



DAIRY TECHNICAL BRIEFING

News, updates and advice from your Red Tractor Assurance team

To ensure you receive all guidance updates, please add rtfcomms@redtractor.org.uk and membermatters@redtractor.org.uk to your address book and regularly check all your inbox folders.

It's been six months since our revised standards came into effect. The revisions were aimed at helping members to adapt to changes in legislation and meet evolving supply chain demands, whilst balancing the needs of our customers.

We've been using this time to carefully monitor and record why non-conformances are raised, so we can provide more targeted guidance to help members. We know that most common non-conformances' members have received have been related to either new

or revised standards. To help members we have created some additional advice and support, available on the **Red Tractor Assurance website**. We also have answers to several frequently asked questions and **guidance** on how to avoid the most common non-conformances.

SAFETY ON FARM

According to figures from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), British agriculture has the horrific track record of having the worst rate of fatal injuries than all the other UK's main industries.

Helping to improve farmings safety record is vital, which is why Red Tractor now requires all farms to have a Health and Safety Policy in place and communicated to anyone who is on site.

Of course, this isn't a fix-all solution, but having a written policy in place and making sure

everyone on site understands it is an important early step to improving on-farm safety.

Red Tractor assurance means food is British, traceable, safe, and responsibly produced. It is the responsibility of all of us to make sure that food is safe to eat, but also that the health of those whose job it is to produce also isn't harmed in the process.

Preparing such a policy doesn't have to be time consuming. There are free tools available, including a downloadable policy template on the **HSE's website**.



TOP TIP

We can now identify more specifically the reasons members are not compliant with the key requirement that:

HF.1 *Housing must be constructed and maintained to provide a safe and secure environment for livestock.*

The key issue seems to be that members are failing to demonstrate that the sharp edges or other features that have to potential to cause injury to animals (HF.1.b) have been addressed.





WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY TO PROTECT BRITISH AGRICULTURE'S REPUTATION

COMMENT FROM RED TRACTOR'S CEO

Scrutiny of food production is more intense than at any other point, for this reason, it is vital that the British dairy sector continues to meet the expectations of shoppers and diners. Achieving this protects the hard-earned trust and loyalty that has built up over the last two decades since the dark days of the 1990s, when public trust in British food was at an all-time low.

Red Tractor is the bedrock of progressive farming in Britain – reassuring consumers that food that is traceable back to British farms, is safe, and produced responsibly. Our standards are based on the needs and expectations of consumers and the supply chain, encompassing UK legislation, scientific evidence, and best practice. That's why our standards underpin major supermarket and dairy processor buying specifications.

Alongside farming unions and trade associations, Red Tractor is one of the industry's biggest defenses against the rhetoric of animal rights activists, misinformation, and vilifying campaigns.

Red Tractor's credibility is largely dependent on members and farm workers striving to continuously meet all standards. Doing so not only protect the reputation of an individual member's own business, but the entire industry in which they play a vital role.

We know that standards might occasionally slip. So, in 2019, Red Tractor introduced a risk-based approach for dairy members which is based on the number and nature of any non-conformances. This helps the scheme to focus on struggling members and gives them a fair

chance to get back on track. We have a fair and objective approach to identify high-risk members, using the number and nature of any non-conformances to categorise their risk to the dairy industry's reputation.

It is true that some breaches are not always detectable during inspections, which is why we have a number of ways for individuals to share their concerns with us, including our confidential 'Tell Us' reporting service.

Whenever there are reports of a failure to uphold Red Tractor's standards, the team investigates, including any mitigating circumstances, and only acts when evidence is substantiated. No decision is ever taken lightly by the team, we know the profound implications any action we take can have on individuals and businesses.

TELL US

Very occasionally, standards can slip on farms between assessments. It's important that we are made aware so we can ensure things are put right. If you have any concerns that Red Tractor standards aren't being met, there are a number of options- you can raise concerns with your **certification body** or directly with the Red Tractor Team, or use our anonymous, confidential **TELL US** online reporting service.

