



Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

25 March 2025

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RED TRACTOR BOARD STATEMENT

Red Tractor Board welcomes the recommendations of the Farm Assurance Review

Since the publication of the Farm Assurance Review on 20 January, its full range of recommendations have been discussed at length by the Red Tractor Board. Considerable [input has also been provided by the Sector Boards](#), which have representation from the whole supply chain including 23 farmers.

Having listened to all perspectives, Red Tractor's Board supports the Review's recommendations and is fully committed to delivering improvements to farm assurance in collaboration with farmers and their representative bodies, the farming unions, AHDB, other assurance schemes, the retail and processing sectors, government and the certification bodies responsible for auditing farms.

We welcome the Review's recognition of the substantial benefits that farm assurance brings to the UK food and farming sector, but we also acknowledge the deep frustrations expressed by producers. There is a clear disconnect between these experiences and Red Tractor's core purpose to deliver value to British food and farming, which we must address.

We want farmers to feel heard, involved and proud to be part of Red Tractor. The input and contribution that farmers make to the development of our standards, governance structures and on our Board is of vital importance to Red Tractor. We acknowledge that more can be done to ensure farmers feel consulted, listened to and able to influence decision-making. We welcome this Review as an opportunity to reset relationships with farmers, and to better align with all stakeholders on the role assurance will play in a rapidly changing world.

The Red Tractor team, led by the Sector Boards, has begun work that will help to deliver many of the recommendations. This includes work to improve our communications with farmers, streamline our standards, improve audit efficiency and embrace new technology, all of which should reduce the audit burden for farmers. We are also doubling down on our efforts to increase engagement with farmers as part of our leadership culture.

Our commitments to deliver the relevant recommendations in the Farm Assurance Review are outlined in our detailed response published today. We will report progress against these commitments regularly, with updates published on our [website](#). We will also build these commitments into future business plans.

The recommendations include some complex issues that all involved with Red Tractor want to properly address. Everyone we've consulted has recognised the extremely challenging timescales outlined in the Review, together with the need for collaboration with other organisations. For this reason, our response proposes realistic milestones that prioritise key issues and maintain momentum, while balancing speed with rigour. We have also

written to other farm assurance schemes and stakeholders to offer collaboration and look forward to supporting where there is a need or the opportunity to work together.

As was clear in our recent Sector Board meetings, different farming sectors have different views, requirements and experiences. As a result, we will continue to work with our Sector Boards to, where asked, develop more tailored approaches.

In the coming months, we will be setting up opportunities to discuss plans more widely and hear thoughts and ideas from farmers and stakeholders about the direction of travel. These will include feedback via our website, webinars and face-to-face meetings around the country. We look forward to meeting you at these.

The Red Tractor Board

Alistair Mackintosh, Interim Chair

John Dracup, Beef & Lamb Sector Chair

Representing the [Beef & Lamb Sector Board](#).

Tim Lock, Dairy Sector Chair

Representing the [Dairy Sector Board](#).

Kit Papworth, Crops & Sugar Beet Sector Chair

Representing the [Crops & Sugar Beet Sector Board](#).

Stewart Houston, Pigs Sector Chair

Representing the [Pig Sector Board](#).

Iain Gardner, Poultry Sector Chair

Representing the [Poultry Sector Board](#).

Lucy MacLennan, Fresh Produce Sector Chair

Representing the [Fresh Produce Sector Board](#).

David Exwood, Industry Director, NFU

Representing the Farm Unions

Will Jackson, Industry Director, AHDB

Dean Holroyd, Industry Director, British Meat Processing Association

David Neilson, Industry Director, British Poultry Council

Sophie Throup, Industry Director, British Retail Consortium

James Russell, Independent Director and Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

John Pain, Independent Director with consumer marketing expertise

Chris Goodwin, Independent Director and Chartered Certified Accountant

Jim Moseley, Chief Executive Officer of Red Tractor

Responses to strategic recommendations

The Farm Assurance Review provides nine strategic recommendations. The table below provides Red Tractor's response to each strategic recommendation and highlights those that are a priority for our organisation. These high-level recommendations are supported by 56 more specific detailed recommendations, which we provide responses to on pages 6 to 42.

Strategic recommendation	Red Tractor's response
<p>1. On-farm audits must be reduced, simplified and delivered more consistently</p>	<p>PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR Red Tractor fully supports this recommendation. We want farmers to experience real change with smarter risk-based audits which reduce burden. We are committed to prioritising the relevant recommendations in partnership with our certification bodies, assessors and other schemes to ensure audits to Red Tractor's standards are consistent, simplified, meaningful and as efficient as possible.</p>
<p>2. There must be a transformational step forward in embracing technology and managing data to deliver more effective farm assurance with greater added value for all</p>	<p>PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR Red Tractor fully supports this recommendation and is committed to investing in and embracing technology and improving data management. This will start with the roll out of initial developments to the Red Tractor Portal to improve the functionality for members and assessors. We have started to seek views from stakeholders on which data integration options should be prioritised and piloted.</p>
<p>3. Farm assurance schemes need to reset and/or restate their decision-making structures to establish farmers as the driving voice in standards development</p>	<p>PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR The input and contribution that farmers make to the development of our standards, governance structures and on our Board is of vital importance to Red Tractor. We acknowledge that more can be done to ensure farmers feel consulted, listened to and able to influence decision-making. However, our Board and Sector Boards agree that as a whole supply chain assurance scheme, it's important that decision making is a collaborative process balanced between all stakeholders - this was also recognised by the Campbell Tickell Review.</p>

