



**Red Tractor
Assurance**



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

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Dairy standards changes: what you need to know before 1 October

Find out what Red Tractor mid-cycle changes are happening, and why.

Red Tractor reviews the standards across all its sectors on a three-year cycle.

This is to ensure that practices on farm keep pace with the best available science and match consumers and customers' expectations of how food is being produced.

Occasionally changes need to be made in between the cycles and Red Tractor has recently completed a consultation on a small number of changes which dairy farmers will be assessed on from 1 October 2019. Full details of the standards changes can be accessed here

<https://tinyurl.com/y2ocnxws>

Dairy technical manager Kate Cross explains: "New issues are emerging all the time, not only in the agriculture industry but also in the minds of consumers who buy Red Tractor branded products."

What's changing?

Health plan

The required Livestock Health Plan is to be strengthened by the setting out of policies and details for different scenarios/diseases which must be recorded. As each plan is farm specific the detail will reflect what actions are taken on that farm. A template and details of the different areas to be included will be available on the Red Tractor website in the next few weeks.



The plan is to be done in conjunction with a vet, who is to sign the final version to say it is a reflection of the farming practices on that farm. Current health plans, which are a true reflection of the farm, can be added to for the areas not currently covered. Further guidance on timelines in relation to how this standard change will be assessed can be found in the standards change document on the Red Tractor website along with examples and templates.

Pain relief

One such policy is the delivery of pain relief to stock, when undertaking

procedures which may cause pain, this covers anaesthetic, analgesic and non-steroids. Along with noting details in the herd health plan all administration must be noted in the medicine records.

Animal husbandry

The use of cauterising paste for disbudding has had its terms of use strengthened - it must only be used on stock less than seven days of age and those animals must receive pain relief.

Disease control

Endemic disease control is something that many include within their health





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plans, and there are a number of national schemes working to manage and eradicate some diseases. Within the new standards is a requirement that all members have a signed Johnes Action Plan, signed by a BCVA accredited Johnes Advisor.

The website www.actionjohnesuk.org has a map of all the accredited vets along with resources, advice and case studies of practical steps farmers have taken to eradicate Johnes from their herd.

The standard wording includes a 12-month derogation for members in Northern Ireland as equivalence of the national scheme to Action Johnes is worked through.

Members are also asked to demonstrate how they are taking action to eradicate BVD in their herds, for many this is being part of the national schemes while for others it will be via testing routes.

Colostrum management

The feeding of milk from known Johnes positive cows is a potential risk factor in the transfer of the pathogens to youngstock. Farms must not feed milk or colostrum from Johnes positive cows to youngstock which may potentially enter the dairy or beef breeding herd.

Antibiotics and medicines

Red Tractor members are already engaged with the industry actions looking to address the challenge posed by antimicrobial resistance. To provide further feedback the annual vet review will include focuses on any cascade/off-

label use of medicines plus alternative disease prevention strategies which will aim to reduce levels of disease and ensure the correct medicines are prescribed.

Records of medicine use will now also include teat sealants.

It has been decided that the standard relating to antibiotic failure will be amended so that the prescribing vet is informed of each failure. As per the current standard these failures should be noted in the farm complaints record and the findings of the investigation noted.

Medicine administration

One person responsible for administering medicines (as displayed by entries in the medicine records) must have undertaken a training course on the safe use of medicines since 1 October 2016. The course undertaken must have covered topics such as medicine types, handling, administration, storage, recording and residue avoidance. There are numerous routes to undertake these types of courses from vet-led MilkSure to online from national training providers.

Documents

A plan should be in place outlining what action should be taken if



emergency situations arise which could present a risk to food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection, including telephone numbers and relevant persons. Inclement weather, the loss of assurance status or power failure are three examples. The plan should be displayed in a position available to all those involved in farm tasks. A template for this revised requirement from the plan can be found on the Red Tractor website.

Milk production

The standard relating to parlour cleanliness has been strengthened to take account of the industry requirements in relation to Maximum Residue Level of chlorates in milk. It is a requirement that a protocol for the wash phases of the parlour is available on farm. An example of the detail required can be found on the Red Tractor website.

Dairy standards changes webinar

All Red Tractor's dairy members are invited to log on to a webinar on Thursday 12 September at 7pm to hear more about how and why the mid-cycle changes are taking place.

You can register for the webinar now via the link <https://tinyurl.com/yylrromv> Doing this now will ensure you get a reminder nearer the time.

It will be an opportunity to question Red Tractor's experts and find out more about some of the templates and resources at your disposal to make complying with the new standards as simple as possible.

Keep an eye on the Red Tractor website and follow [@RTfarmers](https://twitter.com/RTfarmers) on Twitter for more guidance on how we are working across the sector to ensure all have information on the changes.



UK Dairy Day: come and meet us

Farmers are invited to meet the Red Tractor team at UK Dairy Day in Telford on 11 September.

Red Tractor's stand will be in the Sharing Knowledge Zone 1 on the first floor.

It provides an opportunity to ask the team about the continued evolution of the assurance scheme which has included a large-scale consumer advertising campaign and a tougher inspection regime for non-compliant farms.

Technical manager Kate Cross will be taking part in the seminar programme, speaking at 1pm in the Zone 1 seminar area outlining the mid-cycle standards changes outlined in this newsletter.



Tips to avoiding Red Tractor non-conformances

Red Tractor's dairy farmers are passionate about the cattle they look after, the businesses they run and the food they produce.

They work hard to ensure it meets the standards required by Red Tractor 365 days a year, and no-one likes to see a non-conformance recorded at assessment time.

