

JULY 2021



BEEF AND LAMB TECHNICAL BRIEFING FROM YOUR RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE TEAM



CHAIR'S VIEW:

ALISTAIR MACKINTOSH | BEEF AND LAMB BOARD



As farmers, we all recognise the importance of standards and the role they play in underpinning the industry's credibility.

Red Tractor has proudly led the way in ensuring British beef and lamb is produced to extremely high standards, and has a reputation for being a world leader in animal health, welfare and responsible use of medicines.

Earlier this year we held the biggest consultation in Red Tractor's history to ensure the next evolution of the standards – which will be brought in from 1 November 2021 – to help



safeguard the future of our members' farms.

This was a consultation in its truest sense, and this briefing highlights some of the key changes we want farmers to be aware of, so they can prepare for their implementation. Please read this briefing and other documents, because a number of proposals that were put out for review in January have been re-shaped or removed completely.

Red Tractor's Technical Advisory Committee and Sector Board, which are made up of a broad cross section of the supply chain – from farmers to retailers – has reviewed the feedback and reached a consensus.

Some of the key changes in our sector include bringing an end to tethered housing systems, and wider use of analgesic and anaesthetic when carrying out husbandry procedures.

The new standards will also help farms demonstrate that they use antibiotics responsibly, and remain aligned to the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use, adding further tangible benefits to your membership.

I believe that these standards will not only be beneficial to your business, but will help protect the beef and lamb sector's future.

GETTING READY FOR 1 NOVEMBER 2021

Red Tractor's chief executive Jim Moseley said: "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.

"We'll be sharing the manuals and creating helpful guides. Please keep an eye on your post, emails and our website for updates."

www.redtractorassurance.org.uk

IN BRIEF: WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY?

The new Red Tractor Beef and Lamb standards will be audited on farm from 1 November 2021. In the next few weeks, we will send every member a manual detailing the new standards in full and we are producing helpful guides on what has changed and why. Below, we have detailed the key changes which have been agreed following the consultation process.

TETHERED HOUSING

Tethering restricts normal animal behaviour such as self-grooming and exercise. Following recommendations from the Farm Animal Welfare Council and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), tethering housing systems, for stock of any age, will not be permitted on Red Tractor Farms. In the short term, derogations will be offered, and visits will be made to the small number of members still tethering their cattle while we gather information to help us understand how many farmers this new position affects, why they are using the practice and if it is possible for systems to be changed. You must apply directly to Red Tractor for a derogation before 1 November 2021.

USING ANALGESIC DURING HUSBANDRY PROCEDURES

Reducing any pain caused by routine animal husbandry procedures is crucial. We recognise that in the interest of animal welfare, human health and safety, and farm business viability it would not be possible to replace or reduce the need for some routine husbandry procedures on livestock. Therefore we are advocating the use of analgesia to manage the pain associated with these procedures.

ERADICATING BVD

Assessors will ask how you are taking action to eradicate bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) in your herd. This must be documented in your health

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STUART ROBERTS, NFU DEPUTY PRESIDENT

plan and implemented. For example, you may be part of a national scheme or carrying out regular testing. This new recommendation will become a full standard from October 2022.

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

The recommendation that at least one person on farm has undertaken recent (after October 2016) medicine training is now a full standard. This will raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance and drive medicine use best practice. In addition, we are asking that you undertake an annual collation of the antibiotics used on your farm. Your medicine records or prescription data can be used as the basis for the collation, and as part of the annual review your vet will advise how your farm can use antibiotics as responsibly as possible without compromising welfare.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

New staff should receive an induction (you will need to keep a record of this) which includes an explanation of your health and safety policies and management reporting lines. 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.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Slight revisions to our standards will ensure that any spillages of agrochemicals are contained appropriately and that nitrogenous



fertilisers are stored in a way that minimises the risk of theft. Red Tractor farmers will be required to have a documented, up-to-date calculation of their slurry storage requirements.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH VETS

A closer working relationship between vets and farmers will provide effective oversight, flexibility and accountability to help preserve the reputation of the industry. Your nominated vet should visit the farm at least once a year.

The annual health and performance review documents key issues and outline any actions to be taken to reduce or control their prevalence. As such, the health plan now needs to be signed, dated and reviewed annually by your vet.

LIVESTOCK HANDLING

Stress and poor handling affect the welfare of stock and staff and impair carcass quality of the meat. We have added a new appendix which explicitly sets out Red Tractor's expectations as to what is and is not acceptable livestock handling.