

AUGUST 2021



TURKEY 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 a range of improvements which 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 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 turkey 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. Farms must be capable of implementing a compulsory housing order, and additional criteria on welfare planning for housing free range flocks has been added to the avian influenza contingency plan.

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.

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.

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,

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STUART ROBERTS
NFU DEPUTY PRESIDENT

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.

**LOOK OUT FOR
OUR MANUALS
AND HELPFUL
GUIDES ON
OUR WEBSITE.**

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. Once per crop, the lux level in all housing must be measured and recorded at bird head height across 80% of the building. Farms must also document any reduction below 10 lux, and measure light levels at each turn around to ensure that lights settings are calibrated correctly.

FEED AND WATER

You will now need to monitor the water consumption on your unit. This not only demonstrates an adequate water provision but also is another tool to monitor the health and welfare of the birds.

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 need to record daily culls.

We are strengthening our standards on Mycoplasma testing for breeder layers and, in line with the poultry health scheme, testing records for *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, *synoviae* and *meleagridis* must be retained to ensure bird welfare and the prevention of disease.

HATCHERY EGGS

We are seeking to improve health and welfare for birds, including at hatcheries by avoiding setting eggs from parent flocks who have tested positive for *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, *synoviae* and/or *meleagridis*. If it is unavoidable, a documented mycoplasma containment plan must be implemented, which covers a range of parameters to safeguard the welfare of the progeny, parent stock and planned depletion to contain the spread of disease. All vehicles carrying poultts must be able to control ventilation to improve welfare in transport.

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 continue to be limited to essential visitors, but we've strengthened the standard in some areas. For example, visitors must now record their date of last contact with poultry within the last seven days, or within 14 days if visited overseas.



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.

