



FRESH PRODUCE

WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY

VERSION 5

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

The new Fresh Produce structure consists of 11 core sections, covering crop production and management systems (applicable to all). There are a further 5 sections based on operational area (e.g. Harvesting and Storage) which are applicable just where relevant.

There are two supplementary modules to meet specific assurance needs. A hops module – to support a benchmarking arrangement – along with a watercress module, to better align with a Food Standards Agency/Food Standards Scotland recognised good hygiene practice guide.

The list of assured crops has been refreshed using the CRD Crop Definitions List as a reference point to help provide clearer certification scopes. The crop risk categories have also been refreshed to ensure crops are assigned appropriately. While many crop names and risk categories are unaffected, some have changed.



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RISK ASSESSMENT

RA.4

Effective Risk Assessment must keep pace with changes in process and new knowledge. Our standards have been updated to ensure that – for all crops that may be consumed raw – risk assessments are reviewed at least annually, and that this process is recorded. This will help ensure that Risk Assessments are reappraised thoroughly and remain up to date.

RA.6

We know that some of the most significant risks for growers are associated with historic and adjacent land (or site) use. This is illustrated by recent issues in the US where investigation of STEC E. coli outbreaks affecting lettuce have identified proximity of livestock as the likely source of contamination. You will already be completing assessments on your production site. To better address these risks, we are strengthening expectations and providing greater clarity as to what should be included in this risk assessment, including preventative actions and frequent reviews.

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

DP.1

Red Tractor's reputation is built on traceable, safe food production that has been farmed with care. Maintaining our reputation is crucial to everyone. We have introduced a new standard that requires the farm to present an acceptable and tidy appearance to the public. The external areas around buildings and farm entrances should be kept clear of rubbish, non-essential equipment and other debris. In addition, loose wire, scrap machinery, scrap metal, seed and fertiliser bags, PPP containers and disused tyres must be well managed. Good site management ultimately means that the risk to food safety, animal welfare or the environment is minimised.

PERSONNEL

PL.4

After consultation with the GLAA and expert advice, we have made some simple changes to terminology and requirements. The agreement between labour provider and farm is now defined as a Service Level Agreement and will cover additional requirements, based on Best Practice guidance to ensure clear allocation of responsibilities between provider and farm.

PL.9

Health and Safety on farm is a known and significant risk to the industry. Businesses must by law put first-aid provisions in place. Our standards now require that you have at least one trained first aider working in the business; you will be required to provide evidence of the training. This establishes a simple baseline for all members. Many members will already go further.

VERMIN CONTROL

VC.1.1

Both pests and rodenticides present risks, either to produce or the environment. If pest control is managed in-house, for Fresh Produce we now require that the responsible person has received certified training. Our objective is to ensure that the pest control strategies you employ are underpinned by verifiable subject knowledge.

VC.5

Biodiversity and food safety must co-exist. However, with the increasing prominence of biodiversity and the importance of food safety, this delicate balance becomes more important. Consequently, our current recommendation that precautionary measures are taken where appropriate to discourage pest and vermin activity in crops and cropping areas has been upgraded to a full standard.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

IM.5

Pesticide residues in food are a frequent topic of concern for consumers and regulators. It is important that we have a robust framework for verification testing to show responsible use of Plant Protection Products as part of a broad, IPM strategy delivering safe and legal products for consumers. We are clarifying our expectations and setting a baseline of annual testing for each crop, regardless of whether testing is by you or by your customer (we have built-in the possibility for exceptions in very low risk situations).

IM.6

We have integrated some content formerly addressed within Crop Protocols into the new version of the Fresh Produce standards. Where maximum nitrate levels (for crop) apply for specific commodities (lettuce, spinach and rocket) to minimise potential chronic exposure risk to consumers, a testing requirement applies to verify growers are working within these parameters.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Making sure no chemical or physical contamination, pollution or spread of disease occurs on your farm is a crucial objective of Red Tractor standards.

EC.1.2

Your list of stored PPPs must now be updated at least monthly. This strengthening of the standard will encourage good stock control and store management.

EC.4.1

We know that mixing and handling of PPPs and filling of sprayers present some risks. We have added some additional elements, based on expert advice to better manage and mitigate these.

EC.7.3

If you apply granular nematicides, you will already be working in accordance with the Nematicide Stewardship Programme (NSP) Best Practice Protocol. We have updated our standards to reflect changes in the stewardship requirements, including full roll-out of the free to access e-learning for staff applying granular nematicides. This ensures hazards are managed responsibly and demonstrates that the industry is taking a proactive approach.

