



**Red Tractor Assurance**

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# Climb aboard



News, updates and practical advice from your Red Tractor Assurance team // OCTOBER 2019

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## Farm assured crops hold strong in uncertain times

By Laurence Matthews, Combinable Crops Board chairman



Harvest was not without its challenges but on the whole our yields were good and we finished on time despite a stop-start August.

Now, we begin the process all over again.

Farming can seem very cyclical, but this year, things feel very different. The economic, social and political uncertainty that the country and farmers are facing is significant.

I'm not making wholesale changes to prepare for Brexit, but I continue to look at simple ways to help us to weather the uncertainty. For instance, selling our wheat early in order to have cash in the bank. I don't know what the wheat price will do, but if I've got the cashflow I feel I've done what I can to mitigate risk.

Being part of the Red Tractor scheme will also continue to put us in a good

position. The view of the farmers on our Combinable Crops Board is that regardless of what happens, our major customers and the Great British public aren't going to abandon the robust, credible farm standards that everyone involved with Red Tractor has worked hard to establish over the past 20 years.

As Red Tractor certified farms, we all have a duty to provide products that at the very least are safe, traceable and have been produced using strong environmental credentials.

Red Tractor standards have ensured that we have a clear and consistent industry benchmark. Otherwise we could have been in an undesirable position where every retailer and food company has their own

standards and audits, creating confusion, duplication and an increased burden for farmers.

And Red Tractor continues to provide greater access to markets - the EU biofuel for example, which will continue with the Renewable Energy Directive, regardless of what happens with Brexit.

So as our new crops emerge, the outlook from our farm is one of optimism for the future. I hope it's the same for you.

Please continue to read this newsletter, it contains some important information to help keep you and your business up to date and ready for the new season.



## Red Tractor introduces nematicide best practice protocols

The UK continues to make progress on establishing good stewardship principles for the use of nematicides in combinable crops, sugar beet and fresh produce.

Granular nematicides are used to control microscopic parasitic worms that live in the soil and cause

significant damage to the roots of crops.

Their use is essential to the production of nutritious, quality food. However, if they are not applied safely and responsibly, nematicides could potentially pose a risk to consumers or the environment.

That's why Red Tractor is incorporating the best practice protocol issued by the Nematicide Stewardship Group (NSP) into its standards.

Although previously it was just an appendix, it has already been widely adopted by farmers - and

will formally become part of the farm audit from 1 October 2019. It will include measures such as operator training, calibrating the applicator and inspecting the crop following application. For more information and guidance documents [click here](#).



# In focus: Grain waits in store

With the final trailers of grain from this year's harvest now tipped, our focus is turning from growing quality crops to ensuring that they meet storage specifications in store.

Levels of mycotoxins in cereal based foods are a major focus of food and animal feed safety legislation. Excess levels not only cause a problem for animal feed producers, but also for flour millers and maltsters too. Crucially, they can undermine the acceptability of UK grain in domestic and overseas markets.

Red Tractor insists on its members having a specific storage strategy

in place, but across the industry some results continue to show an elevated presence.

### KEY ADVICE

- Ensure storage sheds and silos are well maintained to prevent water ingress into dried grain bulks.
- Calibrate moisture meters for accurate readings
- Follow storage advice from the industry and from the [FSA](#).
- Fill in all sections of your grain passport including mycotoxin risk assessment score.

## Don't forget!

### Off-farm transport

Farmers who used their own trailers to transport combinable crops and sugar beet off farm must display their Red Tractor membership number and trailer identification number on the sides and rear of trailers, and also sheet the trailers. Full rules [here](#).

### Temporary storage deadline

Temporary stores for crops can only be used until 31 October. Derogations can be obtained from your certification body but must be submitted in good time and will be reviewed by Red Tractor.

### Grain passports and stickers

Grain passport stickers are distributed by your certification body, not Red Tractor. To request new stickers or for queries contact either NSF, SAI Global or Lloyd's Register.

### Contract farming rules

By 1 December 2019 all Red Tractor members will need to be compliant with rules affecting businesses who have contract farming arrangements. Full details were issued in October 2018 and a guide to how things are changing can be read [here](#).

## IMPORTANT DATES

**1 OCTOBER:** NSP Protocols become an auditable Red Tractor standard

**31 OCTOBER:** Temporary crops storage ends

**1 DECEMBER:** Compliance with new contract farming standards compulsory

## Exciting opportunity to test new grain passports

Red Tractor is searching for volunteers to take part in an electronic PDF grain passport trial later this year. If you would be interested in taking part in the trial please send your name and membership number to [debbie.smith@redtractor.org.uk](mailto:debbie.smith@redtractor.org.uk)

## EU Biofuels market still open to the UK

Membership of Red Tractor remains a huge benefit for farmers growing crops for the renewable energy market.

The scheme demonstrates and assures the sustainability of British crops entering the European biofuels supply chain – effectively guaranteeing market access until at least 2023.

While Red Tractor provides key guarantees on the sustainability of production, it is important members consider the eligibility of the land they intend to grow biofuel crops on.

Under the EU's Renewable Energy Directive, if land was converted to

arable production after 1 January 2008, farmers cannot sell a proportion the crop equivalent to this land area's production to either a biofuel or bioliquid end market. Nor can they sign the RED declaration on a grain passport for this tonnage equivalent.

To demonstrate you have fulfilled your obligation make certain you keep records relating to the relevant tonnage, to show it has not been sold to a biofuel or bioliquid destination.

For more information on RED, standard and compliance can be found on the Red Tractor website [here](#).

