



MEAT & POULTRY PROCESSING SCHEME STANDARDS WHAT'S CHANGED AND WHY?

VERSION 4

We've reviewed our Meat and Poultry Processing Scheme (RTMPP) standards and these changes will apply from 1 April 2023. We established a number of working groups with a selection of industry experts represented, who approved these updates following consultation with all our meat processing members and key stakeholders. The aim of the update is to make sure our standards are clearer, more meaningful and provide credible assurance for all. This is essential with the increasing demand for food traceability and growing consumer awareness of animal welfare issues in livestock production and at slaughter.

The RTMPP standards have been developed with a modular structure and the scheme includes five distinct modules. Not all members of the scheme are necessarily certified to every module. Members are required to be certified to certain modules depending on their type of business and the Red Tractor licensing eligibility criteria.

Here are the main changes and why we made them.

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FOOD SAFETY MODULE

Several new and revised standards have been introduced to the Food Safety module, the majority of which have been made to align this module with other food safety schemes which we recognise as part of our licensing programme. Red Tractor meat and poultry processing members now need to have a food safety culture plan and ensure that an independent, confidential reporting service is available to all staff. A procedure must be in place to manage documents that form part of the food safety system and businesses need to immediately inform Red Tractor in the event of a serious incident which could or is impacting on food safety.

Standards have been strengthened in areas such as pest control management, management of obsolete packaging, allergens and training as well as introducing a new section on site security and food defence.

- FS.4** A food safety culture plan is now required to be documented and implemented on site. The plan should help senior management shape, improve, and maintain a positive and proactive food safety culture on site. This is important as creating and maintaining a positive food safety culture demonstrates that a food business operator is committed to providing safe food. It also shows that they are willing to invest in and value their employees. Staff need to be aware that their actions are critical. There are many benefits of maintaining a good food culture, such as, ensuring safe food production, improved staff morale and retention, fewer customer complaints/ visits and improved profits.
- FS.5** The confidential service should be independent from the food business operator. Offering a confidential reporting service, alongside an open-door policy, can provide employees with choices which can improve the chance of an issue being reported and for the business to then deal with it appropriately. Implementing an independent whistleblowing service can provide a secure, confidential method of reporting that enables anonymity. This is important as employees may feel more comfortable about speaking to someone outside their organisation.
- FS.6** The document control system should ensure only the correct versions of documents are in use which is important to ensure traceability, as well as maintaining legal requirements and essential documentation to assist in a product recall, if it occurs.
- FS.23** Good crisis /incident management must include Red Tractor when a serious food safety incident occurs, for example a product recall of Red Tractor claimed product. It's important that Red Tractor are made aware so that we can support our meat and poultry processing members, if required.
- FS.29** A schedule is now required for hygiene inspections (to assess cleaning performance) and fabrication inspections which is important to identify risks to product from the building and/ or equipment.
- ST.9** Catering facilities (if provided on site) must be controlled which is important to prevent cross-contamination of allergens/ food poisoning sources entering the production facility.
- ST.23** A pest management survey to review the pest control system should be carried out by a pest control expert at least once a year. This ensures a fresh pair of eyes is reviewing the pest control systems in place which is important in terms of taking an objective look at whether these systems are working effectively and to make recommendations for change, if required.

ST.51 If a meat processor is producing hot carcasses (meat transported as soon as possible after slaughter for the Qurbani festival) these carcasses/ meat must not be labelled and sold as Red Tractor Assured. They must also meet all FSA requirements relating to hot carcasses including the implementation of an operating procedure shared with the Official Veterinarian.

PC.3 Where equipment settings are critical to the safety or legality of the product, controls should be password protected or restricted.

PC.4 A procedure to check weighers should consider legal requirements, frequency of testing and operating effectiveness. It should also identify competent staff responsible for testing.

PC.10 Members must now have systems in place to prevent obsolete packaging, including labels. This is important to prevent wrong/ incorrect packaging, including packaging with the discontinued Red Tractor logo (old version), being used.

PC.11 Artwork approval from Red Tractor confirming the correct Red Tractor logo use for the product is now required. This is important to ensure the correct Red Tractor logo use.