EC.7.4

Expert advice is a key tool in ensuring PPP use is always based on rational, informed guidance. Anyone making recommendations on PPP use must now be on the BASIS register – not just advisors.

EC.8.3

As non-chemical control options increase and the number of conventional PPPs decline, it is important that our standards evolve to cover changes in practice. You are now required to keep records when you introduce biological controls.

EC.10

You will already be making sure that any manufactured fertilisers, organic manures and other soil amendments are safe and suitable for use. We have made a change to allow some extra flexibility for grazing of sheep prior to growing Category 2 crops such as carrots, sweetcorn and some brassica crops. While food safety remains paramount, this will allow some improved flexibility for mixed rotations.

EC.13

The management of crop waste is a key element of managing disease risk and was formerly covered in the Crop Protocols. For version 5, this has been incorporated into the core standards.

IRRIGATION

IG.1.2

Microbiological suitability of irrigation water for use on produce is a key food safety control. Ensuring laboratories are accredited to perform the testing required ensures that the testing methods are robust and the results are credible. Formerly a recommendation, you are now required to provide evidence of laboratory accreditation.

HARVESTING AND PRODUCE PACKING AND SITE OPERATIONS

HS.6 /
PP.1

You will already have procedures in place for reporting infectious diseases. We want to reduce the chance that workers returning from absence are reintroduced to food handling roles or work near co-workers while they pose a risk of contamination or transmission. Consequently, we have strengthened our expectations of the review of Return-to-Work questionnaires completed by workers returning after absence.

HS.12

Daily start up checks are required for harvesting operations to ensure that any risks to products are identified and addressed. You will already be paying close attention to tools and knives; we are extending preventative controls to cover personnel and other equipment which may affect food safety.

STORAGE

ST.5 /
ST.6

You will already be managing storage areas in a way that protects product quality and food safety. We have updated and strengthened our expectations for management of PPPs used as storage treatments to ensure robust controls and reflect changes in practice. This includes the move away from CIPC as an active treatment but with ongoing consideration of legacy contamination risks by identifying stores where CIPC has historically been used.

PROTECTED CROPPING

PC.1

There has been a lot of innovation and investment in the sector geared towards high-tech glasshouse and emerging production systems, e.g. hydroponics and vertical farming. We have spoken with subject experts and introduced new standards to introduce risk-based controls which address the emerging risks and also incorporate good practices in a proportionate, risk-based manner for more established, protected systems. Risks may include both food safety and/or disease management. You will need to define entrance controls for admitting workers and visitors to crop production areas.

PC.2

We have also introduced a requirement for risk-based cleaning programmes where there is a product contamination risk with record keeping for the highest risk crops.

CHECKLIST

We hope you find this checklist helpful. It is a quick reference list of what you need to do differently. The list covers only the changes within each standard - it is suggested that you refer to the full standard to ensure you comply fully. Those standards which have been revised to provide additional clarity, but do not require members to take different action, have not been listed below. New recommendations are not included.

Record templates will be available before 1 November on:

www.redtractorassurance.org.uk

RA.1	Does your Risk Assessment or a supplementary document identify all preventative actions and include a Water Risk Assessment?	Yes	No	N/A
RA.3	If you use a HACCP based approach, are CCPs identified by documented process, are responsible personnel trained and are you keeping CCP process records?	Yes	No	N/A
RA.4	Do you review and record your risk assessment at least once a year? Relevant for category 0-2 crops.	Yes	No	N/A
RA.6	Do you risk assess all crop production sites (fields and other) and review these assessments at least annually?	Yes	No	N/A
RA.8	Do you complete regular Internal Audits of preventative actions? Relevant for category 0-2 crops.	Yes	No	N/A
DP.1	Does your farm present an acceptable and tidy appearance to the public?	Yes	No	N/A
DP.2	Does your Contingency/ Emergency Plan include actions to be taken in event of: fire, power cuts, extreme weather, pollution incident, incidents affecting food safety or legality?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.3	Is implementation of refresher training (where required) recorded on training record?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.4	Do you have a Service Level Agreement in place with any labour agency used and evidence of a valid GLAA licence?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.6	If you provide temporary, on-site accommodation, do you have inspection/ maintenance records for electric and gas installations and is heating provided if used between October and March?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.8	If you have 5 or more employees, do you complete documented Health & Safety meetings?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.9	Do you have at least one trained first aider working in the business?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.12	Do you complete COSHH assessments for all hazardous substances?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.13	Have you offered health checks to workers applying PPPs if a need is identified within your COSHH assessments?	Yes	No	N/A
VC.1	Have you ensured there is no build-up of vegetation close to farm structures that could harbour vermin and that site surveys are completed at least quarterly (in-house or by an external contractor)?	Yes	No	N/A

