



STANDARDS CONSULTATION: WHAT'S BEING PROPOSED?



Red Tractor really values your opinion on these proposals and what matters to you about the scheme. To provide your feedback go to redtractor.citizenspace.com

It is absolutely vital that Red Tractor's standards move with the times.

Because we represent 75% of UK agricultural production, the way that our members farm has an enormous impact on the reputation of British food and farming, here at home and across the world.

Following consultation, the next round of changes will be implemented in November 2021. Unless an alternative implementation date is stated, this is when farmers will start to be audited against the new standards.

These upgrades must always be necessary and deliverable on farms.

Some changes would simply track amendments to legislation, while others are made in line with new scientific advice.

Our standards must be kept up to date. If we listen to our customers, identify areas for improvement and set robust standards that are meaningful to government and consumers, we can ensure that our members can meet market requirements.

PROPOSED CHANGES ACROSS ALL SECTORS

The standards have been scrutinised across every sector but some of the proposed changes will apply to all members, regardless of what they farm.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental protection is a cornerstone of farm assurance and the standards review looks to continue to strengthen this area. One proposal is the inclusion

of the Farming Rules for Water, which are already legislation and aim to reduce soil erosion and nutrient run-off. The requirements have been adapted from the legal requirements to ensure they are meaningful and can be easily assessed.

WORKER WELFARE

When we say Farmed With Care, this includes care for the people on members' farms. UK agriculture's health and safety record is poor and farming is identified as an at-risk sector for labour exploitation. Building worker welfare into the standards ensure members are taking sensible steps to protect the safety and wellbeing of workers on farm.

CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY

Our Certification Bodies audit millions of standards across tens of thousands of farms each year, so consistency is vitally important. Suggested changes to the formatting of the standards will improve clarity for farmers who need to understand what is required of them, and assist auditors when they assess those farmers against the standards.

Take a look at some of the notable proposed changes by sector below. A full list of standards changes being proposed, and the reasons why, can be found at assurance.redtractor.org.uk

PROPOSED CHANGES TO DAIRY STANDARDS

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Under the proposals from November 2021, tethering as a management practice would no longer be permitted. Husbandry procedures have also been separated into a standalone section for ease of navigation and to highlight the importance of this area.

ANIMAL MEDICINES

The change in standards would encompass

wider coverage of the medicines used by dairy farmers in the annual review, rather than just antibiotics as it is currently. The consultation is asking for views on requiring the antibiotic collated data to be uploaded to an industry medicine hub in the future to help demonstrate that RUMA Targets Taskforce objectives are met.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Welfare outcomes have been linked to standards. This includes housing structure and cleanliness. Red Tractor requirements around handling could be strengthened to make clear what is and isn't acceptable under the proposals.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO BEEF & LAMB STANDARDS

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Under the proposals from November 2021, tethering as a management practice would no longer be permitted. Husbandry procedures have also been separated into a standalone section for ease of navigation and to highlight the importance of this area.

ANIMAL MEDICINES

Health planning could be strengthened to give members an insight into any issues at farm in a timely manner. Farmers would be asked to annually collate their total antibiotic use on the farm so that meaningful reviews can take place with their vet to reduce antibiotic use where appropriate. The consultation is asking for views on requiring the antibiotic collated data to be uploaded to an industry medicine hub in the future to help demonstrate that RUMA Targets Taskforce objectives are met. A proposed new standard is for at least one person who



is responsible for administering medicines to have undertaken training and hold a certificate of attendance or competence.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

A requirement to be part of a disease eradication programme for bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) would be upgraded from a recommendation to a full standard in 2023. Red Tractor requirements around handling could be strengthened to make clear what is and isn't acceptable under the proposals.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PIG STANDARDS

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Red Tractor's new pig standards would mirror Defra's revised Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Pigs which covers requirements around tail docking, enrichment, accommodation and record keeping.

ANIMAL MEDICINES

Red Tractor pig producers have made huge strides in recording antibiotic use in their herds, and the 2021 changes being proposed include developing the future Pig Health and Welfare Pathway and the next set of RUMA's Targets Taskforce targets for antimicrobial stewardship. The standards would support the pig sector as a whole to meet some of the objectives set out by these initiatives. There is a new draft standard requiring training in medicines and antimicrobial resistance, aligned to requirements in other Red Tractor farm schemes. A new standard requiring persistent high users of antibiotics to implement an antibiotic reduction plan has also been proposed.

ANIMAL WELFARE

The way producers move and handle pigs is crucial for both welfare and the industry's reputation. A new standard being consulted on would require all persons involved with pigs to undergo an online training course in handling provided by the AHDB. Additionally, Red Tractor's requirements around handling could also

be strengthened to make it clear what is and isn't acceptable, under the proposals.

BIOSECURITY

New standards have been drafted aimed at minimising the risk of disease spread between and within farms. Deadstock collection would have to be done at the perimeter of the farm and members would be required to sign up to the industry's Significant Diseases Charter, which aims to ensure rapid communication of disease outbreaks.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POULTRY STANDARDS

ANIMAL WELFARE

Across all poultry species, each crop would require the light intensity to be measured and recorded at bird-eye level to confirm that farms are meeting the standards. Lighting for ducks would be phased on and off over a 30-minute dawn-dusk period and there is a new recommendation for windows in all buildings which house ducks. It is proposed that only slower growing breeds can be used for free range chicken production to ensure that breeds are suitable for the method of production.

BIOSECURITY

Standards are being revised and simplified to help with consistency and ease of auditing. Requirements have been grouped – for example site access for people, site access for vehicles, hand cleanliness and footwear.

COMPLIANCE AND CONSISTENCY

Members will notice that all chicken enterprises are now grouped together, including the new enhanced welfare module. This would ensure that core requirements are standardised across all enterprises and species.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO FRESH PRODUCE STANDARDS

STRUCTURE

Members will see a new framework to the standards. There will be 10 core sections

which apply to all farms, five operational area-based modules (assessed only where relevant) and two crop-specific modules. There has also been a reworking of the produce handling and packhouse packing section to allow this to cover rig-based packing operations and streamline assessment where a valid BRC certificate is held.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Existing standards have been reviewed to take into account site risk assessments and post-harvest water management. Additions have been made to reflect new growing techniques and non-traditional cropping systems such as vertical farms and hydroponics.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

There would be new standards for the management of nitrate concentration in crops where legal parameters apply and two new standards to cover post-harvest treatments in the post-CIPC era.

FOOD SAFETY

Several new standards are proposed to further strengthen food safety. They include daily start-up checks for harvest teams and two new standards concerning recirculation and re-use of post-harvest water.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO COMBINABLE CROPS & SUGAR BEET STANDARDS

RISK ASSESSMENT

This would appear as a new section on the standards but brings together a number of existing requirements into one area for clarity.

IRRIGATION

A number of revisions have been proposed, all with the aim of providing clarity on what is required where a member is irrigating crops.

ENVIRONMENT

Some changes to the storage of plant protection products have been outlined based on best practice.