



FOR ALL RED TRACTOR UPDATES!

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MEMBER MATTERS

News, updates and advice from your Red Tractor Assurance team

APRIL 2023

WELCOME TO RED TRACTOR'S APRIL MEMBER UPDATE

Dear Members

Environmental performance on farms has been under the spotlight this month. On 3 April The Times covered a 2020 report by the Environment Agency (EA) following a Freedom Of Information request. Later in the month DEFRA announced new funding for farmers in England to improve slurry storage.

The Times headline claimed that 'Red Tractor farms are more likely to pollute the environment'. From the outset, we have disputed this claim as inaccurate, misleading and a disservice to 46,000 Red Tractor farmers.

The data in the same EA report actually supports the opposite conclusion. In the dairy sector for example, the data in the EA report shows that pollution incidents took place on 8% of Red Tractor dairy farms, while there were incidents on 77% of non Red Tractor dairy farms.

I was pleased to set the record



straight on **BBC Radio 4's Farming Today programme**, the morning after The Times story, and we continue to pursue a correction from The Times.

The EA has also written to The Times stating that the story 'misrepresented the EA's findings'. Their letter makes clear: "...we actually found that the number of pollution incidents on RTA farms would appear to be lower that might be expected by chance based on the representation of farm types..."

We're all aware that reducing agricultural pollution is a difficult problem which requires action from across the industry, including Red Tractor and the Environment Agency among others. That's why accurate reporting in the media is so important and I want to reassure you that we will continue to defend our members' track record.

Best wishes,
Jim Moseley
Red Tractor CEO

NEWS IN BRIEF

BUILD YOUR OWN H&S POLICY

The Farm Safety Foundation has developed a new tool that allows members to ensure their policy accurately reflects their farm make-up and activities, and the format allows those responsible to make amends as their business changes and grows.

The format also supports communication, understanding and adoption of practices, to ensure on-site health and safety is available to all.

Having an active Health & Safety policy is a must for all Red Tractor assured farms, as it encourages farm owners to think about potential risks and how to manage them.

The tool is free to use and can be accessed on the **Yellow Wellies website**.



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Food labelling: why trust the logo?

The risk of food fraud continues to capture national headlines, following reports that a meat processing business was importing meat and marketing it as British origin.

While the business in question was not a Red Tractor licensee, this case has the potential to shake consumer confidence in British food. Red Tractor continues to work with the FSA and other food industry bodies to strengthen accountability within the supply chain.

We are also seeing more cases where the use of "packed in the UK" messages or New Zealand and Australian flags with prominent Union Jacks are being used on packs of imported goods – techniques which can misrepresent provenance to customers.

The Red Tractor logo is unique in demonstrating British provenance because it is backed by a comprehensive traceability verification process. That's why consumers can trust it further than packaging that simply displays the Union Jack flag for example. And that's why we always move quickly to correct any misuse of the Red Tractor logo whether deliberately or in error.

Robust, unannounced audits

Safeguarding British provenance is fundamental to the Red Tractor assurance scheme, and our criteria for how food businesses and supermarkets must use the Red Tractor logo is simple. The logo

can only be used on products processed and packed in the UK which have met Red Tractor standards at each stage of the assurance supply chain. Any food business that makes a Red Tractor claim – whether that is carrying the logo on products, including Red Tractor as part of their marketing activities, or using Red Tractor as a buying specification – must be licensed and is subject to what we call the Traceability Challenge, which is a robust and unannounced audit of food business operators' premises and their paperwork.

The visit, wherever it takes place within the supply chain, will take a Red Tractor claimed product and always require within a short set timeframe, evidence of the farms which have supplied it even if that means going back through multiple businesses in the chain that have handled it. For example, a visit

"THIS PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE ABILITY TO TRACE PROVENANCE OF ANY RED TRACTOR PRODUCT ARE BIG PARTS OF WHY CONSUMERS TRUST YOUR FOOD."



BY PHILIPPA WILTSHIRE
HEAD OF OPERATIONS

to a food service restaurant who is licensed to make a Red Tractor claim on the chicken they sell will be required to present trace evidence back through each Red Tractor licensed stage of the chain, for example, the catering butcher, wholesaler, cutting plant and abattoir to check that all the originating farms were Red Tractor assured.

