



**Red Tractor
Assurance**



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CHANGES TO SAFE HAVEN STANDARDS WILL SUPPORT LONG TERM HEALTH OF GB POTATO INDUSTRY

Red Tractor will soon be looking for industry feedback on potential changes to the Safe Haven Standards, the seed potato assurance scheme. New standards likely to be added to the scheme cover areas such as water use, storage best practice and traceability. The strengthened standards will now mean that the scheme will also cover brown rot and epitrix on top of the existing coverage of ring rot and dickeya.

The Safe Haven Standards were introduced after a ring rot outbreak in England and Wales in 2003 from seed sourced from the Netherlands. The scheme was later widened to include dickeya and has been largely successful at protecting GB seed stocks from these diseases with 60% of growers certified (by area) under the Safe Haven Standards.

After an initial survey to gather feedback from growers earlier this year, Red Tractor, working with AHDB, FERA and the James Hutton Institute, have updated the current scheme, adding eight new standards. The revised standards will shortly go out for official consultation with industry.

Vicky Smith, Technical Manager for Red Tractor, explains: “All Red Tractor Schemes are regularly reviewed to ensure they offer the best protection for growers, and thanks to our survey we have identified a number of key ways we can strengthen these standards.

“While the standards have served the industry well the world does move on, and the potato sector is no different, we need standards which can cope with the changing environment, with political issues like Brexit, and of course, climate change.”

The new standards include closer monitoring of water use and storage and there is also a new standard for growers to have systems in place which will ensure traceability of all seed and ware crops on farm.

In total the scheme has 24 standards, which focus on avoiding and managing risk of contamination. These cover plans and procedures, seed classification, ware classification, water use, hygiene, transportation, machinery, grading and packing, farm visitors and storage. While there are eight entirely new standards, some of the existing standards have also been updated to ensure clarity, particularly around the audit process.

The new standards should not be onerous for current Safe Haven members, as many of them will already have procedures in place which can be adapted for the scheme.

Industry feedback, from both the seed and ware sectors, is now needed to ensure the new standards are fit for purpose.

Dr Rob Clayton, AHDB Potatoes Strategy Director, says: “We really want strong engagement with this consultation from across the industry, so we can make sure we’ve got this right. We’ll be contacting all our potato levy payers in the next few weeks to encourage them to respond, as well as reaching out to other industry bodies.

“The Safe Haven Standards have done an excellent job at protecting the seed sector in the last 16 years, we need to make sure they continue to do so.”

The Safe Haven Standards will be open to industry consultation for six weeks, beginning on 19 August. The consultation will be emailed directly to Safe Haven scheme members and industry bodies plus it will also be available on the Red Tractor website.