



## Information for Pig, Dairy and Poultry Members

### EVERY MEMBER - EVERY STANDARD - EVERY DAY

### RISK BASED APPROACH TO ASSESSMENTS

1. Red Tractor works to reassure the British public that they can be confident that farmers like yourself are producing great food, which is traceable, safe and farmed with care. This is increasingly challenging, as we face external scrutiny by the media, activists and consumers, and increasingly important as we increase the awareness of Red Tractor through TV and social media.
2. To deliver on this consumer promise we are constantly developing the management of our Scheme and measures which will help us towards achieving compliance by “Every member, every standard, every day”. We know this will be welcomed by our members who are proud to be Red Tractor members.
3. One such measure is our risk-based approach to assessments. Members who are found to have poor compliance with the Red Tractor standards may see an increase in assessment frequency, with some visits being carried out with no advance notice. If we continue to find evidence of non-compliance their certificate may be suspended, or their membership of the Scheme may be revoked. This approach aims to ensure that the reputation of members who are conforming to our standards is maintained.

#### **Current system**

4. As a Red Tractor member, you know that you can only gain certification and obtain ‘Assured’ status if you conform to all the standards and you must continue to meet all the standards at all times (Rule 4). Our current system of measuring compliance is based on a routine assessment frequency i.e., maximum of 12 or 18 months between pre-booked assessments. This regime is the same for all members regardless of whether they achieve zero non-conformances at their routine assessment or have multiple non-conformances every time.
5. Our rules already allow Red Tractor and your Certification Body to specify ‘Special Conditions of Certification’ for continued certification of the Scheme. This may include additional assessments over and above the normal routine frequency, at the members’ cost (Rule 43).

#### **Categorisation according to risk**

6. We have spent considerable time focusing on the best way to identify members with poor compliance in a fair and objective way. We have recognised that simply counting the number



of non-conformances would not achieve the desired outcome as two members could have the same number of non-conformances, but the nature of those non-conformances could be very different. For example, one might have a lot of non-conformances which are predominantly record based whilst the other could have the same number of physical non-conformances (e.g., poor animal welfare, feed contamination, housing cleanliness etc.) In which case it would not be appropriate for both members to be categorised in the same way.

7. We have developed an internal system which uses both the nature and number of non-conformances to categorise each member. To do this we have weighted each standard with some being weighted more strongly than others.

8. Examples include the standard that requires livestock to be handled in a way that avoids injury and minimises stress, which has been given a greater weighting than the requirement for a farm map. Likewise, the requirement to keep movement records has been given greater weighting than a complaints record.

9. That is not to say that some standards are of less importance and don't need to be complied with. Compliance with all standards is vital to ensure that Red Tractor's assurances to consumers about food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection can be upheld. Members must conform to them all every day.

#### **How it will work**

10. You will continue to receive your normal routine assessment and any non-conformances raised will be reported as usual to Red Tractor. Our system will consider the non-conformances, if any are identified, and we will notify your Certification Body if additional or different assessments are required in future as a result.

11. We fully expect most of our members, who continue to demonstrate good compliance with the standards, to see no change to their routine assessment frequency. However, members demonstrating poor compliance will be required to undergo an additional unannounced spot check.

12. Following your assessment and depending on the non-conformances identified, your Certification Body will confirm the next steps you must take to continue to be a certified member of the Red Tractor scheme.



| Assessment outcome  | Action required  | Certification status  |
|---|--|---|
| No non-conformances   | None   | Continuous  |
| Non-conformances identified - low number and/or low weighting   | Rectify all non-conformances within 28 days of assessment  | Continuous ( <i>subject to action completed in timescale</i> )      |
| Non-conformances identified - high number and/or high weighting | a. Rectify all non-conformances<br>b. Pay for an unannounced spot check<br>c. Complete and return questionnaire<br>d. It is recommended that members complete a contingency plan in case of suspension from scheme<br>All within 28 days | Continuous ( <i>subject to all actions completed in timescale</i> ) |

13. Existing 'Key' standards and 'minor' and 'major' non-conformances remain with their existing purpose and function but play no part in the categorisation of members described here.

14. A farm's categorization will not be shared beyond those who are deemed part of that members supply chain ie First Purchaser within dairy, integrator in pigs and poultry.

#### Unannounced assessments

15. We recognise that there are practicalities that need to be considered when implementing unannounced spot checks. Members who are required to undergo an unannounced spot check (table above) will be asked to complete a questionnaire to ensure the assessor has all the information to reduce the risk of disruption or no-one being available. This will include details of routine activities on the farm (e.g., breeding, weaning, milking times, routine vet visits, market days) and when it is likely to be de-stocked (if applicable). In addition, contact details for at least 3 people, who can be contacted should no-one be present on the farm, will need to be provided. Members will need to notify their Certification Body if any details provided on the questionnaire subsequently change.

16. Failure to return payment for the unannounced spot check and/or a signed completed questionnaire within 28 days of notification of the requirement for an unannounced spot check, will result in your certificate being suspended.



17. In circumstances where the assessor arrives to carry out an unannounced assessment and no-one is available or reachable by telephone, the assessor will wait for a minimum of 1 hour. If after this time it has still not been possible to start the assessment, then a card will be left for the member explaining that it was not possible to carry out the assessment. The Certification Body will then contact the member to make arrangements for payment for another unannounced spot check.

18. Each unannounced assessment will take the form of a focussed spot check. If non-conformances are identified they will be reported back to Red Tractor in the normal way and the member will be categorised according to the nature and number of non-conformances and the Certification Body will be notified of the required outcome.

### **Outcome of unannounced assessments**

19. Members who have demonstrated an improvement in compliance at the unannounced spot check will be informed by their Certification Body and will maintain their Red Tractor certificate. These members will continue in future with the normal routine assessment frequency, although their next assessment may be arranged at shorter notice.

20. Members who have not improved and continue to demonstrate poor compliance with the Standards will be notified by their Certification Body that their Red Tractor certificate has been suspended. They will not be allowed to market any livestock or milk as Red Tractor assured whilst suspended. The suspension will be lifted only once the non-conformances have been rectified and the member has paid for a follow-up unannounced spot check and returned a new signed questionnaire.

21. If further evidence of poor compliance is identified at the second unannounced spot check the farm's membership of the Red Tractor Scheme will be revoked, resulting in withdrawal of the farm's certificate.

22. In some cases, depending on the history of non-conformances on the farm, a member's Red Tractor certificate may be suspended without an unannounced spot check taking place. As per Rule 39 your Certification Body has the right to suspend your certification under certain circumstances, including

- If you unreasonably delay or refuse routine assessments, revisits, or spot checks
- If an excessive number of non-conformances are found
- In the event of the same non-conformances being found on successive assessment visits.

### **Appeals Procedure**



23. Should a member wish to complain or appeal against non-conformances raised during an audit, this should be done through the usual appeals process with the Certification Body. If a member wishes to dispute their categorisation as part of the risk-based approach to assessments, this can be done directly to Red Tractor; please see the documented RT Complaints Procedure available online.

#### **Certification Body and Assessor impartiality**

24. The independence of our Certification Bodies and assessors is vitally important to the integrity of Red Tractor. All assessors are fully trained, qualified, and monitored to ensure they are competent to carry out the assessment in a consistent way. To ensure assessors remain impartial they are not involved in determining the categorisation of the member.

Version 4  
March 2023