



PRESS RELEASE

Changes to Red Tractor farm standards are agreed

- Follows the biggest ever consultation conducted by the scheme
- New standards come into force on 1 November 2021
- Full details of changes to be rolled out to members in August

Following the biggest ever consultation of its standards, Britain's largest food and farming scheme has set out how it has responded to the feedback.

Red Tractor routinely reviews its standards every three to four years across all sectors, to make sure its members are farming to meet the evolving expectations of consumers and market requirements, as simply as possible. This year for the first time in its history, Red Tractor opened the process to its 46,000 members, making it the biggest and most transparent consultation ever.

Developed over a 12-month period, the proposals were put before the food and farming industry and drawn up with input at every stage of the process from all key stakeholders of the scheme – farming organisations, farmers, vets, processors and retailers.

More than 3,000 pieces of feedback were received from across the industry and customers during the review, which ran for two months from 5 January. To ensure that the consultation was as broad as possible, these took the form of meetings, written questions, emails and phone calls, with a total of 743 responses to a survey on the standards.

The Crops and Sugar Beet sector accounted for 30 per cent of the feedback. This was followed by 21 per cent in Beef and Lamb, 20 per cent in Pigs and 18 per cent in Dairy. The smallest number of responses came from Poultry and Fresh Produce sectors at 6 percent and 5 per cent respectively.

All responses, including direct and indirect qualitative comments, were reviewed, assigned to relevant standards and fed into the committee review process for consensus.

The rigorous three-staged process adheres to the gold standard recommendations of the British Standards Institute - committee, consultation and consensus.

The fifth version of the standards for the farm schemes have now been agreed and will come into effect from 1 November 2021, following consensus agreements by each of the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), Sector Boards and final approval of the Assured Food Standards Board.

The industry spoke and we listened

Red Tractor's CEO Jim Moseley said: "We set out to hear from and to engage as much of the farming community as possible, and I'm delighted by the amount of feedback that was generated by the review. This has been enormously helpful for informing the work to finalise the new version of the standards.

“Our standards need to achieve two key objectives - first to meet the needs of consumers who expect high standards but shop keenly on price, and second to provide farmers and the supply chain with manageable standards. Getting that balance right then satisfies the needs of food businesses and government.

“With its structures of sector boards and technical committees, and through the comprehensive feedback of the consultation, Red Tractor is in a fortunate position to achieve that crucial balance that benefits the UK food supply chain. I would like to thank all of the dedicated representatives on these boards and committees for their hard work in agreeing these standards.”

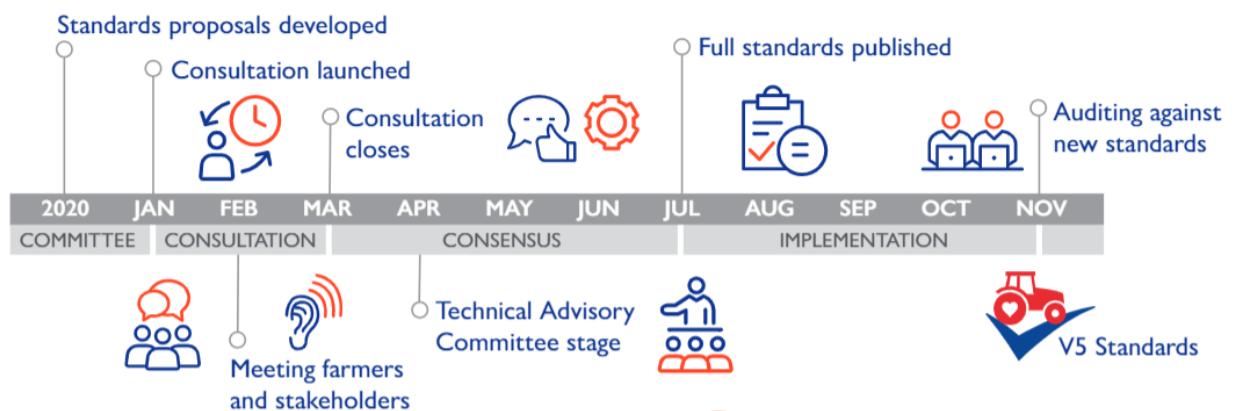
Jim Moseley added: “One of the key themes from the review was the appeal for Red Tractor to provide some flexibility within the schemes, which could deliver even greater market access for our farmer members with minimal impact on the audit burden. We will continue to work with our supply chain customers to explore how this could be delivered effectively.”

Stuart Roberts (NFU Deputy President) said: “It has never been more important for British agriculture to be in tune with the public. Following feedback from the NFU and farmer and grower licensees, Red Tractor has developed the right standards to progress our industry, while balancing the needs of farmers with the evolving demands of shoppers and the supply chain. Going forward I would like to see Red Tractor embrace the eight principles that NFU has set out for future standards development.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Red Tractor is the UK’s largest food standards scheme, covering animal welfare, food safety, traceability and environmental protection
- The consultation on Version 5 of the farm standards ran from 5 January- 5 March 2021 and was open to the whole food chain
- Further details about the standards will be available later this month and the complete standards for each sector will be available on www.assurance.redtractor.org.uk from August 2021
- The new standards will come into effect from the 1 November 2021
- The Standards Consultation Timeline



- Red Tractor was established in 2000 to reassure consumers that food and drink bearing its logo was safe and responsibly produced. Now the tractor is synonymous with trust. Research conducted by YouGov has found that Red Tractor is the UK’s trusted most trusted food assurance scheme, with around three- quarters of shoppers who are aware of the organisation citing it as an independent source they can trust

