

AUGUST 2021



DUCK

TECHNICAL BRIEFING

FROM YOUR RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE TEAM



CHAIR'S VIEW: IAIN GARDNER : POULTRY BOARD



Red Tractor standards play a vital role in underpinning our industry's strength and credibility, securing our future as world-leaders in bird health and welfare, traceability and food safety.

Earlier this year we held the biggest consultation in Red Tractor's history to ensure the next evolution of these standards – which will be brought in from 1 November 2021 – help safeguard the future of our members' farms.

They have been written, reviewed and approved by our Technical Advisory Committee and Sector Board, which are made up of farmer representatives, leading industry experts and supply chain stakeholders.

We were pleased to reach a consensus in many important areas. This includes the requirement for a named welfare officer on each farm, and a range of improvements have been added to our hatchery standard.

We have also strengthened our standards around biosecurity to prevent the spread of disease and protect food safety and bird health.

These new standards will help drive our sector forward and maintain balance between the evolving needs of consumers, farmers, processors and retailers.

This briefing highlights all the key changes we need our members to be aware of. Please read it so that you can prepare for their introduction later this year.

With ever-increasing interest and scrutiny of how food is produced, compliance with these standards not only serves to protect the reputation of your own farm, but the entire sector in which you play a vital part.



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.

"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 also satisfies the needs of food businesses and government."

IN BRIEF: WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY?

We've reviewed our farm standards and these changes will apply from 1 November 2021. The updates have been approved by our Technical Advisory Committee of farmers and industry experts, and sector board, following a public consultation. It will help you help you meet evolving supply chain demands and new legal requirements.

Here are the main changes and why we made them.



DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Maintaining Red Tractor's reputation for traceable, safe food production that has been farmed with care is crucial to everyone. All duck farms must now have a farm location reference on their maps – either OS map or What3Words reference – to ensure that the farm can be located easily in an emergency.

HOUSING SHELTER AND HANDLING

Your heat stress policy must now be demonstrably implemented on the farm, and reviewed if there are any bird losses due to heat or cold stress. The installation of windows in poultry sheds satisfies customer and consumer expectations, and it is now recommended that ducks are provided with natural daylight via the provision of windows at 3% equivalency of the floor area. Evidence shows that transitions

between light at dark over a 30-minute period reduces fearfulness in ducks. As such we have introduced a dawn to dusk transition period.

STAFF AND LABOUR

All staff must be competent, and we want to help equip them with the skills and knowledge they need. All staff must enrol for the world-leading British Poultry Passport initiative within six months of their recruitment, and those in the process of qualifying must complete at least two modules every 12 months.

All farms with workers must also have a written Health and Safety policy – this is a slight advance on the legal baseline which only applies to businesses with more than five employees.

MEDICINES AND HUSBANDRY

Responsible and competent use of medicines and veterinary treatments is the bedrock of good animal welfare across all Red Tractor poultry species.

Records must be kept of all administered veterinary medicines. We have extended this to cover the length of withdrawal period for eggs, as they can sometimes go into the food supply chain.

“IT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR BRITISH AGRICULTURE TO BE IN TUNE WITH THE PUBLIC. THESE ARE THE RIGHT STANDARDS TO PROGRESS OUR INDUSTRY, BALANCING THE NEEDS OF FARMERS WITH THE EVOLVING DEMANDS OF SHOPPERS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN.”
STUART ROBERTS
NFU DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Red Tractor and the poultry industry remains fully committed to the responsible use of antibiotics.

FALLEN STOCK

Protecting Red Tractor's reputation is vital. Activists have been known to go to extraordinary lengths to create images that alarm consumers.

Hatchery waste must now always be placed in a locked container, or container only accessible to removal services and not general waste areas, while culled birds on farm must be stored in a locked container or room.



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OUR MANUALS
AND HELPFUL
GUIDES ON
OUR WEBSITE.**

THE ENVIRONMENT

If you grow your own feed, spread muck or use plant protection products around poultry houses and ranges, you will already be storing agrochemicals in a manner that minimises the risk of contamination and pollution to crops, feedstuffs, animals, soils, groundwater and watercourses. A revision of our standards requires that spillages of agrochemicals and potential pollutants can be contained appropriately. Requirements for organic manure now cover temporary field heaps, effluent from manure heaps. With significant consumer interest and pressure to minimise waste – particularly plastic – farms must now consider opportunities to reuse, recycle and reduce waste.

FEED AND WATER

There is an updated ratio of ducks to nipple drinkers, to ensure that drinking water provision is adequate.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

You will already proactively manage your bird health and welfare, and we have revised some key standards in this

area. To ensure that any issues at the hatchery are being monitored, you will need to record daily culls. Aligning all Red Tractor poultry standards, there is a new requirement for there to be a named welfare officer to coordinate welfare at the hatchery and on the farm. Their contact details must be displayed, and they will have specific responsibilities, such as monitoring welfare policies and procedures.

HATCHERY EGGS

Our standards ensure that hatchery eggs are fit for purpose, we are bringing some duck standards in line with the standards for other poultry species.

Vehicles carrying ducklings must be able to control ventilation, and injured or sick ducklings must not be transported; they should be humanely culled immediately as required by law. Ducklings must be placed in clean, dry, ventilated containers that ensures contamination and disease is minimised and that temperature and air flow in transport is optimal.

BIOSECURITY AND DISEASE CONTROL

Effective biosecurity measures are essential to prevent the spread of disease and protect food safety and bird health.

Farm access must be limited to essential visitors only and visitor records must



be kept. Controls on access to all Red Tractor poultry sites must be in place and the risk of disease spread by vehicles must be minimised. Farms must provide effective wheel wash facilities for visiting vehicles, and you must ensure drainage does not cause contamination, otherwise parking should always be off-site, unless road safety necessitates parking on site.

Hands must be washed or sanitised prior to starting work, after handling deadstock, before and after meals and after visits to the toilet.

We are recommending that farms only rear a single poultry species at any one time due to the increased challenge of cross contamination.

DEPOPULATION

During depopulation, the health and welfare of birds and site biosecurity is at risk. A designated person must inspect forklifts and other catching equipment – this now includes catching frames brought to the farm. These must be cleaned and disinfected before arrival. Water must be provided for layers and breeder replacements up to transfer and must be available in the destination house prior to unloading the birds.