WHERE TO FIND FARMING SUPPORT IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Farming is uniquely challenging at any time. In the agriculture sector, poor mental health and personal resilience are some of the biggest threats to the industry. When facing challenges, it's important to share problems and concerns with family, friends and people who can help.

There are a number of resources you can access and many charities which offer specialist help to anyone involved in agriculture or living in a rural area. Their practical advice, guidance and support makes a huge difference to many in the farming community. **Find out more [here](#)**



IMPROVING COMPLIANCE – OUR RISK-BASED APPROACH TO ASSESSMENTS

Red Tractor's risk-based approach to assessments was introduced for our pig, poultry and dairy schemes more than three years ago. The objective was to improve compliance with our standards, to deliver on our promise to consumers that food carrying the logo is safe, traceable and farmed with care. The approach not only adopts a fair and objective method of identifying members with poor compliance, but also

ensures that the reputation of members who meet the standards consistently is preserved.

Most Red Tractor dairy farmers do an excellent job meeting every standard every day, and so they are not affected by the risk-based approach.

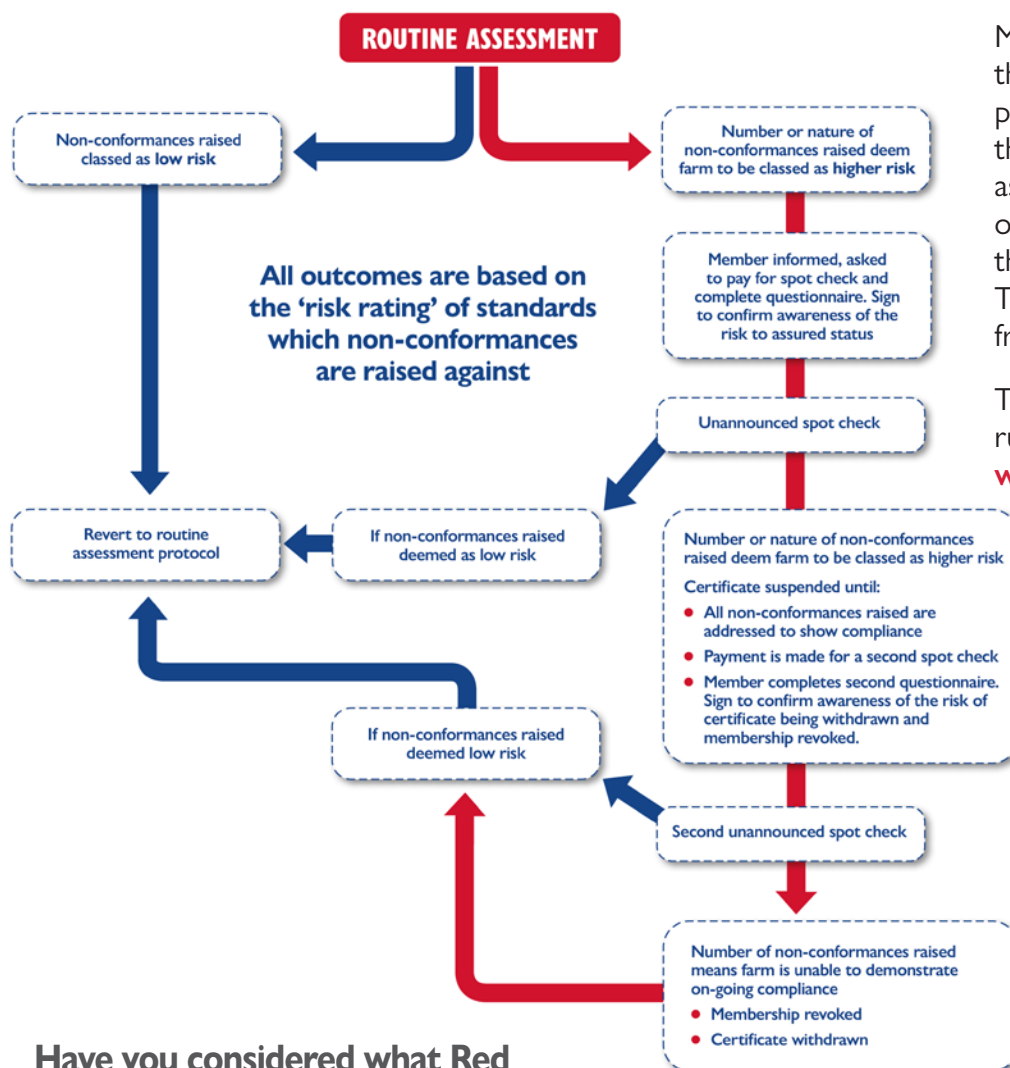
What is the risk-based approach?