Strategic recommendation	Red Tractor's response
4. A new industry-led initiative must set out the future environmental ambitions for farm assurance, establishing this as an area of competitive advantage for UK farming	Red Tractor accepts this really important area is for others to lead and is ready to support the sectors to help meet the environmental ambitions of UK farming, but only if we are asked to do so by all stakeholders within the sector.
5. The inclusion of regulatory requirements within farm assurance standards and audits should be conditional on government and regulators agreeing a form of 'earned recognition'	Red Tractor welcomes the suggestion of inclusion of earned recognition in government policies and agrees this important area requires a cross-industry approach to open the door. We would welcome the opportunity to work with regulatory agencies to identify further opportunities for earned recognition that would reduce audit burden for Red Tractor assured farms. We do not agree with the broad statement that regulatory requirements should only be included in farm assurance standards in return for Government 'earned recognition' as many of these will also be vital to deliver core elements of assurance (e.g. food safety, animal welfare, traceability etc) and the right approach will differ depending on the sector.
6. There must be greater coordination in the way in which farm assurance operates across the UK nations	Red Tractor is committed to ongoing collaboration with Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish farming bodies and assurance schemes to ensure we understand and reflect devolved regulatory requirements in our scheme, maximise efficiency across the different assurance operations and identify opportunities for earned recognition of common standards.
7. Farm assurance schemes must better position the UK farming industry in world food markets and in competition with imported food	Red Tractor agrees this is an important area for the UK farming industry and looks forward to working with AHDB, farming unions and organisations, farmers, processors and government to promote British food both overseas and in the UK. We recognise this is particularly important for the crops sector and are committed to playing our part to establish how best to address the import equivalence challenge for that sector. We welcome the recommendations for others to lead to provide more transparency about standards for imported food.

Strategic recommendation	Red Tractor's response
<p>8. All farm assurance schemes must review, and, where necessary, improve their methods of communication with the farming industry</p>	<p>PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR Red Tractor is totally committed to ensuring that farmers see, hear and feel real change. We are also focusing on improving how we communicate, particularly with farmers and growers, and embedding this into our leadership culture. We will implement a new communications strategy focused on building trust and engagement with farmers.</p>
<p>9. The RT scheme must complete the implementation of recommendations in the Campbell Tickell report</p>	<p>PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR Since the publication of the Campbell Tickell report we've published a Governance Handbook, introduced a Board Member Code of Conduct, developed a process for Directors' appraisals and reviewed the Risk Register.</p> <p>We will publish a briefing on how we've delivered the governance recommendations from the report by the end of May 2025.</p>

Detailed recommendations

Strategic Recommendation 1: On-farm audits must be reduced, simplified and delivered more consistently

PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR: Red Tractor fully supports this recommendation. We want farmers to experience real change with smarter risk-based audits which reduce burden. We are committed to prioritising the relevant recommendations in partnership with our certification bodies, assessors and other schemes to ensure audits to Red Tractor's standards are consistent, simplified, meaningful and as efficient as possible.

Notes

*For ease of reading, and to demonstrate transparency, the table below includes a summary of what we understand to be the key asks of each recommendation. Please refer to the [Farm Assurance Review](#) for the detailed recommendations. **The lead organisations are those identified by the Farm Assurance Review as taking a lead responsibility for the recommendation.

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
1.1	Clarity about purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose and scope of farm assurance must be clarified and reset, based on the good practice statement set out in the FAR report. Agreement should be sought from bodies across the food supply chain on this restatement. 	NFU & AHDB	RT will help and support at the request of the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT values our close working relationship with NFU & AHDB who have representatives on our Board and Sector Boards and have contributed to our response to FAR. We would be pleased to help and support NFU, AHDB and other stakeholders to agree the purpose and scope of farm assurance if required. RT wrote on 21st March to NFU and AHDB who lead this action offering our help and support at a time that they feel is appropriate.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
I.2	Revising standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove standards or reduce their complexity. • Undertake a deep dive of existing standards to provide a publicly available plan setting out which, in due course, will be removed, replaced or improved. • Thereafter, report publicly on the rationale for keeping or removing a standard. • Each new standard introduced must have a publicly identified sponsor/sponsors to provide greater transparency on the catalyst for its inclusion. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT recognises the importance of this and has started work in this area in consultation with Sector Boards and key stakeholders to develop and finalise a policy for standards. The policy will initiate a review of and justification for existing standards and identify future changes as specified. • This new 'Red Tractor Policy for Standards' will be published on our website with a review plan by July 2025. • Progress against the review plan will be monitored and published every 6 months.
I.3	A right of appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be recourse for farm businesses to refer an audit outcome to an independent arbitrator outside the scheme when the audit outcome could restrict market access. • Publicly restate its approach to having a transparent complaints and appeals procedure that takes account of external arbitration. • Unless non-compliance relates to an issue of food safety, or some other serious breach of standards, it should not result in immediate suspension of market access. • Publicly restate the timescales within which an appeal process will be completed. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT agrees this is an area where transparency is vital. • Appealing audit outcomes is within the responsibility of the Certification Body so we will ask all who work with RT to ensure their appeals procedure is accessible to RT members. • While RT has a Complaints and Appeals process which specifies that the appeal panel must include at least one person independent of RT, we will nevertheless consider steps to strengthen this process in line with the recommendation. We will then publish the process in full by June 2025. • RT will review the process every two years. • RT's existing suspensions process includes a 28-day grace period for non-conformances to be resolved with the exception of major non-conformances against key standards.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

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1.4	Proportionate sanctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the sanctions imposed for non-compliance to ensure that they are proportionate and do not unduly impact upon the viability of a farming business. • Schemes must work together to ensure that there is greater consistency between their standards, grading and any sanctions imposed for non-compliance. 	FA Schemes	RT will collaborate and consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While RT already has a process to ensure that sanctions are proportionate, the review has demonstrated that these sanctions are not sufficiently transparent or publicly available. Therefore, we will communicate and publish RT's sanctions by May 2025. • Following discussion with other FA schemes RT will review sanctions in consultation with Sector Boards, to ensure they are consistent. • RT has started progress against this recommendation by writing on 19th March to other FA Schemes to suggest we all collaborate on this topic to ensure a consistent approach.