PC.12 Where cooking instructions are present on packaging, they must be validated to ensure they produce a consistently safe and ready-to-eat product.

PC.25 Where there is a persistent and recurring issue with a supplier (a Red Tractor farmer or livestock transport member to an abattoir) the issue is reported to Red Tractor via one of 3 routes: directly to a member of the Red Tractor Team or through the confidential reporting service Tell Us/ Safecall or via the Red Tractor Checkers and Services website. This is important to be made aware of persistent/ recurring issues so that Red Tractor can support our meat processing members in investigating any issues brought to our attention.

SF.1, SF.2 & SF.3 Systems should be in place which protect and defend food from deliberate attack. A Threat Assessment Plan is now required, and this is important to enable meat processing members to identify weak points in their supply chain and processing activities that may be vulnerable to fraud. It can then help the business to minimise the chances of such an attack.

TRACEABILITY AND INTEGRITY MODULE

Several new and revised standards have been introduced to the Traceability and Integrity module largely reflecting our licensing rules.

Our standards on the verification of the Red Tractor status of livestock, as well as bought-in product, have been strengthened. In addition, we have clarified the labelling requirements of carcasses and products with their assurance status and the use of a Red Tractor claim on paperwork. We have also introduced a standard specifying the need for a site to hold a Red Tractor Licence.

TR.1 Traceability of work in progress (WIP) product must now always be in place which is essential for ensuring robust traceability systems and that meat labelled with a Red Tractor claim is eligible to carry that claim.

TR.10 & TR.20 There must be clear segregation of livestock (cattle and sheep) and poultry which are slaughtered with no prior stunning (non-stun halal or kosher) from Red Tractor Assured (or Red Tractor recognised scheme) livestock, carcasses and offal. This is to ensure no meat from livestock which have been killed with no prior stunning is sold with a Red Tractor claim.

TR.12 Labelling of eligible beef, lamb and pork carcasses must be as Red Tractor Assured if livestock originate from a Red Tractor Assured farm, or are labelled with the Red Tractor recognised scheme descriptor if assured to one of these farm schemes whilst the carcasses is a split, fore or quarters.

TR.15 & TR.21 Checker services must be used to verify the assurance status of livestock at intake as this provides an accurate 'live' check on assurance status, rather than relying on hard copy assurance certificates which can be suspended or revoked at any time. The Red Tractor Industry Checker provides a historic search to allow industry users to perform checks on members' certification in the past. Historic date checking plays a vital role in assessing whether a member was assured at the time they were selling their livestock.

TR.16, TR.22 & TR.26 Red Tractor status identified on product paperwork has been clarified so that where a Red Tractor claim is being made, it is clear, and confusion is minimised. Where meat is a primal/ cuts, paperwork must state Red Tractor Assured in the product description where the product is to be sold with a Red Tractor claim. Where the product is eligible to carry a Red Tractor claim, and is being sold as such, the product must not be described as Farm Assured.

TR.25 For cutting plants bringing in bought-in meat, checker services must be used to verify Red Tractor assurance status, which includes the use of the Licensee Checker on a risk-based frequency. New suppliers must be checked using checkers services before the first delivery of meat. This requirement strengthens the verification of Red Tractor claimed meat.

TR.36 Sites selling product with a Red Tractor claim, which is an implicit indication of the assured status of the product, must hold a valid Red Tractor Licence for that product.

ANIMAL WELFARE MODULE

Several new and revised standards have been introduced to the Animal Welfare module.

This includes the mandatory collection of Welfare Outcomes and the introduction of permanent environment enrichment for all pigs. In addition, the use of goads on pigs is now prohibited. Also, we require the reporting of any recurring poor performance related to Red Tractor Assured livestock arriving at abattoirs to be reported to us, which also includes the reporting of FSA Annex 4 reports.

AW.4 Animal welfare must always be managed by competent people in accordance with company policies. Standard Operating Procedures for each operation, from animal intake to death, will ensure company procedures are followed and that meat processing members are meeting legislative requirements.

AW.9 Welfare outcome scoring must be recorded for Red Tractor Assured cattle, sheep and pigs. Being undertaken at the request of customers, e.g. a retailer, complies with the standard.