Depending on the nature and

number of non-conformances found during a routine assessment, members with poor compliance are required to have an additional unannounced spot check to check ongoing compliance with the standards. If we continue to find evidence of non-compliance a member's Red Tractor certificate may be suspended (after the first unannounced spot check), or membership of the Scheme could be revoked (after a second unannounced spot check).

Members are required to pay for the additional spot check(s). Our partner certification bodies set the fee as it covers the cost of the assessor visiting the farm to carry out the additional spot check and the associated administration. Red Tractor receives no financial benefit from the extra spot checks.

To read the risk-based assessment rules in full go to the [assurance website](#).



Have you considered what Red Tractor suspension could mean?

- ✘ Impact on milk collections
- ✘ Consider disposal methods for milk or alternative sales

KEY FACTS

16%

of the 1052 spot checks have resulted in suspension

21

members have had their membership terminated as part of the Risk Based Approach



ADVISORY FROM THE FSA on Dairy Farm Registrations & Inspections



To be able to produce milk and milk products you must first register your business. Registration is free and can't be refused. If you are already trading and have not yet registered yet, you need to register as soon as possible as this is a legal requirement. To help with this process we have the answers to some frequently asked questions:

Q Do I still need to register my dairy business with other authorities if I'm a member of Red Tractor?

A Yes, as a food business it is your legal responsibility to register.

Q Who do I need to register with?

A England & Wales - You need to register with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and can apply for registration by downloading the registration form from the FSA website [here](#)
A. Northern Ireland - You need to register with the Department

of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and can apply for registration by downloading the registration form from the DAERA website [here](#).

Q What happens once I'm registered?

A Once registered, a dairy hygiene inspector from the FSA or DAERA will visit your dairy business to ensure that all relevant legal requirements are being met. Dairy hygiene inspectors do this by:

- inspecting milking premises and equipment
- inspecting milk-producing animals

These inspections are not related to Red Tractor assessments, so it is important that you understand and meet the requirements for both. The FSA and DAERA have the power to act against dairy businesses that do not comply with the relevant law.

Q How often will the authorities visit me?

A After the initial registration inspection, an inspector will visit compliant Red Tractor members every 10 years. For non-members, the frequency of these inspections is every 2 years.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Last week it was announced that new Slurry Infrastructure grants will open later this autumn. These new grants are aimed at helping livestock farmers in England to upgrade their slurry storage and nutrient management systems.

- Click [here](#) for further details.

BUILDING A MORE SECURE FUTURE FOR UK DAIRY

The inaugural Great British Calf Week served as a timely reminder of the value and importance of good calf management.

Animal health and welfare is a core principle of Red Tractor and is a major consideration for farmers, as well as British shoppers and diners.

An important change to Red Tractor standards in November was the inclusion of the UK dairy industry's commitment to end routine euthanasia of calves by 2023 – a significant reputational issue for the sector.

It is crucial that the whole industry focuses on eliminating this practice. So, you must have a written breeding and management policy, to encourage responsible breeding strategies by breeding calves that are economically attractive to potential beef buyers and /or rearers. Additionally, an annual collation of calf births and deaths must be kept, with any trends identified and actions noted in your health plan.

- Click [here](#) for more information on the cross-industry GB Dairy Calf Strategy.



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