



PIGS STANDARDS

WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY

VERSION 5

WHAT'S CHANGED?

We've reviewed our farm standards and these changes will apply from 1 November 2021.

These updates have been approved by our Technical Advisory Committee of farmers and industry experts, and Sector Board, following a public consultation. They will help you meet evolving supply chain demands and new legal requirements.

Find out about the main changes and why we made them in the summary below.

The checklist at the end of this document covers all changes and everything the member needs to do differently from November.

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STAFF

Your business must have competent people who can do farm tasks properly. We want to help you equip your staff with the skills and knowledge they need.

PL.1.1

Anyone who cares for pigs must now complete online pig welfare training, which focuses initially on moving and handling of pigs. We want everyone to know what is and isn't acceptable as farm practices evolve with consumer expectations. Ensuring pigs are always treated compassionately is vital for pig welfare and will protect the industry's reputation.

PL.5

Health and Safety is a key issue. The new standard requires all farms to have a written Health and Safety policy. All Red Tractor farms should have a simple, clear approach to managing Health and Safety which can be independently verified. Given farm fatality figures, this is an important area of focus.

TRACEABILITY AND ASSURANCE STATUS

Traceability is key to food safety and supports our chain of assurance. Before, if you wanted to source non-assured stock/semen you had to get permission from your certification body every year.

TI.5

Now, you must ask Red Tractor directly, before all consignments of non-assured breeding stock or semen. This will give us full oversight. Semen and breeding stock suppliers must tell their customers if they lose their Red Tractor certificate. This will ensure assured pig units are aware and can make other arrangements.

TI.5.1

Farms can have their Red Tractor certificate suspended or withdrawn at any time. It is our recommendation you use our checker to confirm the assurance status of source farms first. This will ensure you don't risk your own assurance by bringing non-assured pigs onto your unit.

HOUSING, SHELTER AND HANDLING FACILITIES

Pigs need safe, comfortable, hygienic accommodation and facilities. This is vital for pig welfare, optimum performance and food safety – and the reputation of the UK pig sector. There are several revised and/or new standards in this area, including protecting your pigs from extreme weather.

HF.2.1

You now need to have a documented extreme weather contingency plan. This will detail the measures to be taken in unusually hot/cold weather, snow, severe wet weather and ventilation failure.

HF.4

We know pigs will sometimes lie in the dunging area, for example, in hot weather. However, if this behaviour continues it suggests the pigs' environmental needs are not being met. The standards are now clear that pigs must have access to a dry lying area and steps must be taken to ensure pigs can keep clean.

HF.5

We have strengthened our lighting standards to reflect legal requirements and industry best practice. At least eight hours of continuous light and six hours of continuous dark is now required. Pigs must be able to access an area lit to at least 40 lux.

HF.6.3
/6.4

We have also incorporated other existing legal requirements as new standards. This includes the need for pigs to always have sight of other pigs and space provision when using self-locking individual feeding stalls.

HF.9.3

There is growing pressure on the industry to move away from farrowing crates. Temporary crating allows sows to be confined during the risky period – the first few days after farrowing. It is now our recommendation that if a temporary crating system is used it is opened as soon as practicable after farrowing. This will allow the sow to turn around freely.

HF.9.4

If sows spend too long in a farrowing crate, it can affect their welfare. That's why we've set a new standard of five weeks as the maximum time sows can remain in crates after farrowing. If the sow is suckling additional piglets as a nurse sow, this may however be extended to eight weeks, depending on her condition.

HF.9.5

Sows must be provided with material to enable natural nest-building behaviour. This is vital for sow welfare and for improving farrowing and lactation. You must provide all sows with nest-building material, like natural rope, hessian, or straw, in at least the 24-hour period up to farrowing. This applies regardless of flooring type.

HF.9.6

We have now created a specific standard to cover indoor free farrowing, in line with government guidance on key features. Indoor loose farrowing pens must have enough space for the sow to turn around and lie down. In addition, they must have rails or other means to protect piglets from crushing.

FEED AND WATER

Pigs must have access to clean drinking water. This will limit the spread of pathogens to pigs and protect food safety and pig health. Reducing the incidence of disease will in turn lessen the need for medication including antibiotics.

FW.3.2

If your private water supplies show bacterial contamination above the threshold when tested, you must now investigate and act.

FW.12

Contamination of feed by birds, rodents and other wildlife can also spread disease. You must now take steps to minimise the contamination of feed stored in hoppers by birds.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Compassionate care of pigs is vital for their welfare and ensures a quality product.

AH.2

You already keep health and performance records. Now you must also record incidents of tail biting, as well as overall mortality figures.