Supply chain accountability

As we demonstrate to consumers in our advertising campaigns, the Red Tractor assurance scheme covers the entirety of a Red Tractor-labelled product's journey to the supermarket shelf. This principle of accountability and the ability to trace provenance for any Red Tractor product are big factors in consumers' trust in food.

£14bn worth of food produced in the UK per year now carries the Red Tractor logo. There have been two printing mistakes so far this year relating to products that carried the Red Tractor logo. In these cases, the detailed information we hold on licensees and the Traceability Challenge is an incredibly useful tool which has enabled Red Tractor to take swift action against misuse of

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the logo, as it allows us to identify weaknesses in the supply chain and hold it to account where improvements need to be made. Please email us (enquiries@redtractor.org.uk) with

photos if you suspect misuse of the Red Tractor label and we will investigate as a top priority and take action against food businesses where required. We will be focusing on the

Traceability Challenge in our next member webinar on May 22, and we look forward to explaining more about the initiative and taking your questions about it. **Register here.**

RED TRACTOR ON THE ROAD...



• FARMERS WEEKLY QUESTION TIME IN NORWICH

Red Tractor Chair Christine Tacon joined the Farmers Weekly Question Time panel event at the John Innes Centre on April 20.

Christine addressed the recent reports of food fraud, saying they demonstrate the need for the UK to improve its food security. She also commented that consumers are able protect themselves by looking for the Red Tractor logo.

The audience expressed their concerns about the amount of bureaucracy and standards that the Red Tractor scheme imposes on farmers.

Christine recognised the difficulty members face and explained that Red Tractor has been reviewing its dairy, beef and lamb standards for audit efficiencies and plans to do the same for other sectors in the coming year.

She highlighted that while Red Tractor plays a crucial role in the

supply chain, the Red Tractor team is constantly listening to members and taking steps to improve it. She also welcomed feedback from Red Tractor farmers on areas to improve, and encouraged members to use The Portal, which is a tool for uploading necessary assurance documentation ahead of assessments.

You can listen again to the event via the Farmers Weekly podcast.



• PIGS TOMORROW

Come say hello to us and Red Tractor Pigs Chair, Stewart Houston, at our stand at Pigs Tomorrow, on May 9th and 10th. We're looking forward to speaking with members about how we can work together to ensure the future of the pig sector.

• AUCTION MARKET ROADSHOW

Look out for dates in May and June when Beef & Lamb Technical Manager Jemma Holden will be teaming up with SAI Global Intertek to visit markets around the country and meet up with members.



• CEREALS 2023

Join us on Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th June at Thoresby Estate, Nottinghamshire for the arable industry's leading technical event. Submit your details for the chance to receive a pair of complimentary tickets from Red Tractor.

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DEFRA'S PLAN FOR WATER

Defra announced on 4 April that farmers in England will benefit from more funding as part of a new integrated plan to improve water quality for people, businesses and nature.

The measures see more funding for farmers to improve their slurry storage, with nearly £34 million available through the first round of the Slurry Infrastructure Grant - more than double the original budget following very high demand from farmers.

Defra also outlined the second round of the Water Management Grant, which will open for applications in Mid-April. It will provide £10 million in funding to help farmers manage their water use through more efficient irrigation and securing water supplies through the construction of on-farm reservoirs.

The Integrated Plan for Water covers both the quality of the water environment – how clean it



is – and how much water we have. Defra have said it will transform the whole water system, tackling every source of pollution, including from storm overflows, agriculture, plastics, road run-off, chemicals and pesticides.



A Red Tractor themed Coronation

Next month Red Tractor will be celebrating the coronation of King Charles, who has been a lifelong champion of the British countryside, farming and food standards. To mark the occasion, we have created a bunting-clad animation of a coronation street party with characters from our new advert.

We will be using this animation on social media and our website to promote Red Tractor to consumers.

LET US KNOW

We are always looking for ways in which to improve what we do, and we welcome direct feedback from our members whether it is about the standards, your assessor or certification body, a business or farm you are concerned about or you have spotted the Red Tractor logo being used where it should not be.

We will always investigate every case thoroughly, as per our **complaints procedure**. Please be assured your details will always be kept confidential.

There are many ways to let us know – phone (020 7630 3320), email (**memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk**) or even our **TELL US** page for anonymous

complaints or intelligence. We need as much information as possible to do a thorough investigation. For food which may be carrying the Red Tractor logo incorrectly we need photos and in particular the supplier codes on the pack which allow us to identify the packer through our extensive database system and carry out immediate unannounced audits.

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