

JULY 2021



# DAIRY

TECHNICAL BRIEFING  
FROM YOUR RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE TEAM



## CHAIR'S VIEW: ANGELA RHODES ; DAIRY BOARD



We all know that standards play an essential role in underpinning and maintaining our industry's credibility.

Red Tractor has proudly led the way in ensuring British dairy producers maintain extremely high standards and that they're recognised for their world-leading focus on animal health, welfare and responsible use of medicines.

Earlier this year we held the biggest consultation in Red Tractor's history.

This briefing details the key changes dairy farmers need to be aware of before they are implemented on 1 November 2021.

A number of proposals published in January have been re-shaped or removed completely, so reading this document is key.

Red Tractor's Technical Advisory Committee and Sector Board, which is made up of a broad cross section

**"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**

of the supply chain – from farmers to retailers – reviewed all 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. We have also integrated the wider dairy industry's commitment to eliminating the routine euthanasia of calves by 2023.

The new standards will also help farms demonstrate that they use antibiotics responsibly.

I believe that these standards will be beneficial to your business while helping to safeguard the future of the dairy industry.

## 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](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk)

## IN BRIEF: WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY?

The new standards will be audited from 1 November. 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.

### AN END TO TETHERED HOUSING SYSTEMS

Tethering restricts normal animal behaviour such as self-grooming and exercise. Following recommendations from the Farm Animal Welfare Council and European Food Safety Authority, 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 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.

### ENDING CALF EUTHANASIA

In summer 2020 Red Tractor consulted on proposed standards to ensure the industry delivers on a commitment to rear all calves with care and eliminate the routine euthanasia of calves by 2023. Now, a new standard is being introduced focused on a written breeding and management policy.



### USING ANALGESIC DURING HUSBANDRY PROCEDURES ON CALVES

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 may not be possible to replace or reduce the need for some routine husbandry procedures on calves. Therefore we are advocating the use of analgesia to manage the pain associated with these procedures.

### MILK PRODUCTION

Facilities must be available for anyone milking or handling raw milk and colostrum needs to wash their hands and arms.

This requirement is integral to the continuation of Red Tractor's earned recognition status with the Food Standards Agency.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

New staff should receive an induction (this should be documented) 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

A minor revision ensures any agrochemical spillages are contained appropriately and that the risk of nitrogenous fertiliser theft is minimised. Requirements for organic manure now cover temporary field heaps, effluent from manure heaps and capacity of slurry storage.

Members will also 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 should now document key issues and outline any actions to be taken to reduce or control their prevalence. Additionally, the health plan needs to be signed, dated and reviewed annually by your vet.

### LIVESTOCK MOVEMENTS

Electrified backing gates can no longer be used on Red Tractor dairy farms. A full appendix of what is and is not acceptable livestock handling can be found in the standards manual.