AH. 6

Ensuring pigs are handled in a way which avoids injury and stress is a priority for Red Tractor and the sector. Our revised standard and new appendix detail what is and is not acceptable to us when it comes to pig handling.

AH.8 / AH.8.1

We've made clear requirements on using passageways as isolation facilities for sick or injured pigs. Pig euthanasia is a hard subject for consumers. Our standards centre on ensuring, when required, this is done promptly and humanely so that pigs do not suffer.

AH.9 / AH.9.1

Initial euthanasia training must now be carried out by a vet or via a Humane Slaughter Association course. Additionally, stockperson competency in euthanasia must be assessed every two years, rather than every three, and by a vet. The farm's euthanasia policy must now also include contingency procedures and be signed by your vet, to confirm these are appropriate.

AH.9.3

When using a mechanical device for piglet euthanasia, our standards now align with the Humane Slaughter Association's guidance so it is effective and humane.

AH. 9.4/9.5

Euthanasia must happen away from potential onlookers if possible. You must check that your actions have been effective so that you can repeat swiftly if necessary. This will minimise the animal's distress.

AH.12

Enrichment satisfies a pig's desire to root, manipulate and explore its surroundings. All pigs must always have access to enrichment, including sows in farrowing crates. Our new enrichment standard is stronger in line with Defra's Code of Practice. This requires specific combinations of enrichment materials and objects to ensure pigs' needs are met.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Ensuring husbandry procedures are carried out competently is important for pig welfare.

HP.1

We must ensure that where husbandry procedures are carried out, they are done so appropriately and as such only those listed in the Veterinary Health Plan may be undertaken.

HP.2

Red Tractor's position on the use of immunocastration products has been incorporated into the standards. This is allowed with written permission from your processor customer(s). Surgical castration remains prohibited.

HP.3

You must provide evidence to show why docking is needed, supported by a detailed quarterly veterinary review.

HP.3.I

All units must take measures to minimise the risk of tail biting and avoid the need for docking. This includes an annual risk assessment on all units and an action plan on farms rearing docked pigs.

HP.5

Nose ringing must now be done by someone deemed competent by your vet.

HP.5.I

Only one septum ring is allowed.

BIOSECURITY AND DISEASE CONTROL

Biosecurity measures help prevent disease from spreading and protect food safety and animal health. You will already have clearly defined biosecure areas to manage the flow of people and vehicles to minimise these risks.

BI.3

We now require that you define an overall site biosecure area and use visible markers at vehicle entry points into biosecure areas.

BI.4.I

Fallen stock vehicles go from farm to farm and can transmit disease. These vehicles are no longer allowed to enter the farm's overall site biosecure area.

BI.11

If there is an outbreak of disease on farm, it is helpful if nearby farms are made aware. That way they can tighten their biosecurity and reduce the risk of disease spreading to their farm. Members must now sign up to the Significant Diseases Charter and report disease outbreaks.

MEDICINES

In recent years, the pig industry has made huge progress in reducing antibiotic use and ensuring they are used responsibly.

AM.3.1

Having a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding is key to the success of any strategy to better manage medicine use, and demonstrates a professional approach to the wider supply chain. We've added a new requirement that someone has been trained in the responsible use of medicines.

AM.4

Medicines must also be stored in a fridge separate from food and drink items. The fridge temperature must be checked and recorded every week.

AM.8.1

Your vet already reviews the antibiotic use on your unit each year. Now we also want the vet to recommend alternative disease control measures, where possible, to minimise the prophylactic use of antibiotics.

AM.8.2

Farms using high levels of antibiotics over the long-term must develop and implement an action plan with their vet to reduce use.

AM.11

There must also be a broken needle policy detailing how to deal with broken needles being left in animals.

FALLEN STOCK

Fallen stock must not pose a risk of environmental contamination and the spread of disease. You should consider the reputational risk of your farm, Red Tractor and the wider pig industry too.

FS.2

You must use containers for fallen stock (except where it is not possible to for adult breeding stock). These must be locked unless empty.

FS.2.1

Our recommendation is that fallen stock are marked with indelible dye when placed into storage.

ENVIRONMENT

Pollutants pose a serious risk to the environment. We know that you already store agrochemicals as safely as possible.

EC.I

Our standard now requires that liquid feed spillages can be contained appropriately.

EC.I.I

Organic manure must be stored properly. We've strengthened our existing requirements to cover temporary field heaps, effluent from manure heaps and capacity of slurry storage. You must now have a documented up-to-date calculation of your slurry storage requirements.

EC.I2

Farms must also consider opportunities to reuse, recycle and reduce waste.

OUTDOOR PIGS

Wild animals can spread diseases to pigs including trichinella and TB.

OP.10

We now require you to document and implement a wild animal control plan of measures to minimise this contact. This aligns with the Defra Code and will help meet statutory requirements around trichinella testing.