Welfare outcomes are considered to provide the most direct and accurate picture of animal welfare, and meat processors who collect data can use this data to draw more informed conclusions about the conditions on farm and the welfare of animals on those farms within their own businesses. Red Tractor would like to collect welfare outcome data in time which will aid us in reviewing our scheme standards and enhancing our scheme's credibility and the reputation of the industry.

AW.11 Internal and external ramps for unloading pigs have angles of no more than 20 degrees, ensuring that legislative requirements are met.

AW.15 Walkways, the lairage and any pens must have sufficient drainage to ensure effective cleaning and disinfection.

AW.17 Misting systems for pigs are used to calm them if necessary and are not used if pigs are exhibiting signs of cold stress or the ambient temperature is below 5°C. This is important to ensure the misting system is being used for its intended purpose but not at the detriment of the pigs.

AW.21 A risk assessment is used to identify source of noise in the lairage and ensure mitigating actions have been taken if required, with no sustained animal vocalisation present. This is important to minimise any undue stress within the lairage environment for the livestock held.

AW.24 Group stunning pens (if used) must be adjustable to maximise a safe working environment and to minimise excitement to animals.

AW.27 If field lairages are used, the cleanliness of livestock must not deteriorate whilst being held within them which is important for the welfare of these animals, but also to minimise bacterial load of carcasses during slaughter from a food hygiene perspective.

AW.28 Requirements for checks on livestock held in vehicles on site where there is a delay in unloading have been strengthened to maximise the welfare of those animals and ensure those in need are unloaded first.

AW.44 Enrichment material for pigs in lairage pens must be permanently available. It must be safe, hygienic and not hazardous. Enrichment should be edible, chewable, investigable and manipulable.

- AW.45** Requirements on how animals are handled in the lairage have been strengthened to ensure no illegal handling methods are used and that the welfare of animals is protected.
- AW.47** Goad use is not permitted on any categories of pigs.
- AW.55** Records of double/ re-stuns must now record the reason for the double stun so that actions can be taken, if required, to address the issue.
- AW.65** Emergency situations may have a reputational impact on Red Tractor through a serious breach of the scheme standards, which may attract media attention. Red Tractor must be told about these situations as soon as they arise to protect our reputation, and to support our meat processing members, if required.
- AW.66** Persistent/ recurring poor performance of suppliers, which includes reporting of FSA Annex 4 reports, must be made via the Red Tractor Checkers and Services website **here**.
- AW.75** A wipe test using paper towelling is carried out on pig vehicles which have been sampled for a spot check to assess visual cleanliness before they leave the abattoir. Cleaning and disinfection of livestock vehicles is important to minimise spread of disease and carrying out a wipe test adds robustness to the visual check.

POULTRY WELFARE MODULE

Several new and revised standards have been introduced to the Poultry Welfare module including the mandatory collection of Welfare Outcomes.

We have added standards for controlled atmosphere bi-phase and multi-phase stunning systems and a new section has been introduced to future-proof the standards on the use of Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning (LAPS).

- PW.4** Animal welfare must always be managed by competent people in accordance with company policies. Standard Operating Procedures for each operation, from animal intake to death, will ensure company procedures are followed and that poultry processing members are meeting legislative requirements.
- PW.6** Animal Welfare Officers must have completed external training, such as the Bristol University Poultry Welfare Officer course, in addition to their Certificate of Competence training. This is good practice and ensures poultry processing members are supporting the continuous development of staff.
- PW.10** Where a serious incident or emergency results in a breach to a Red Tractor standard and/ or legislation, Red Tractor is immediately informed if product from affected birds is destined to be packed with a Red Tractor claim. Its important we know to protect our reputation and support our poultry processing members, if required.
- PW.11** Persistent/ recurring poor performance of suppliers must be made via the Red Tractor Checkers and Services website **here**.

PW.12 Welfare outcome scoring must be recorded for Red Tractor Assured chicken and turkey. Being undertaken at the request of customers, e.g. a retailer, complies with the standard.