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
1.5	Risk based, coordinated inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a risk-based approach to audit visits, based on previous audit outcomes, so that the timing of visits and their content can be adjusted where appropriate and permissible. • The risk assessment must be clearly communicated to the farm business so that it is aware of the timescales and areas of focus that will form the basis of future audit visits • Prior to a farm audit, the certification body must continue to contact the farmer to set out how the process will work and offer the opportunity to raise questions or concerns, but this should take the form of supportive contact to reduce stress, and offer advice about the audit process on a non-prejudicial basis. • If an auditor is unable to conduct their audit in accordance with the timing in the agreed audit plan, they must set out their reasons to the farmer in writing. If the farmer disagrees that the time taken is not compliant, the farm assurance scheme must review the matter to ensure the auditor's work is being conducted as effectively and efficiently as possible, and inform the farmer of the outcome. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All RT sectors fully agree that developing this approach is an important ambition, whilst also recognising the risk assessment method and delivery will need to both maintain rigour and incorporate sector differences. • RT already operates a risk based approach to audits in pigs, poultry and dairy however, a risk-based approach acknowledging low risk farms has not yet been developed or implemented. • Ensuring consistency and fairness through a risk-based approach whilst continuing to deliver within the accreditation and existing sector benchmarked arrangements is a complex area. RT will work with UKAS, our certification bodies, regulators, other FA schemes to ensure all aspects are considered in developing an achievable roadmap by sector. • RT will publish progress updates on this topic in sector board reports. • We will publish details of the RT Assessor Protocol and Training programme to demonstrate the processes that all assessors have to follow when conducting an audit by July 2025. • RT will work with our certification bodies to ensure appropriate information is shared prior to assessment including any guidance that may aid the member. • RT Complaints and Appeals process will be reviewed as part of 1.3 to check the process meets this recommendation.

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1.6	Learning lessons: using experience to support members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm assurance schemes must make the lessons learned from audit visits available to their membership in an anonymised form so that best practice, and the means to develop that practice, can be shared. Farm assurance plays a role in helping to maintain and improve standards across the farming industry; auditors should be tasked to identify best practice to feed into these processes. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT agrees there is an opportunity improve the value provided by audit information, and will consult with farming representatives on Sector Boards, other external support organisations (eg AHDB) and auditors to review how such information, including best practice examples, can be shared widely across the RT membership and industry. RT will pilot this with the dairy sector by Sept 2025. RT publishes compliance advice based on the most common non-conformances for members across all sectors.
1.7	Working in tandem: collaboration and cooperation between schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further collaboration and cooperation is needed between farm assurance schemes to allow multiple scheme audits to be conducted at the same time, reduce duplication and encourage 'earned recognition', with the aim of reducing the time invested by farm businesses in audits. In due course there must be a common scale of standards – or at least a 'read across' between scheme standards – with additional requirements related to customer requirements only where they are strictly necessary to obtain particular market access. 	FA schemes, led by AHDB	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On a large proportion of farms where RT and other FA scheme audits are required by the member they are already conducted at the same time (eg RT + LEAF we estimate >95%). This is delivered through our work with our certification bodies who also assess for many other FA schemes. However, this can improve, and separate audits in some devolved regions and between RT and RSPCA audits are the exception. RT has started progress against this recommendation by writing on 19th March to all other FA schemes to suggest we all collaborate on this important area and seek ways to improve. In some sectors, considerable additional audit burden is created by separate processor and customer audits, which RT has identified as a significant area omitted from the Commissioners' Report. RT will write to all retailers to urge them to work with RT to address this together. Relevant RT Sector Boards will identify areas for improvement in this area and develop an action plan to consult with relevant processors and customers. RT will publish progress updates on this topic in sector board reports.

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1.8	Joint training for inspectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm assurance schemes must revisit induction and training programmes for both new and existing auditors, to create and publish a common mandatory 'framework' for all scheme auditors based around a simplified assurance structure. • There must be a renewed focus on auditor training to develop interpersonal skills that improve communication and relationships between the audit process and the farm business. Farm assurance schemes should engage with TIAH to capture and recognise the continuing professional development of farm assurance auditors, and for TIAH to signpost farm assurance schemes and auditors, to appropriate training. • Farm assurance schemes must publish data on auditor training annually. 	FA Schemes, working with TIAH	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT is committed to continuous CPD for auditors delivering RT audits, and we have a dedicated Assessor Training Academy and internal staff resource in our Compliance Team to focus and deliver this. • RT will review the current training provision to ensure it delivers the required framework, and training around communications and interpersonal skills. • We will publish details of the RT Assessor Protocol and Training programme to demonstrate this by July 2025. • RT is already a member of the TIAH Consultation Group, and wrote to TIAH on 19th March reconfirming our commitment to the work TIAH are doing and asking for suggested appropriate training providers as recommended. • Statistics on the RT assessor training programme will be published annually, starting in Sept 2025.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
1.9	Transparency between schemes and regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm assurance schemes must (ideally collaboratively) inform and train industry regulators about the purpose and scope of good practice farm assurance, and the respective roles of farm assurance versus regulatory requirements. (NB this should take account of Defra's current regulatory review to improve efficiency and effectiveness.) • Auditors should regularly come together with key stakeholders to undertake mock inspections that improve dialogue and learning. 	FA Schemes and industry regulators	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT recognises that transparency with regulators could deliver benefits to all parties – members, FA schemes and regulators themselves. • RT has started progress against this recommendation by writing on 19th March to all other FA schemes to ascertain the potential to collaborate on knowledge exchange initiatives with regulators. • Through its existing memorandum of understanding with the Food Standards Agency, RT has agreed to host an on-farm awareness day for key FSA staff and inspectors. • RT will produce videos showing elements of a RT farm inspection for sharing with FSA and other regulators to improve transparency by May 2025.