OP.11

Where outdoor pigs are held in a collection area before transport they must have access to water. Again, this is in line with the Defra Code.

CHECKLIST

This checklist is your simple guide to what you need to do differently. It only covers the changes within each standard and it does not include those standards that have been revised for clarity. You should refer to the full standard to ensure you comply fully.

Record templates will be available before 1 November on:
www.redtractorassurance.org.uk

DP.2	Does your Contingency Plan include steps to be taken in the event of all the listed scenarios?	Yes	No	
PL.1.1	Has everyone caring for pigs on your unit carried out the specified online welfare training?	Yes	No	
PL.3	Do you have a way of providing evidence to your assessor that annual performance reviews are documented and gaps in competence are recorded?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.4	Do you have evidence of your labour providers GLAA licence and does the Service Level Agreement detail the required information?	Yes	No	N/A
PL.5	Do you have a Health and Safety policy in place? Can you demonstrate that you have effectively communicated it to your workers?	Yes	No	N/A
TI.5	Are you aware that before sourcing or importing non-assured breeding stock/semen you must seek permission in advance from Red Tractor?	Yes	No	N/A
TI.5	If you are a breeding stock or semen supplier, are you aware you need to include the RT number of the source farm on delivery information and must notify your customers if your certificate is withdrawn or suspended?	Yes	No	N/A
VC.1	Are you undertaking site surveys for vermin activity on at least a quarterly basis?	Yes	No	
HF.2.1	Do you have a documented Extreme Weather Contingency Plan?	Yes	No	
HF.2.3	Are you keeping a record of weekly ventilation alarm system checks?	Yes	No	N/A
HF.3	Is the flooring designed and maintained in such a way that pigs do not slip?	Yes	No	N/A
HF.4	Do all pigs have access to a dry lying area? And if pigs are lying persistently dirty, can you demonstrate what corrective and preventative measures you are taking?	Yes	No	N/A
HF.5	Do pigs have access to an area lit to 40 lux? Are you providing light for eight hours continuously and a minimum period of continuous darkness of six hours?	Yes	No	N/A
HF.6.3	If you are using self-locking individual feeding stalls, is there a separate place where the pigs can lie together as a group?	Yes	No	N/A
HF.6.4	Are all pigs able to see other pigs (except when isolated or in farrowing pens)?	Yes	No	

HF.9.4	Are you aware that after farrowing sows can only stay in a farrowing crate for a maximum of five weeks? (Extends to eight weeks for nurse sows if certain conditions are met)	Yes	No	N/A
HF.9.5	Are you always providing nest-building material in the 24 hours before farrowing? Is it where the sow can access it?	Yes	No	N/A
FW.1	Can you demonstrate that any sows of very poor body condition have been identified and are being managed?	Yes	No	N/A
FW.3.2	Is the bacteria count of your private water supply below the required threshold? If not, have you taken action to investigate?	Yes	No	N/A
FW.12	Have you put measures in place to minimise contamination of feed in hoppers by birds?	Yes	No	N/A
AH.1	Does your vice action plan in the VHP detail the required information?	Yes	No	
AH.2	Are you recording all tail biting incidents and possible causes, incidents of facial scarring/udder damage, and overall mortality figures?	Yes	No	N/A
AH.3	Can you demonstrate that health and performance records are reviewed at least quarterly?	Yes	No	
AH.5.1	Have you got your most recent four Quarterly Veterinary Reports available for the assessor to see?	Yes	No	
AH.6	Have you read and understood Red Tractor's appendix defining unacceptable behaviour with regards to livestock handling?	Yes	No	
AH.7	Is the designated person who has oversight of welfare on the unit named in the VHP? Are they aware of what they are responsible for overseeing?	Yes	No	
AH.8.1	Are un-adapted passageways only used for short-term isolation (max one hour)?	Yes	No	N/A
AH.9	Are you aware euthanasia training for new starters must be delivered by a vet or HSA course, with both theory and practical elements, covering the specific learning outcomes? Have you arranged for all to be reassessed by the vet in the past two years?	Yes	No	N/A
AH.9.1	Does your Euthanasia Policy include contingency plans? Has it been signed by the vet?	Yes	No	
AH.9.2	Has everyone signed the latest copy of PVS Casualty Pig document to confirm their understanding?	Yes	No	
AH.9.3	Does the mechanical device used for piglet euthanasia deliver 27.7 joules or above?	Yes	No	N/A
AH.9.4	Is euthanasia carried out away from onlookers in a compassionate manner?	Yes	No	N/A
AH.9.5	Are all those who conduct euthanasia carrying out immediate checks to ensure the method was effective?	Yes	No	N/A
AH.10.1	Is it only your designated vet (or nominated vet from the same practice) who carries out quarterly veterinary visits? Are you ensuring those visits are never more than 20 weeks apart?	Yes	No	