Welfare outcomes are considered to provide the most direct and accurate picture of animal welfare, and meat processors who collect data can use this data to draw more informed conclusions about the conditions on farm and the welfare of animals on those farms within their own businesses. Red Tractor would like to collect welfare outcome data in time (for chicken and turkey) which will aid us in reviewing our scheme standards and enhancing our scheme's credibility and the reputation of the industry.

For ducks, welfare outcomes, recorded as per the Red Tractor Protocol, must now be reported to Red Tractor.

PW.14 The design of the lairage ensures birds avoid becoming wet from the lorry wash.

PW.23 No pooling of water is permitted within the lairage to enable effective cleaning and disinfection of the environment which is important to minimise disease spread, cross-contamination and maintain food safety standards.

PW.27 Record requirements for each load of birds received at the abattoir has been strengthened, many of which aid poultry processing members to meet legislative requirements.

PW.28 All missing information on the Animal Transport Certificate and Food Chain Information must be investigated.

PW.29 Dead on Arrivals (DOAs) percentages within a single load before the root cause is investigated have been tightened to 1% for chicken and 0.2% for turkeys and ducks. Minimising the number of DOAs received at the abattoir is not only good practice, but also helps to minimise any negative reputational effect on the industry.

PW.38 All Red Tractor Enhanced Welfare Assured birds must be stunned/ killed by controlled atmosphere stunning (CAS) using inert gas or bi-phase or multi-phase systems in accordance with the scheme standards. Electrical stunning is only permitted without live inversion. This ensures Red Tractor Enhanced Welfare product claims are meeting the criteria required by the Better Chicken Commitment.

PW.39 Large birds weighing more than 15kg liveweight are not shackled whilst conscious. Live inversion is known to be detrimental to animal welfare.

PW.51 Carbon dioxide must not exceed an average maximum concentration of 30% until birds have lost consciousness. This applies to bi-phase and multi-phase gas stunning systems for chickens and turkeys and is based on research which demonstrates that a maximum concentration of 30% is less aversive, and therefore detrimental to bird welfare, than a maximum 40% concentration until birds have lost consciousness.

PW.61 – PW.67 New standards covering the stunning and killing of chickens up to 4kgs liveweight using Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning (LAPS). These new standards aim to ensure, when using a LAPS system, chickens are stunned/ killed without pain or distress.

PW.71 Automated machines for washing bird transport crates and modules are inspected daily to ensure all nozzles and spray heads are working and operating in the correct direction. Soak systems and water agitation systems must be operating to standard. Cleaning and disinfection of live bird crates and modules (and vehicles) are important to minimise disease spread, particularly considering Avian Influenza and transferring disease back to farms.

PORK QUALITY MODULE

The standards in the Pork Quality module have been strengthened around the analysis of microbiological fresh pork testing results and incoming product temperature controls. For assured sausages, in line with our licensing rules, the standards have been strengthened on the exact labelling of batches of raw material. Incoming product temperature controls have also been updated.

PORK

- PQ.6** Red Tractor pork must meet required microbial specifications. Where microbiological results are above the upper action limit, there is evidence that these are subject to trend analysis and where ongoing issues are found, the root cause is investigated, and corrective action taken.
- PQ.7** Organoleptic assessment of primal cuts is not a requirement anymore; it is only required for finished (retail) packed products.
- PQ.13** Systems must be in place to ensure that frozen pork and trim is used within 24 months of freezing, a change to the previous 12 months. This is to aid pork processing members by negating the need to operate two SKUs for frozen pork.
- PQ.19** Ensuring strict temperature controls is important and chilled incoming pork must be in the range of -2°C to +5°C and is brought into the preparation room progressively as needed.

SAUSAGES

- PS.3** Bacon bought in must be sourced from a Red Tractor licensed site.
- PS.4** Each batch of pork raw material must be labelled with required information which includes things such as health mark, description, weight, batch codes, country of birth, kill date and Red Tractor assurance status (labelled as RT, RTA etc). It's important eligible pork is labelled as Red Tractor Assured if it's a primal or cuts, and not labelled as Farm Assured, if it is to be sold with a Red Tractor claim.
- PS.14** The temperature of frozen bacon raw material must not exceed -12°C at intake unless it is received in a tempered form ready for slicing.