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
I.10	Addressing the impact of audit on farmer wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in farm assurance schemes has a reported impact on stress levels and mental health in an industry already known to have high levels of neurodiversity. Auditors should be supported through training to take these factors into account in their auditing approach. Training and support are available from, for example, FCN, RABI, RSABI and Rural Support, and farm assurance schemes should engage proactively with such charities. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT recognises the huge challenges facing the farming community and the pressure placed on some farmers, and is fully committed to ensuring RT staff and auditors working on our behalf are appropriately trained. In addition we believe that work in streamlining audits and implementing a risk based approach has the potential to improve the impact. To amplify existing efforts, by July 2025 the RT Board will identify a Director to take responsibility for overseeing this work and identify where improvements can be made, for example in the prominence and frequency of published support, or in the training provided to auditors or the RT telephone helpdesk. The RT website carries more information and details are published in our Member Matters newsletter from time to time. RT staff who liaise with members on a regular basis have attended RABI Mental Health Training, and RT direct communication with individual members, particularly when sanctions are being applied, always highlights where further support can be found. Certification Bodies working with RT all provide regular training for their staff and auditors.
I.11	Promoting consistency in inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater consistency and longevity is needed in the appointment of an auditor to a particular farm business (subject to accreditation requirements) to enable a better understanding of that business during the audit process - 	FA Schemes	RT will consult with UKAS and Certification Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT will consult with UKAS and certification bodies by July 2025 to identify what is possible whilst maintaining balance between consistency and objectivity and as such RT wrote to all RT certification bodies on 19th March. RT will also investigate whether capturing key information on IT systems and portals could assist with better knowledge retention in the future if the individual auditor has to change, for whatever reason.

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1.12	Inspection as a career path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm Assurance schemes must collaborate to secure and improve the pipeline of experienced and trained farm auditors, for example through raising awareness among the next generation of farmers or via educational curricula. 	FA Schemes	RT will consult with Certification Bodies and FA Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT agrees that securing and improving a pipeline of experienced and trained auditors for the future is vital and is committed to playing our part. Lack of interest in farming-related roles is a problem for the farming sector as a whole. RT will consult with Certification Bodies who contract / employ auditors as they are a key partner in addressing this area, together with universities and colleges. RT has started progress against this recommendation by writing on 19th March RT to certification bodies and FA Schemes offering to discuss how we can all collaborate to address this important topic.
1.13	Risk-based inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be a reduction in the frequency of farm assurance audits for those farm businesses that are consistently compliant, building upon the risk-based audit approach. Farm assurance schemes must also consider focusing auditors on aspects of farming practice while on site, and encouraging greater use of technology to deal separately with paperwork-related audit requirements. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This directly links to Recommendation 1.5, in which all RT sectors fully agree this approach is an important ambition, whilst also recognising the risk assessment method and ways to deliver it will need to incorporate sector differences. RT will work with UKAS, our certification bodies, regulators, other FA schemes to ensure all aspects around audit efficiency and best use of time are considered in developing an achievable roadmap by sector. RT will publish progress updates on this topic in sector board reports on an ongoing basis.

Strategic Recommendation 2: There must be a transformational step forward in embracing technology and managing data to deliver more effective farm assurance with greater added value for all

PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR: Red Tractor fully supports this recommendation and is committed to investing in and embracing technology and improving data management. This will start with the roll out of initial developments to the Red Tractor Portal to improve the functionality for members and assessors. We have started to seek views from stakeholders on which data integration options should be prioritised and piloted.

Notes

*For ease of reading, and to demonstrate transparency, the table below includes a summary of what we understand to be the key asks of each recommendation. Please refer to the [Farm Assurance Review](#) for the detailed recommendations. **The lead organisations are those identified by the Farm Assurance Review as taking a lead responsibility for the recommendation.

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
2.1	'Tell Us Once': making good use of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auditors must be mandated to review their scheme's online portal prior to their audit visit to review documentation placed on the portal by the farm business, then focus on any missing documentation and reviewing farming practice. Auditors must be required to provide written evidence that the pre-visit portal/repository review has been conducted. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT and our Sector Boards unanimously agree with this recommendation on the proviso farmers – given their wide variation in levels of technology adoption – can still choose whether to use the portal or not. Priority work is already well underway to improve the portal experience for assessors. We will deliver training and issue a survey for further feedback on ideas for improvement by April 2025. RT wrote to all certification bodies on 19th March stressing the importance of all assessors using the portal where farmers indicate they want to. RT recognised this issue a number of years ago and developed its portal in late 2019 and launched it in 2020 partly to address this and partly to address the challenge of Covid.

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
2.2	Data ownership: the need for resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any outstanding issues surrounding the ownership, holding and use/sharing of data required by farm assurance schemes must be clarified in conjunction with farming industry bodies, and the results communicated to the farming industry as soon as practicable. The distinction between data of value to assurance scheme members, and anonymised data to support direct improvements in farming assurance and farming systems, needs to be 'written in' to an industry agreement on data ownership, custodianship and use, so to realise the longer-term benefits from the wider use of technology in farm assurance systems. 	Farm assurance schemes, NFUs and AHDB	RT will collaborate at the request of the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT recognises that the issue of data ownership is extremely important to our members so we support this recommendation. RT wrote on 21st March to those identified to lead this action offering to collaborate at a time they feel is appropriate. In February 2024 Red Tractor was awarded a full Farm Data Principles Certificate, independently verifying that we operate to the highest standards of data security, privacy, and integrity.
2.3	Creating a data co-op	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm assurance schemes, working together, should support feasibility work into a data co-op whereby data could be shared across private and public sector. to reduce duplication and improve efficiency. Farmers should retain control of commercially sensitive data, managing consent and protecting any commercial value. Consideration must also be given to replicating the approach seen in Wales for the development of data hubs that can be used to pull data sources together for the benefit of the farming industry. 	FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT will discuss this further with Commissioners to ensure a full understanding of the recommendation and is committed to consulting with necessary stakeholders to establish their views prior to agreeing a way to progress.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

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2.4	Supporting farmers in a digital world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm assurance schemes must publish information about the training programmes they have put in place to help improve farmer take-up of current technologies, and ensure that future system developments include relevant training for end users at cost to the scheme. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In April 2025 RT will publish the first in a regular update in Member Matters and on the website about the RT portal, how it works and the benefits to members of using it, together with a survey for farmers to feedback ideas that RT can use to improve. RT currently provides user guides and a video on our website to help farmers use the RT Portal. RT does not charge members to use the RT portal.
2.5	Future possibilities: harnessing collective expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The farming industry should seek to facilitate a regular 'hackathon' to address the longer-term use of technology in farm assurance, given the way technology is often raised as a solution, but with little progress on its use to reduce burden of assurance or on meeting the needs of those who rely upon farm assurance for business or regulatory purposes. 	NFUs, AHDB and Defra Data Group, with Agri-Tech E &/or UK Agri-Tech Centre & FA Schemes	RT will collaborate with others as requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT is committed to playing its part with the wider industry in this area and awaits further clarification on how this will be coordinated across the wide number of industry stakeholders identified.