VC.1.1	If pest control is managed in-house has your responsible person received certified training?	Yes	No	N/A
VC.2	Does any permanent baiting meet the conditions set out in the standard and guidance?	Yes	No	N/A
VC.5	Where appropriate, do you take precautionary measures to discourage pest and vermin activity in crops and cropping areas?	Yes	No	N/A
IM.5	Do you have annual pesticide residue tests available for each crop?	Yes	No	N/A
IM.6	Is nitrate concentration (for crop) considered in your risk assessment if you grow lettuce, spinach or rocket? Are product testing requirements defined and implemented?	Yes	No	N/A
SM.6	If you grow crops in substrates other than soil or water, are the substrates traceable and (for category 0 and 1 crops) are you considering micro risk and testing where appropriate?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.1	Are you familiar and compliant with all fertiliser and manure storage controls set out in this standard?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.1.1	Are you familiar and compliant with all PPP store controls set out in this standard?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.1.2	Is your list of stored PPPs updated at least once per month?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.3	Are you familiar and compliant with all nitrogen based fertiliser storage controls set out in this standard?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.4	Can you trace deliveries of PPPs back to supplier?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.4.1	Are you managing risks from sprayer filling?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.7	Are any air-blast sprayers NSTS tested annually?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.7.3	Have all staff applying granular nematicide completed ARTIS e-learning?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.7.4	Do you have the name and BASIS registration number of the anyone making recommendations on your PPP use?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.8	Do PPP records cover all relevant applications and identify first permissible harvest date (where applicable)?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.8.3	Do you have record keeping systems for the introduction of biological controls?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.13	Have you got records to demonstrate responsible waste management practices have been adopted?	Yes	No	N/A
IG.1.2 & PP.10 & PW.2	Do you have evidence of accreditation for the laboratory used for microbiological testing of water?	Yes	No	N/A
GM.1	Have you requested a Red Tractor derogation for any GM crops?	Yes	No	N/A
HS.1 & PP.1	Does your hygiene policy restrict nail varnish and vaping in operational areas?	Yes	No	N/A

HS.2 & PP.2	Are personnel trained in the return to work policy and is refresher training in personal hygiene requirements completed at least annually?	Yes	No	N/A
HS.4 & PP.5	For categories 1-3 (already in place for category 0), if hair is identified as a contamination risk within the risk assessment, are head coverings worn?	Yes	No	N/A
HS.6 & PP.7	Are completed Return-to-Work questionnaires checked and verified before workers return to operational duties after a period of absence?	Yes	No	N/A
HS.12	Do you have recorded daily start up checks for harvest teams?	Yes	No	N/A
HS.14	Do packaging controls ensure all packaging is stored in a clean area and is checked before use?	Yes	No	N/A
HS.15	Where product is not covered for transportation, is there a risk based justification?	Yes	No	N/A
HS.16	Are any cooling parameters defined in your risk assessment and are adequate cooling facilities present?	Yes	No	N/A
PP.9	If water is in contact with produce for purposes other than washing (e.g. cooling, hydration) is this risk assessed, compliant with the Water Matrix? Are containers and tanks managed appropriately?	Yes	No	N/A
PP.12	Are pre-production checks completed to identify foreign body risks?	Yes	No	N/A
PP.13	Are knife/ sharps issue records in place (where applicable)?	Yes	No	N/A
ST.5	If you have used PPPs as store treatment do you have the name and BASIS professional register number of advisors?	Yes	No	N/A
ST.6	If you have used PPPs as store treatment do you have evidence of your operator's training? Where NPTC or Lantra certificates are not directly relevant, have you checked if the product manufacturer offers training provision?	Yes	No	N/A
ST.7	Are stores that have been treated (historically) with CIPC labelled with a permanent notice?	Yes	No	N/A
PW.1	Are any tanks or containers used for storage of water for product washing managed to avoid contamination risks?	Yes	No	N/A
PW.3	If product wash water is recirculated, is a treatment process in place (not relevant for desoiling and stone separation)?	Yes	No	N/A
PW.4	Does wash system design ensure cleaned product cannot be re-contaminated by earlier, process stages?	Yes	No	N/A
PW.5& PC.4	If you discharge waste water, are you compliant with environmental permitting requirements?	Yes	No	N/A
PC.1	If you grow crops in protected cropping systems, have you defined and implemented entrance controls for crop production areas?	Yes	No	N/A
PC.2	If you grow crops in protected cropping systems, have you defined and implemented cleaning programs for equipment and surfaces which have the potential to pose a risk to food safety?	Yes	No	N/A