

JULY 2021



CROPS AND SUGAR BEET

TECHNICAL BRIEFING

FROM YOUR RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE TEAM



CHAIR'S VIEW: GUY SMITH : CROPS BOARD CHAIR



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

Red Tractor has proudly led the way in ensuring British crops are produced to extremely high standards.

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

After listening to our members, some proposals have been dropped, but others have been included. For instance, showing Health and Safety policies are in place will now be part of your farm assessment – given recent farm fatality figures it was agreed that this was the right action to take.

A tweak to a standard on vermin control was necessary, in order to comply with food safety law. Poison can no longer be used inside grain stores, but the standards' continued recognition of responsible use means members can still buy professional rodenticides.

We are adopting a pragmatic approach to crop storage, removing the requirement for a five-week period between cleaning a livestock building and using it to store grain.

As we told you in the last technical briefing, government rules on Renewable Energy Directive (RED) eligibility have become more exacting, meaning that from 1 July 2021 farmers must show figures on crop volumes going in and out of stores. This will allow assured crops to continue to be sold into the biofuels market.

This briefing highlights all the key

changes we need our members to be aware of. Please read it so that you can prepare for their introduction later this year.

With ever-increasing interest and scrutiny of how food is produced, compliance with these standards not only serves to protect the reputation of your own farm, but the entire sector in which you play a vital part.

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 Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet standards will be audited on farm from 1 November 2021. In the next few weeks, we will send every member a full 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.



STAFF

All farms with workers must 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.

This will ensure that all Red Tractor farms have a simple, clearly defined approach to managing Health and Safety and that this can be independently verified. Given high fatality figures in the industry Red Tractor believes it is essential to check policies are fit for purpose and implemented correctly.

VERMIN CONTROL

This section has been simplified to focus on the effective control of vermin.

Many of the requirements of these standards align with the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use Code of Practice which aims to minimise the exposure of wildlife to toxic rodenticides.

This means that Red Tractor members can continue to buy rodenticide that they would otherwise be prohibited from purchasing.

ENVIRONMENT

From 1 November any biosolids you use must be assured under the Biosolid Assurance Scheme (BAS). BAS assures the majority of biosolids used in the industry and the scheme covers all aspects of treatment, processing and application.

CROP STORAGE

We are placing more emphasis on the AHDB Grain Storage Guide which is widely recognised as being the best practice industry guide.

We are removing the requirement to leave livestock buildings for five weeks between cleaning them and using them to store grain. This long-time standard was put in place originally to prevent any cross-contamination from cleaning products but as the use of food grade cleaning products was introduced several years ago the risk of taint is no longer a concern.

We have also introduced additional detail on the prevention of stored grain being contaminated with treated seed. Secure segregation of grain from treated seed can be achieved by a rigid physical barrier or a distance of at least three metres.

“IT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR BRITISH AGRICULTURE TO BE IN TUNE WITH THE PUBLIC. THESE ARE THE RIGHT STANDARDS TO PROGRESS OUR INDUSTRY, BALANCING THE NEEDS OF FARMERS WITH THE EVOLVING DEMANDS OF SHOPPERS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN.”

STUART ROBERTS
NFU DEPUTY PRESIDENT

TRANSPORT

Traceability is one of Red Tractor's core values with every step of the food journey checked and documented from farm to pack. For simplicity, grain trailer ID needs to be clearly identifiable and on at least the rear and one side of the trailer rather than all three sides. Trailer ID is only necessary when transporting your grain into a third-party intake.

RISK ASSESSMENT

This is a new section, but it encompasses current requirements. We hope that putting them in one place will make completing your risk assessment easier.