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2.6	'Tell Us Once': collecting and storing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm assurance schemes must ensure that they have a portal, or similar data repository, which can be used by scheme members to host information required during their audit visit. • The format of that data should be flexible to better provide for data collection during the audit cycle rather than during the period immediately before the audit visit. • Providing information via a portal/repository should be mandatory, and farm businesses positively incentivised by farm assurance schemes to use these basic technologies as part of the audit process. • Farm assurance schemes must publish annually the take-up of their respective portal/repository by scheme members so that a record of progress towards universal use of such systems is publicly available. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT and our Sector Boards unanimously agree with this recommendation, although feel that mandating it at this time would not be appropriate as use should be a farmer choice, with efficiency and visit frequency driving that decision. • As outlined in 2.4, in April 2025, RT will publish its first of a regular update in Member Matters and on the website about the RT portal, how it works and the benefits to members of using it, together with a survey for farmers to feedback ideas that RT can use to improve. • As described in 2.1, RT previously recognised this challenge and launched our portal in 2020. • As at March 2025 the RT portal has been used for documents relating to 10,482 member sites. RT commits to publishing an update on usage figures annually.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

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2.7	Alternative approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AIMS/Vetaverse scheme (among others) should be explored to understand their governance structures, data ownership and funding models. Such technology-based approaches may have the longer-term potential to disrupt current methods of farm assurance in the livestock sector and bring non-assured livestock products into farm assurance scope – although they will need to move from concept to coordinated application with the support of others. 	New schemes to work with AHDB	Not applicable to RT	
2.8	Keep it live: reviewing standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As new approaches to farm inspections are created a dynamic approach to implementing related exemptions in current farm assurance systems must be taken. We expect farm assurance schemes to use data on a 'tell us once' principle to avoid duplication of effort by farm businesses and deliver greater efficiency in farm assurance processes. 	FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the standards review (see 1.2) RT will consult with Sector Boards and government agencies to identify other similar opportunities. In February 2025 RT changed the beef and lamb standard to recognise the DEFRA Pathway visit as a way to demonstrate compliance with the standard requiring a health performance review. Details published in Technical Briefing.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
2.9	Investing in technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intended outcome of the above recommendations is to embed a technology and data environment within all farm assurance schemes, and to greatly improve take up among farm businesses. Farm assurance schemes will need to maintain, at their cost, a comprehensive strategy for innovation and investment in this area, and farm assurance schemes should work together to develop real time, mobile data collection systems on which a rolling assurance system could be based. • Food assurance/food transparency/food waste and sustainability and business value can all benefit from collaboration and improved data use. While technology for some aspects is already employed on many farms, greater coordination and engagement with the farming community will be required to deliver a shift in farm assurance towards these methods and to help farms better utilise aggregated data. 	AHDB to coordinate with FA Schemes	RT will support and collaborate at the request of the lead body AHDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT awaits further clarification from AHDB on how this will be coordinated.

Strategic Recommendation 3: Farm assurance schemes need to reset and/or restate their decision-making structures to establish farmers as the driving voice in standards development

PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR: The input and contribution that farmers make to the development of our standards, governance structures and on our Board is of vital importance to Red Tractor. We acknowledge that more can be done to ensure farmers feel consulted, listened to and able to influence decision-making. However, our Board and Sector Boards agree that as a whole supply chain assurance scheme, it's important that decision making is a collaborative process balanced between all stakeholders - this was also recognised by the Campbell Tickell Review.

Notes

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Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
3.1	Creating and amending standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure farmers are involved in the process of creating/amending farm assurance standards. • Publish the way in which this happens. • Give farmers a clear route to make their views known. • In the longer term, collaborate with other schemes to set out an agreed framework for wider farming industry consultation. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT acknowledge that more can be done to ensure farmers feel consulted, listened to and able to influence decision-making on standards. We also recognise that farmers have concerns about representation. • We are committed to continuous improvement in this area and will review how we consult on creating and amending standards as part of the Standards Review plan set out in 1.2. • Feedback from members on standards or other areas will continue to be encouraged via direct communication or our post assessment surveys and we will consider other methods. • The input and contribution that farmers make to the development of our standards, governance structures and on our Board is of vital importance to Red Tractor. • Farmers are involved in RT Governance at all stages from Ownership Body to Board, Sector Boards and Technical Advisory Committees • Details are available in our Governance Handbook. • In the past RT members have had a clear route to making their views known on proposed RT standards through an open and transparent consultation process which we will improve. Eg Version 5 Consultation.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
3.2	Appointments to Sector Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the process for appointing farmers to Sector Boards (or similar) as representatives of their sector is transparent. • Demonstrate that appointees are clear on responsibilities to engage with the wider farming community to act as a representative voice for that community. • Demonstrate that the process for appointment is independent of the scheme's senior executive team. • Develop role descriptions for farmer appointments which sets out their obligations as representatives. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT recognises that some farmers do not feel their voices are heard. To address this, we will review the Sector Board Terms of Reference covering the structure of each Sector Board, how members are recruited and appointed, and their duties outlined to both represent their sector and disseminate information back from RT. They will also particularly examine how RT and those on our Sector Boards can be more transparent and engage with the wider farming community more thoroughly. • Sector Board Terms of Reference will be reviewed by July 2025. • Farmers are involved in RT Governance at all stages from Ownership Body to Board, Sector Boards and Technical Advisory Committees • Details are available in our Governance Handbook. • The appointment process is defined in the Nominations Committee Terms of Reference which is published in the Governance Handbook • RT publishes summaries of the Red Tractor Board and Sector Board meetings on our website.
3.3	Board structures in farm assurance schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the structure and board composition to ensure skills mix is balanced and equitable across the food supply chain using the Campbell Tickell report as a guide. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT welcomed the Campbell Tickell report in March 2024 and has implemented its recommendations since then. A report will be published in May 2025 on how these recommendations have been completed. • RT and our Sector Boards unanimously agree that there must be balance across the food supply chain on RT Sector Boards. • Following a review of our Sector Board Terms of Reference in July 2025 (see 3.2) we will then review each Sector Board to ensure the skills mix is balanced.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
3.4	Balancing scheme demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct and publish an annual review of the statement of good practice set out in the review. • Demonstrate that the demands placed on various parts of the food supply chain are balanced, and that any additional farm assurance costs arising from new or enhanced standards are shared across the food chain on an equitable basis. 	FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT Board will consult with the Commissioners and Sector Boards to consider how best to meet this recommendation.
3.5	Using impact assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an impact assessment is published for either the creation or removal of a farm standard as a matter of course, so that the origin and rationale are understood. • Publish details of how the farming industry has been consulted about any changes to standards. 	FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 1.2 - RT will consult Sector Boards on a new RT Policy for Standards and take this recommendation into account when finalising.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
3.6	A federation of farm assurance schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the need to establish a loose federation of farm assurance schemes to act as focus for knowledge transfer, thought leadership and best practice. 	FA Schemes	RT is committed to collaborating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT has started progress against this recommendation by writing on 19th March RT to other FA Schemes to suggest we all collaborate on this recommendation.