As noted in the CEO comments on the next page, the number and nature of non-

conformances noted at assessment has a bearing on whether the farm will be subject to an unannounced spot check

Analysis of the most common reasons for a non-conformance to be raised shows that maintenance and recording keeping are the more common issues.

Here are some of the more common findings and how to avoid having them raised.

Red Tractor templates and checklists with this symbol 📄 are available at <https://tinyurl.com/y2pd9qex>

Are the structures in the dairy and parlour in good order?

Address:

- Damaged doors
- Incomplete and pitted floors
- Rusty fixtures and fittings
- Damaged fed troughs

Is the housing looking tired and run down?

Look out for:

- Sharp edges
- Electrical installations that hang low
- Broken gates or pens

Do you have an annual collation of antibiotics used on the farm? 📄

Record:

- Collated medicine use on an annual basis between two fixed dates
- Record by product name and total amount – be it bottle, mls or tubes
- This information will be needed by the vet to complete the annual herd health and performance review

Has the vet reviewed, discussed and signed your annual herd health and performance review? 📄

To do:

- Complete on an annual basis

- Medicine use must be reviewed – ensure you use an updated template
- Must be signed by your vet

Has your parlour, milk cooling system and tanks been maintained and routinely serviced? 📄

You need records of:

- Annual service schedule and report
- Spares and repairs invoices for any work undertaken between annual services

Are you controlling birds, rodents and insects? 📄

Ensure:

- You have a site survey, regardless of method of control used
- The doors to the dairy are kept closed and when closed don't have gaps allowing access to vermin
- Feed storage areas are kept clean
- Drains are covered and potential access points are closed off

Are your dairy health and performance records up to date? 📄

Collect and review records of:

- Lameness
- Mastitis
- Culling rates – voluntary and involuntary
- Calf mortality

Dairy cleanliness and hygiene needs to be maintained

Take a look at:

- Tank inlets and outlets for build-up of milk residue
- Exterior of tanks for dust and possible contaminants that may enter the tank
- Anything kept in the dairy that should not be there
- Walls and ceilings are kept clean and free from build-up of residues

Ensure the parlour and surrounding areas are kept clean from dirt build-up

Common issues are:

- Cobwebs and dust on higher level pipes
- Dried on dirt on rump rails
- Troughs with a build-up of mould and dirt

Keep complete spray records of plant protection product applications 📄

Ensure you have:

- Recommendation sheets from agronomist
- Completed spray sheets – sprayer operator completes with date, time, weather conditions etc
- If using a contractor, details of their sprayer NSTS number and NRoSo numbers



CEO comment: compliant dairy farms have nothing to fear



The strengthening of Red Tractor's inspection regime was just one element of a strategy I announced last autumn as we bid to become the flagship for British farming at home and abroad.

Other developments included a £1.5m advertising campaign, and new standards to cover a broader range of farming systems.

My vision is for a scheme which consumers demand, customers value and government is proud of.

My key message then was the same as it is now. Farms that continue to comply with the required scheme standards will not be affected.

It is only businesses found to have a high number of non-conformances, or serious breaches, which are

now subject to unannounced spot checks.

Our goal is for every member to meet every standard every day, which is a tall order but one we must achieve if Red Tractor is to remain the industry's leading food and farming assurance scheme.

The tougher inspection regime has been in place in the dairy sector since April. The non-conformances found for a farm to be flagged for an unannounced inspection have

all been significant issues which risk the reputation of the whole UK dairy industry. We simply cannot allow this to happen, and Red Tractor has taken action.

For those who are compliant, it's business as usual.

"Farms that continue to comply with the required scheme standards will not be affected."

We have a bank of our previous newsletters on our website which go into more detail on changes I announced, and there is a webinar covering frequently asked questions available at redtractor.org.uk/media/videos.

Meet your technical manager: Kate Cross



Kate Cross joined Red Tractor in April as technical manager for the dairy and beef and lamb sectors.

She joined following a 12-month maternity cover role with certification body NSF and will also be known to many members from her years spent in a knowledge exchange role at AHDB Dairy.

Kate grew up involved in dairying across Lancashire and Yorkshire and spent 15 years milking cows, latterly on a 400-cow unit until 2006, and is a former chairman of the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs.

She continues to help out with milking on a local farm in her spare time.

Experience in her career so far spans the practical and professional – not only seeing the implementation of farm standards in the milking parlour but ensuring assessors are consistent and capable when they arrive on farm.

"Any standards from any assurance scheme have to be practical and achievable to benefit the business, and they have to be upheld by farmers to be meaningful at the end of the supply chain," Kate said.

"The dairy sector has moved forward because the market demands a quality product that's traceable, safe and farmed with care and that's what British farmers produce.

"More than 95% of British milk is Red Tractor assured so we have a huge role to play in ensuring production meets the expectations of our customers and that is a big part of my job."

GOOD NEEDLE PRACTICE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Suspected broken needles in livestock are rare, however, imagine the food safety risk and subsequent harm to the industry's reputation if a broken needle ended up in a meat product.

As a producer, it is very important to take steps to prevent needles from breaking, and to know what to do if a broken needle is suspected.

As part of Red Tractor's standards farmers must have a broken needle policy; an example of a broken needle policy can be found on the template area of Red Tractor's website.

Good needle practice is a crucial tool for farmers in maximising the value of their product after slaughter.

Incorrect injections can lead to the formation of lesions, which subsequently means farmers are financially worse off as the lesion and surrounding tissue must be trimmed out by the abattoir before being weighed.

Injections should be carried out in the neck of the animal, where the lower value cuts are located, as well as in a dry and clean area.

