



**FOR ALL RED TRACTOR UPDATES!**

[rtfcomms@redtractor.org.uk](mailto:rtfcomms@redtractor.org.uk)

[membermatters@redtractor.org.uk](mailto:membermatters@redtractor.org.uk)

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# MEMBER MATTERS

News, updates and advice from your Red Tractor Assurance team

**NOVEMBER 2022**

## WELCOME TO RED TRACTOR'S NOVEMBER MEMBER UPDATE

### Dear Members

Last month we mentioned how the UN recognised the way we partner and share data with agencies like the Food Standards Agency, as an exemplar way to protect food safety. For this edition of Member Matters, we will explore what partnerships like this means in practice for our farmer members.



members has long been top of our agenda. It is also one of the most common comments that we hear from farmers up and down the country.

We continue to listen and review what steps can be taken to achieve this- without reducing the robustness of the scheme upon which the whole of the food industry relies on. One crucial way we are able to deliver this, is to

make sure that members meet the requirements of partner schemes and agencies- through earned recognition arrangements with UK regulators and industry voluntary initiatives. It is an important and little understood way in which we support our members.

Below is an easy guide to earned Recognition.

Warm Wishes,  
**Philippa Wiltshire**,  
Head of Operations

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## EARNED RECOGNITION – WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER TO ME?

### What is Earned Recognition?

When an assured farm demonstrates good compliance with Red Tractor standards, and legislation, through a programme of regular and independent inspections, they are rewarded with less frequent enforcement inspections. This is what is meant by earned recognition with regulators.

### Why is Earned Recognition so important?

Regulators have an important role to play, especially when tasked with ensuring all food is safe to eat,

animal welfare is protected, and taxpayers' money is being appropriately spent. They therefore must be confident that assurance schemes are robust, have procedures in place to ensure their inspections are meaningful, have systems in place for ensuring non-compliances are rectified swiftly, and are deemed to be worthy of recognition.

### How is Red Tractor eligible for earned recognition agreements?

Red Tractor uses independent Certification Bodies to

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manage the day-to-day running of sector schemes and carry out assessments against our standards on our behalf- so we don't mark our own homework. In addition, the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) assesses all our certification bodies to ISO 17065, which means that their performance is monitored

through annual office inspections and shadow audits. They also make sure that any changes we make to our standards are fully auditable.

With all this in place, it means that the Red Tractor scheme meets the necessary requirements for earned recognition arrangements with regulators.

### Why don't all food and farming schemes have this arrangement?

This system only works if regulators are confident the scheme is robust and worthy of recognition. All parties must be trusted and must work together to ensure audits are meaningful- and that the scheme

can demonstrate that it covers legal requirements and has the ability to share aggregated scheme data performance- We never share individual farm assessment data.

### What does it mean for me?

When it works well, it is good for everyone involved and is a hidden benefit for farmers. For assured members that means fewer inspections (non- Red Tractor assessments) than they otherwise would have. For regulators and enforcement bodies, it means they can focus their resources and budget on those farms where there is no other intelligence regarding their compliance to legal requirements- thereby posing a significant threat to the reputation of British Agriculture which in turn means the reputation of your business.

### So, is Red Tractor effectively the government's policeman?

We are very clear that we are not the government's policeman. We do not share the individual results from members' assessments with regulators. We simply tell them who is assured so they can be classified for less visits.

## View from a regulator

*"We are pleased to be working closely with Red Tractor to provide assurance that food carrying the logo is safe and is what it says it is. The arrangements we have in place for approving assurance schemes, and for ongoing data sharing, mean that members of these schemes benefit by having fewer inspections from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and local authorities."*

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the dairy sector, farms that are members of the assurance scheme and demonstrating satisfactory standards are inspected only every 10 years by the FSA, while non-members are inspected every two years or less.

Unassured livestock, arable and fresh produce farm are more likely to have a higher inspection frequency by a local authority, than a farm that is assured.