Strategic Recommendation 4: A new industry-led initiative must set out the future environmental ambitions for farm assurance, establishing this as an area of competitive advantage for UK farming

Red Tractor accepts this really important area is for others to lead and is ready to support the sectors to help meet the environmental ambitions of UK farming, but only if we are asked to do so by all stakeholders within the sector.

Notes

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Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
4.1	Developing acceptable environmental standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given RT's position that it will not explore environmental standards until there is a clear 'ask from industry, there is no current leadership to establish a consistent framework for environmental standards that can act as a guide for farm businesses. This issue must therefore be taken out of the hands of the farm assurance system, and addressed by farming representatives, working with regulators. AHDB and the farming unions must clearly articulate what is currently required by each of the 7 industry sectors to be legally compliant with current environmental legislation and conduct a gap analysis. 	AHDB, NFUs, Gov Ministries and relevant agencies	RT will support at the request of the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RT Board and Sector Boards all agree that the environment is an extremely important subject for the UK farming industry. RT strongly welcomes this recommendation and in particular urges the AHDB/NFUs to clearly articulate what is required to be legally compliance with current environmental legislation. RT will support in this area where required.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
4.2	How can farmers implement environmental standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In taking the above approach, there must be clear and regular communication with farm businesses about the steps they can take to meet the necessary environmental legislative baseline and any agreed farm assurance standards related to that baseline. 	AHDB and NFUs	RT will support at the request of the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT will support in this area where required.
4.3	Rewarding the use of environmental standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the food chain wish to see enhanced environmental or animal welfare standards (above the legal baseline) this must be accompanied by a clearly identified premium paid to the farm business that recognises the benefit to the food chain business. Food chain businesses must report publicly on the steps they have taken to implement this recommendation. 	Food chain businesses beyond the farm gate	Action for others to lead	
4.4	Telling the wider world what farming delivers for the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm assurance schemes, in conjunction with the unions and AHDB, must collaborate to develop and implement a communications/PR plan for the wider public to highlight farming practices that are helping to deliver enhanced environmental and animal welfare standards. 	FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT will consult with Sector Boards and stakeholders once requested to be involved in communicating enhanced environmental standards to the wider public by NFUs, AHDB and wider farming and food chain stakeholders. RT will continue to highlight good practice in farm animal welfare to the general public through our consumer marketing campaigns.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
4.5	A 'foresight' exercise on future environmental standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the whole food supply chain to help the food sector be current and less defensive on environmental issues. • Monitor the UK's farming performance on environmental standards from a farm business perspective, and benchmark this performance against competitor farming nations and international farm assurance standards to determine how farms will meet new standards from a menu of sector-appropriate farming measures. 	FA Schemes with farming and food chain industry reps	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By necessity, this will be built upon 4.1, hence RT will await a steer from AHDB and the farming unions upon which we will consult with our Sector Boards and stakeholders.

Strategic Recommendation 5: The inclusion of regulatory requirements within farm assurance standards and audits should be conditional on government and regulators agreeing a form of 'earned recognition'

Red Tractor welcomes the suggestion of inclusion of earned recognition in government policies and agrees this important area requires a cross-industry approach to open the door. We would welcome the opportunity to work with regulatory agencies to identify further opportunities for earned recognition that would reduce audit burden for Red Tractor assured farms. We do not agree with the broad statement that regulatory requirements should only be included in farm assurance standards in return for Government 'earned recognition' as many of these will also be vital to deliver core elements of assurance (e.g. food safety, animal welfare, traceability etc) and the right approach will differ depending on the sector.