AH.12	Are you providing the right combinations of enrichment? Do all pigs have access to enrichment, including sows in farrowing crates? Are root vegetables used for enrichment sourced from an assured farm?	Yes	No	
HP.1	Are all the husbandry procedures carried out on the farm listed in the VHP? Do you have a record of who performs specific procedures?	Yes	No	N/A
HP.2	Do you have written permission from your processor(s) to use immunocastration products?	Yes	No	N/A
HP.3	If your vet has given quarterly approval to tail dock, is this supported by a written review detailing the required information?	Yes	No	N/A
HP.3.1	Have you carried out and documented a risk assessment for tail biting (even if you are not docking)? Are you implementing a documented action plan to minimise the need for tail docking?	Yes	No	N/A
HP.3.2 / HP.4.1	Are you cleaning and disinfecting tail docking and teeth reduction equipment between each litter?	Yes	No	N/A
HP.4	Do you have quarterly veterinary approval for teeth reduction and is it supported by a written review?	Yes	No	N/A
HP.5	Have all persons who are nose ringing pigs been deemed competent by the vet?	Yes	No	N/A
HP.5.1	Are you only using single septum rings for nose-ringing (not disc rings)?	Yes	No	N/A
BI.1	Can you demonstrate that you are following the measures outlined in your Biosecurity Policy?	Yes	No	
BI.2	Does your visitor record ask for the visitor's organisation, purpose of visit and confirmation they have not had flu-like symptoms?	Yes	No	
BI.3	Have you defined the overall site biosecure area and specific biosecure areas within it? Do you have visible markers at vehicle entry points into biosecure areas?	Yes	No	
BI.4.1	Do you prevent vehicles collecting fallen stock from entering the farm's overall site biosecure area?	Yes	No	N/A
BI.7	Are there means to clean and disinfect hands available?	Yes	No	
BI.11	Have you signed up to the Significant Disease Charter?	Yes	No	
AM.2	Are you ensuring that expired medicines, including those that are beyond their in-use shelf life, are not used?	Yes	No	N/A
AM.3.1	Do you have at least one person on the farm (someone who oversees medicine use) trained in the responsible use of medicines in livestock? Do you have their certificate of attendance (dated since 1 January 2018)?	Yes	No	
AM.4	Are medicines stored separately from food and drink items? Is the fridge temperature recorded each week?	Yes	No	N/A
AM.6	Are you recording length of withdrawal period in medicine records?	Yes	No	

AM.7	Do your medicine disposal records include batch/bottle number?	Yes	No	
AM.8.1	Based on your antibiotic use data has your vet made recommendations for alternative disease control, to minimise prophylactic use?	Yes	No	N/A
AM.8.2	If your eMB has identified you as a persistent high user, do you have an action plan to reduce antibiotic use? Have you used the required template?	Yes	No	N/A
AM.11	Does your broken needle policy detail how to identify the animal, inform the abattoir and keep records?	Yes	No	N/A
FS.2	Are you using containers for fallen stock storage? If you use an incinerator as storage, do you have additional facilities available if needed?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.1	Is your liquid feed stored and/or sited in such a way that any spillages cannot enter clean drainage systems?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.1.1	Do you have a documented up-to-date calculation of your slurry storage requirements? Can reception pits hold the required amount including likely rainfall?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.1.1	Are manure heaps stored in such a way as to prevent effluent runoff into a watercourse? Are you moving temporary field heaps every 12 months?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.4	Are any unapproved PPPs kept segregated and clearly labelled whilst awaiting disposal?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.5	Are you ensuring PPP applications are compliant with buffer zone requirements?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.8	Do your PPP application records, including use around pig buildings, include all the listed information?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.8.1	Do you have an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan where PPPs are applied to crops?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.9	Are any biosolids applied to land assured under the Biosolids Assurance scheme?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.10	Have you calibrated your fertiliser application equipment in the last year? Have you got a record of the calibration?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.11	Are you disposing of empty PPP containers and redundant PPPs as required?	Yes	No	N/A
EC.12	Can you demonstrate that you have considered opportunities to reuse, recycle and reduce waste?	Yes	No	
OP.6	Are farrowing huts/arcs sited on level ground?	Yes	No	N/A
OP.7	Are you using fenders on farrowing arcs to prevent very young piglets from straying?	Yes	No	N/A
OP.10	Do you have a documented Wild Animal Control Plan? Can you demonstrate that it is being implemented?	Yes	No	N/A
OP.11	Is the collection area for outdoor pigs operated on an 'all-in all-out basis'? Is water provided?	Yes	No	N/A