

# DAIRY, BEEF AND LAMB

## VET BRIEFING

VERSION 5 - 1 NOVEMBER 2021



### OVERVIEW

Red Tractor has completed a review of the Farm Standards and a few changes will come into force on 1 November 2021. They have been reviewed and approved by our Technical Advisory Committee, which is made up of farmer representatives, vets, leading industry experts and supply chain stakeholders, and our Sector Board. Many of the changes will members you meet the evolving supply chain demands, legislation, consumer expectations and best practice. You will find the changes summarised here to explain what has changed and why.

### The Red Tractor Team

### REMINDER

Vets play an important role in upholding the Red Tractor scheme, and the wider industry's reputation. If you encounter any issues around compliance with our standards or the law, the most effective way to raise a concern is with a member of the Red Tractor Team directly using the details below.

If you wish to report a concern anonymously, please use our independent confidential **TELL US** web reporting service by visiting [safecall.co.uk/RT](https://safecall.co.uk/RT).



[REDTRACTORASSURANCE.ORG.UK](https://redtractorassurance.org.uk)

[MEMBERHELP@REDTRACTOR.ORG.UK](mailto:MEMBERHELP@REDTRACTOR.ORG.UK)

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## DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES



**Red Tractor Dairy scheme standards already cover the care of youngstock on the farm regardless of gender. As part of the GB Dairy Calf Strategy, Red Tractor Dairy consulted in summer 2020 on proposed standards to ensure the industry delivers on this commitment to rear all calves with care and to eliminate the routine euthanasia of calves by 2023.**

DP.5

Following this consultation, a new standard will be introduced focusing on a written breeding and management policy. It provides clear audit points that the member will need to demonstrate compliance with.

## HOUSING



HF.6.1

Tethering restricts normal animal behaviour, such as self-grooming and exercise. Following recommendations from the Farm Animal Welfare Council and EFSA, we start to phase out tethering housing systems on our farms. In the short-term, we will offer derogations to the small number of members who tether their cattle. We want to find out how many farmers will be affected, why this practice is used and whether systems can be changed. Tethering or restraining cattle for any other purpose will still be permitted, including for showing, milking and veterinary procedures. Tethering at shows is allowed because this is temporary, and cattle are under the care of a duty vet for the duration.

## HEALTH AND WELFARE



**Animal health and welfare is a core principle of Red Tractor. Efficient and meaningful health planning is built on generic management techniques to deliver continuous improvement through a proactive management system. An effective way to health plan is by good planning and setting targets then by monitoring and reviewing at the end of the cycle based on the results recorded throughout the year.**

**The revisions include a change in terminology throughout the health and welfare section to nominated vet or vet from the nominated vet practice.**

**The fragmented nature of the industry makes it difficult for vets to have a clear picture of what medicines have been used on the farm.**

**A closer working relationship between vets and farmers will provide effective oversight, flexibility and accountability which helps to preserve the reputation of the industry.**

AH.1 /  
AH.1.1

We've reworded and re-ordered the standard and How You Will Be Measured. This now better reflects the fact that the health plan and health and performance (H&P) review are closely linked. The vet must sign, date and review the health plan every year. In addition, the vet's annual H&P review should now document key issues and what actions to take to reduce or control them.

AH.1.2

Disease control is vital to livestock health. Assessors will now ask what action you are taking to eradicate BVD in your herd. This must be documented in the health plan and implemented. For example, you may be in a national scheme or doing regular testing. This recommendation will become a full standard in October 2022.

AH.2

As part of our commitment to rear all calves with care and eliminate the euthanasia of calves by 2023, annual collation of calf births/deaths must now be maintained. Trends need to be observed and actions arising noted in your health plan.

AH.3

This revision, ensuring that a member's vet visits the farm at least once a year to see the livestock, makes it clearer that the vet has professional oversight of the farm.

AH.6

The way members move and handle livestock is crucial for both welfare and the industry's reputation. Stress and poor handling do not just affect the welfare of the stock and staff; they also reduce returns by impairing carcass quality of the meat. Motorised backing gates are common in collecting yards outside milking parlour entrances and some are designed to administer an electric shock if an animal touches them. However, there are concerns about their use as they are not in the direct control of someone who can use discretion. For this reason, electrified backing gates can no longer be used on a Red Tractor dairy farm. We have also added a new appendix which explicitly sets out Red Tractor's expectations as to what is and is not acceptable livestock handling.

## ANIMAL HUSBANDRY



**Supported by scientific research, it is well documented cattle do feel pain, therefore reducing any pain caused by routine animal husbandry procedures is a crucial aspect of maintaining farm animal welfare.**

HP.1.1

With specific reference to calves, the rationale behind using analgesia has been well documented and has been recommended by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) and the British Veterinary Cattle Association (BVCA). We recognise that in the interest of animal welfare, human health and safety, and farm business viability that it will not be possible to replace, or reduce, the need for some routine husbandry procedures on calves. However, animal welfare is a core principle of Red Tractor and we require the use of analgesia to manage the pain associated with these husbandry procedures. In recognition of the differences in handling practices and breeds, this is a full standard for dairy and a recommendation in beef animals.

**Human antibiotic resistance is a real problem so the agriculture industry must show that medicines are used responsibly.**

AM.3.1

We know education is key. That's why we now require that at least one person has done recent (after October 2016) medicine training. This will increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of antimicrobial resistance and encourage consistent best practice across UK farms. It also supports Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance and Targets Task Force policy and helps deliver the UK's five-year antimicrobial resistance strategy.

AM.8

Members must provide an annual collation of total antibiotics used on their farm. Their vet will use these records to advise them on how to use antibiotics responsibly without compromising welfare.