Notes

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Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
5.1	Creating points of contact in government departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government department should address the lack of a clear principal point of contact for farm assurance. 	Gov depts	RT will collaborate with the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT welcomes this recommendation and urges Government agencies to act so we can engage as soon as is practically possible.
5.2	Consistency of regulatory use of farm assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government departments, and their agencies, must determine how, and when, they expect to use farm assurance in their regulatory systems, and a consistent approach to its use is negotiated and agreed with farm assurance schemes and relevant industry bodies. An early part of these negotiations should be to properly define the term 'earned recognition' so that the concept is employed consistently across the farm assurance landscape. 	Gov depts, regulatory agencies and NFUs	RT will collaborate at the request of the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT has experience of earned recognition arrangements with some government agencies (e.g. FSA) and is committed to working in collaboration with NFUs and Government departments as soon as is practically possible.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
5.3	Agreeing how regulatory sanctions and farm assurance work together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is scope for farm assurance schemes to continue to be used as a proxy for regulatory inspections, but the terms of such engagements must be publicly available and agreement reached on reporting sanctions for non-compliance. 	Regulatory agencies with FA schemes	RT will collaborate with the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT welcomes this recommendation and urges Government agencies to act so we can engage as soon as is practically possible. RT recognises that there are significant sensitivities amongst farmers in this area and so any proposals must provide clear benefits to RT members and be fully consulted with sector boards and farming organisations before agreement.
5.4	Extending 'earned recognition'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is scope for government bodies to extend the concept of 'earned recognition', with the potential that participation in a government funding scheme could be used to fulfil the relevant aspects of a farm assurance audit. 	FA schemes in consultation with gov depts	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT will consult with Government departments on the concept of 'earned recognition'. A letter will be sent to set this in motion once there is clarity over the appropriate contacts within Government (se 5.1).
5.5	Using farm data to determine the impact of policy changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central and devolved governments should work with farm assurance schemes to provide commercial payments in exchange for relevant data from farming businesses 	Gov depts	RT will collaborate at the request of the lead bodies	
5.6	Improving government understanding of the role of farm assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be closer liaison between farm assurance and Defra's Farming and Countryside Programme 	DEFRA	RT will continue to liaise with DEFRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT liaises with DEFRA's Farming & Countryside Programme on a monthly basis to ensure an understanding of Red Tractor's programme and always uses the opportunity to reinforce the importance of the farmer within the supply chain. We will continue to do this proactively.

Strategic Recommendation 6: There must be greater coordination in the way in which farm assurance operates across the UK nations

Red Tractor is committed to ongoing collaboration with Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish farming bodies and assurance schemes to ensure we understand and reflect devolved regulatory requirements in our scheme, maximise efficiency across the different assurance operations and identify opportunities for earned recognition of common standards.

Notes

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Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
6.1	Consider a new approach for combinable crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although RT is working on a new entry level grain standard, the cereals sector must take stock of farmer feedback and decide if a new comprehensive model for the sector should be adopted. Comparing and contrasting the RT Crops assurance scheme with Scottish Quality Crops Food Fortress in Northern Ireland would provide the basis of a thorough, time limited review, which should engage widely with the combinable crops industry and the AIC to co-develop a new approach. The review must take account of the mixed nature of many farm businesses to ensure that any new approach, does not increase farm assurance requirements or cost. 	Crops supply chain orgs, coordinated by AHDB	RT will help and support at the request of the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT is committed to helping and supporting NFU, AHDB and all stakeholders in the crops supply chain to establish how best to address the import equivalence challenge for the sector.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
6.2	Improving Red Tractor understanding of farming in Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Northern Ireland governance board with strong farmer representation to focus on the particular farming circumstances found in this part of the UK. 	Red Tractor	RT will consult with the UFU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT recognises that there is a unique trading environment in NI with the land border to the EU. RT is committed to further consultation with UFU to ensure that these issues are discussed transparently at all relevant levels within RT governance. The three schemes which RT operates in NI have UFU representatives on the Sector Boards and TACs. The RT Chairman and CEO meet with the UFU every two months. RT meets regularly with NIFCC the certification body certifying the RT Dairy and poultry scheme in NI.
6.3	Creating 'one voice' for UK farm assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the recommended federation of FA Scheme forum. Be an integral part of the 'one voice' approach when representing UK farm assurance to external bodies. 	All FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT has started progress against this recommendation by writing 19th March to other FA Schemes to suggest we all collaborate on this recommendation
6.4	The role of whole-life in farm assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livestock farm assurance schemes that do not deliver whole life assurance should establish a plan to do so. 	Relevant FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering whole-life is a clear objective for the RT beef and lamb sector board at the right time and in consultation and agreement with all stakeholders. Other recommendations are considered a priority at this stage.

Strategic Recommendation 7: Farm assurance schemes must better position the UK farming industry in world food markets and in competition with imported food

Red Tractor agrees this is an important area for the UK farming industry and looks forward to working with AHDB, farming unions and organisations, farmers, processors and government to promote British food both overseas and in the UK. We welcome the recommendations for others to lead to provide more transparency about standards for imported food.

Notes

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Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
7.1	Standards for imported food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for greater clarity on the food production standards of importing food nations and for these to be directly compared with the standards used by UK farm assurance schemes. The work begun by the AHDB to provide these assessments must continue and address other farming sectors and other nations. UK farm assurance schemes must cooperate fully with these exercises to ensure that there is comprehensive information available to inform these assessments. 	AHDB	RT will collaborate at the request of the lead body AHDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT welcomes this recommendation to provide more transparency in this area and will continue to collaborate with AHDB on this work as we have done on the work prior to March 2025.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
7.2	Informing UK farming about food standards in other nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AHDB and farming unions must use information from comparing international food standards to inform the farming industry how UK food production really compares with that of competitor nations. The information in these assessments should provide clear comparisons and highlight major differences where international standards exceed or fall below those employed in the UK. 	AHDB & NFUs	RT will collaborate at the request of the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT welcomes this recommendation to provide more transparency in this area and will collaborate as requested by AHDB and NFUs.
7.3	Farm assurance for combinable crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The combinable crops sector's issue around mixing imported products with those produced in the UK must be changed so that clear labelling identifies the origin of component materials in a combinable crops product, providing a complete picture of the standards to which it has been produced for others in the food chain and consumers. 	FA Schemes with Crops Sector reps & their customers	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT Board will consult with the Commissioners and the stakeholders represented on the crops sector board to consider how best to meet this recommendation.
7.4	Reviewing international standards by government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through oversight from AHDB and the farming unions, all government departments with responsibility for the farming and food industries should ensure standards for imported food are equivalent to those of UK farm assurance schemes, and that movements in international standards are kept under close review to assist in the export of UK food products. 	Relevant gov depts, with AHDB and NFUs	Action for others to lead	

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
7.5	The Trade and Agriculture Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government should reconsider the way in which the Trade and Agriculture Commission operates so that it can provide advice during the negotiation process on free trade agreements, where those agreements cover aspects of agriculture and food production, not just on the post-agreement impact of an FTA on the UK farming and food industry. 	UK Govt	Action for others to lead	

Strategic Recommendation 8: All farm assurance schemes must review, and, where necessary, improve their methods of communication with the farming industry

PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR: Red Tractor is totally committed to ensuring that farmers see, hear and feel real change. We are also focusing on improving how we communicate, particularly with farmers and growers, and embedding this into our leadership culture. We will implement a new communications strategy focused on building trust and engagement with farmers.

