

JULY 2021



# FRESH PRODUCE

## TECHNICAL BRIEFING

FROM YOUR RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE TEAM



### CHAIR'S VIEW:

LUCY MACLENNAN : FRESH PRODUCE BOARD



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 fresh produce is grown to extremely high standards, securing its future as a world-leader in food safety and responsible pesticide use.

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

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

We are pleased to have reached agreement when it comes to advancing our sector in important areas such as new standards to improve post-harvest washing, better crop waste management and a streamlining of expectations on plant protection product usage.

This technical briefing highlights some of the key changes we need to make members aware of, so they can prepare for their implementation. Please note that a number of proposals that were put out for review in January have been re-shaped or removed from the final standards.

The new standards will give Red Tractor members peace of mind that their business meets key requirements to supply the food chain, without the need for additional checks and costs. For instance, your membership enables you to obtain GLOBALG.A.P.

certification without the need for additional assessments, granting you access to international markets.

I believe that these standards will be beneficial to your business, while helping to protect the fresh produce 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](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk)



# IN BRIEF: WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY?

The new Red Tractor Fresh Produce 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.

## ENVIRONMENT

Your list of stored plant protection products (PPPs) must now be updated at least monthly.

If you apply granular nematicides, we have updated our standards to reflect changes in the stewardship requirements, including full roll-out of the free-to-access e-learning for staff carrying out applications.

Anyone making recommendations on PPP use must now be on the BASIS register. You are now required to keep records when you introduce biological controls.

We have allowed some extra flexibility for grazing of sheep prior to growing of Category 2 crops. While food safety remains paramount, this will enable more flexibility for mixed rotations.

The management of crop waste is a key element of managing disease risk and was formerly covered in the Crop Protocols. This has now been incorporated into the core standards.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

Your risk assessment must be reviewed at least annually and, for all crops that may be consumed raw, that review process must be recorded. Some of the most significant risks for growers

are associated with historical or adjacent land use. We are providing greater clarity as to what should be included in this risk assessment, including preventative actions and frequent reviews.

## DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

A new standard requires farms to maintain a tidy appearance for the public. External areas should be kept clear, while scrap machinery, metal, disused tyres and rubbish must be well managed.

## STAFF

The agreement between labour provider and farm is now defined as a service level agreement and will cover additional requirements based on best practice guidance to ensure clear allocation of responsibilities between provider and farm. Farms must have at least one trained first aider.

## VERMIN CONTROL

If pest control is managed in-house, the responsible person must have received certified training.

Our recommendation that precautionary measures are taken to discourage pests and vermin in crops and cropping areas has been upgraded to a full standard.

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

We are setting a baseline of annual testing of pesticide residue for each crop, regardless of whether testing is

**“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**

by you or by your customer. We have also integrated some content formerly addressed within Crop Protocols into the new version of the Fresh Produce standards. Maximum nitrate levels to protect consumers apply for certain crops and a new testing requirement will verify that growers are working within legal limits.

## HARVESTING

We have strengthened the review of return-to-work questionnaires for workers returning after ill-health absence to manage contamination risks.

You will already be paying close attention to tools and knives – we're extending start-up checks to cover personnel and other equipment which may affect food safety.

## STORAGE

We have updated and strengthened our expectations for management of PPPs used as storage treatments to ensure robust controls.

## PROTECTED CROPPING

There has been a lot of investment in high-tech glasshouses and emerging production systems. We have introduced new standards which address the emerging risks and incorporate good practices. Workers must be trained against the staff hygiene policy and cleaning programmes are needed where there is a product contamination risk, with record keeping for the highest risk crops.