



PIG TECHNICAL BRIEFING

News, updates and advice from your Red Tractor assurance team

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RED TRACTOR PIG CHAIR'S UPDATE

FROM STEWART HOUSTON

It's been five months since our revised standards came into effect.

The revisions were aimed at helping members adapt to changes in legislation and meet evolving supply chain demands, whilst balancing the needs of our customers.

Some key changes to our standards are around producer training and development. I know that the pig sector is facing a really tough time, and, of course, I know there are many experienced and competent members of staff working with pigs. However, with ever-increasing interest and scrutiny of how food is produced, it is important to stay up to date with best practice

and to have a professional approach towards training and development. It is also essential to protect the reputation of individual farms, as well as the entire sector. Thank you to the many producers who have taken up the training so enthusiastically in the first few months and for the valuable feedback you have provided.

As a Red Tractor farm member, I know that you are committed to producing food in a way that cares for the animals and meets the high standards that are expected from consumers. Over the past few months, we have been asked to clarify how some of the new standards apply in practice in certain situations. We have therefore created some additional advice and support to help members on the **Red Tractor Assurance website**, including answers to several **frequently asked questions**. There is also some guidance on how to avoid the most regular non-conformances.

We will be providing similar updates to support members in the coming weeks, so please continue to feedback to memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk if you have any questions.



RESPONSIBLE USE OF MEDICINE TRAINING

A new standard requires at least one person who is responsible for overseeing the use of medicines on the unit to have undertaken training since January 2018.

- A person on the unit that oversees medicine use needs to undertake a course (online or in-person) from our approved list of training providers – which can be found [here](#). Evidence of completion of the course, not just the date the course is booked, must be submitted as corrective evidence for a non-conformance against this requirement to be closed out by your Certification Body.
- Courses undertaken between 1st Jan 2018 and 31st Oct 2021 do not need to be from our approved list. If the course covered the use of veterinary medicines, it is acceptable, including courses focused on other livestock species. This includes the Safe Use of Vet Medicines module offered as part of the AHDB Stockperson Development Scheme. You will need to show a certificate of course attendance or completion to the assessor.

MEASURES TO MINIMISE RISK OF TAIL BITING

There are many reasons why tail biting can occur in any group of pigs. It can spread quickly in pig pens once it has started and can lead to painful tail injuries, infection, spinal abscesses, and lameness. However, there are known and identifiable risk factors associated with outbreaks and our standards seek to ensure members understand why the problem is occurring, minimise the risks and take action to avoid the need for tail docking.

All audit points in the new key standard (HP.3.1) will be assessed. The main requirements are:

1 Farm-specific **risk assessment** for tail biting risk factors - **ALL** farms, including outdoor units, must do this, even if you have no history of tail biting and even if you receive pigs already docked or rear pigs with full tails.

2 An **action plan*** outlining measures taken to minimise the risk of tail biting and the need for docking. This is required for farms that are rearing docked pigs (regardless of whether you dock the pigs yourselves or receive them docked). During the audit assessors will be looking to verify whether the

actions are implemented in line with the timelines detailed in the plan.

It is important to note that this action plan is **different from** what is required in the vice action plan within the Veterinary Health Plan.

Vice action plan (AH.1)

Actions to be taken when a tail biting outbreak occurs

For example remove bitten pigs, remove biter, add more enrichment, monitor pigs, spray affected tails

*Tail docking action plan (HP.3.1)

Actions (may be short or long term) the farm is taking to try to move away from docking

For example, trialing lower stocking densities, replenishing enrichment more frequently, rotating forms of enrichment, getting a ventilation expert in, trialing a longer dock

Continued...

MEASURES TO MINIMISE RISK OF TAIL BITING *Continued...*

The **AHDB WebHAT tool** can be used to generate both a risk assessment and an action plan for HP.3.1. Red Tractor also has a tail docking action plan **template** on the assurance website **here**.

With several months of data now available almost all the regular non-conformances members are receiving are related to either a new or revised standard. As such, reviewing the changes and becoming more familiar with them means that you can make effective changes on your farm and minimise the risk of not meeting the standards.



We have lots of information and handy guides to help you get ready for your next assessment and understand what you need to do and why?

Visit the V5 support hub



ARE YOU ON FACEBOOK?



The Red Tractor farmers Facebook group helps members succeed, answering their questions and bringing them the latest news and updates from the team. Remember to include your farm address when joining. **Join the group**



TOP TIPS

Our assurance website has lots of useful information and advice to help you get ready for your next farm assessment and avoid non-conformances. **Find out more**



DON'T FORGET

The Red Tractor portal is your free, secure online filing cabinet, allowing you to upload documents and save time ahead of your next assessment. **Find out more**



FAQS

If you've got a query about revisions to Red Tractor's standards, which took effect in November, check out our handy FAQs page for answers or get in touch. **View FAQs**



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