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## View from a farmer

*A West Sussex Dairy Farmer “I’ve been a dairy farmer for more than 30 years, and still remember the bi-annual Dairy Hygiene Inspectorate visit. Being Red Tractor assured means that today there is only one of these inspections every decade.”*

## DOES RED TRACTOR ONLY HAVE EARNED RECOGNITION PARTNERSHIPS WITH ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES?

Earned recognition also applies in other areas where Red Tractor farmers are exempt from having to jump through additional hoops to access markets or to prove good farming practice.



Buying professional-only rodenticides is a good example of where earned recognition with the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) which means that members do not need to obtain a license or undergo additional training to buy it – saving members time and money.



Registering as a recognised scheme for the EU’s Renewable Energy Directive (RED II), is a streamlined approach to ensuring that crops and sugar beet members are automatically granted free access to the growing biofuels markets in the UK and across Europe – saving members extra bureaucracy, costs, and inspections.



The Voluntary Initiative (VI) promotes the responsible use of pesticides and Red Tractor is key to helping the industry delivering this. By incorporating these goals within Red Tractor standards, we provide a verification that farms are adopting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans and principles, lessening the likelihood of increased regulation.

## THE PORTAL

The introduction of the Portal at the height of the Covid pandemic, not only helped us to continue to assure the food chain at a time when it was vulnerable, and producers and growers were striving to feed the nation, it also proved to be an invaluable tool for members.

Now, around a fifth of our members are using the portal which is freely available for all members to use. In effect it is an online and secure filing cabinet, where members can store all necessary documents required to prove compliance to our standards. It is also the safest and simplest way for you to provide your Certification Body with your farm assurance paperwork. Using the portal for your documents also helps to minimise the amount of time the assessor spends on farm during an audit. Assessors can review the paperwork ahead of a visit, so they can focus their attentions on crops and animals, whilst on farm.

We are now reviewing how the portal can be developed further to help our members, so if you do use it and have some feedback on how we can improve the functionality please send it to us at [memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk](mailto:memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk).

**TOP TIP**  
**Red Tractor Portal**  
 Load your documents throughout the year, to save a last-minute rush ahead of your assessment.  
**CLICK HERE** to find out more

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## SO WHAT NEXT?

Despite all these agreements in place, there is still a long way to go to reduce the audit burden for members. Our CEO and Chair, Jim Moseley and Christine Tacon, met with the Farming Minister Mark Spencer to highlight how earned recognition has worked and benefited our members, and called for DEFRA to adopt similar arrangements.

## Reducing the number of standards required

We have listened and while there is no silver bullet to make these changes, we continue to remove duplication and look at ways we can streamline standards without unintentionally weakening or unintentional consequences to the benefits our scheme delivers for our members. Many of our sectors have already benefitted from this approach, and for others they are at the start of the journey.

## EARNED RECOGNITION – WHAT IT MEANS FOR RED TRACTOR MEMBERS

FARMING SECTOR	AGENCIES/REGULATION	 RED TRACTOR MEMBERS	NON RED TRACTOR MEMBERS
All sectors 	FSA & Local Authorities (Food Hygiene)	2% inspected per year (once every 50 years)	25% inspected per year (once every 4 years)
All sectors (livestock feeding & arable growing) 	FSA & Local Authorities (Feed Hygiene)	2% inspected per year (once every 50 years)	25% inspected per year (once every 4 years)
Dairy farms 	FSA Inspectors (Dairy Hygiene)	Inspected once every 10 years	Inspected a minimum of every 2 years
All sectors 	Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide use (CRRU)	No licence or Certificate of Competence needed to buy professional rodenticides	Licence or Certificate of Competence needed to buy professional rodenticides
Livestock sectors 	Export Health Certificates to EU for livestock products	Products from RT assured farms automatically qualify for export with no additional paperwork or checks needed at farm level	Paperwork required

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