Notes

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Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
8.1	A 'farmer first' approach to communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm assurance schemes must continue to review the way in which they communicate with farming members to ensure that their institutional cultures deliver a 'farmer first' approach. This process should be revisited on a regular basis to ensure that scheme staff understand the importance of farm member communications and that their means of communication remain effective. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Tractor is totally committed to ensuring that farmers see, hear and feel real change. RT will review its communications with farmers before developing and starting to deliver a new farmer engagement strategy from June 2025. RT will consult with other farmer-focused organisations to understand and collaborate on best practice approaches to farmer engagement. This strategy will include working with farmer representatives on RT's Sector Boards to ensure they have the tools needed to communicate effectively to those that they represent. As in 8.5, RT has developed new organisational values which will support a change in culture.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
8.2	Implementing the Commission's recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All farm assurance schemes must publish an initial report on the implementation of recommendations contained in the Commission's report and ensure that this is made available to farming members and to the wider farming community. Where certain recommendations have not yet been implemented a clear timetable for their completion must be provided in the report, and updates made available to the farming industry on a quarterly basis until the implementation work is complete. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT welcomes the Farm Assurance Review and has published its response here. We are committed to providing regular updates on progress at www.redtractor.org.uk/FAR RT will work with David Llewellyn the independent Commissioner appointed to monitor progress to demonstrate transparently how the recommendations have been and will be addressed by us. RT will publish regular updates on its on our website to share our progress on delivering the Review recommendations.
8.3	Using Features/Advantages/Benefits statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm assurance schemes must produce a Features / Advantages / Benefits (FAB) statement to make clear what is required from farmers by the scheme, the standards in the scheme's operation that farmers can expect, as well as aspects that the scheme will not cover. 	FA Schemes	RT is committed to relevant consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT will work with the Review Commissioners to understand the expectations and structure for FAB statements, before developing these or similar Value Propositions for farmers.

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
8.4	Avoiding 'mission creep' to address third party requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where changes to farm audits fall outside the accepted purpose and scope of farm assurance contained in this report, they must be subject to full industry consultation, an independent impact assessment and an agreed method to share the cost of implementation and operation. These actions must be undertaken collaboratively to achieve a collective decision on whether, and how, such changes are to be implemented, and how the costs will be shared across the wider food chain. 	BRC with NFU & AHDB	RT will collaborate at the request of the lead bodies	
8.5	Implementing culture change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm assurance scheme boards must implement culture change programmes with their respective senior management teams to ensure that the 'farmer first' approach advocated in this review is followed through to all levels within their organisation. The outcome of this programme must be measured with farmer member feedback at routine intervals so that scheme boards are kept apprised of progress in developing greater levels of trust between farm assurance schemes and their farmer members. 	FA Schemes	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT is doubling down on our efforts to increase engagement with farmers as part of our leadership culture. RT will implement an annual survey with our Sector Boards to measure the effectiveness of the way our leadership act and communicate. RT will continue to seek feedback from farmers on a regular basis to understand how they feel about Red Tractor. Over the past six months, RT has crystallised its organisational values (Integrity, Trustworthy, Community and Expertise) which include behaviours for its leaders and how we work with all our stakeholders particularly farmers. RT will integrate these organisational values into its performance development, feedback and appraisal process for Directors, management and all staff.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
8.6	The ownership of Red Tractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current ownership arrangements should remain in place, but these must be balanced by the RT Board being reaffirmed as the primary governing body for the organisation. • The owners of the scheme must show greater and more active leadership, to help shape its future direction and organisational culture, but without straying into issues of setting strategic direction and overseeing operational delivery, which should remain with the RT board. • The terms of this arrangement should be established by the Board and the scheme owners and published so that they are clear to members of the scheme. 	Red Tractor Board and Owners	RT Board will consult with its Ownership Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Tractor welcomes the Review's recommendation that the RT Board is reaffirmed as the primary governing body for the organisation. • The RT Board also welcomes the recommendation that the owners of the scheme must show greater and more active leadership. • The RT Board is committed to consulting with the Ownership Body as to how to progress this recommendation. Discussions started at a meeting of the Ownership Body on 18th March 2025 and will continue at meetings over the coming months.

Strategic Recommendation 9: The RT scheme must complete the implementation of recommendations in the Campbell Tickell report

PRIORITY FOR RED TRACTOR: Since the publication of the Campbell Tickell report we've published a Governance Handbook, introduced a Board Member Code of Conduct, developed a process for Directors' appraisals and reviewed the Risk Register. We will publish a briefing on how we've delivered the governance recommendations from the report by the end of May 2025.

Notes

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Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
9.1	Reviewing progress with the Campbell Tickell report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT must publish a report on the way in which it has implemented the recommendations of the Campbell Tickell report and ensure that this is made available to farming members and to the wider farming community. Where certain recommendations have not yet been implemented, a clear timetable for their completion must be provided in the report and updates made available to the farming industry when these elements have been addressed. 	Red Tractor Board	RT Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT has implemented all the recommendations of the Campbell Tickell report. RT will publish a report detailing how the recommendations have been implemented by May 2025.

Red Tractor's response to the Farm Assurance Review

Code	Recommendation title	Key Asks*	To Lead**	Red Tractor Response	Red Tractor Action Plan
9.2	A formal assessment of changes to Red Tractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though the Campbell Tickell report may address current issues concerning the governance of the RT scheme, it remains to be seen if in the longer term the measures in that report, together with those in this review, have successfully repaired the levels of trust necessary to create a more positive relationship between the scheme and the farming community. • Sponsoring bodies for this review must conduct a formal assessment of the outcome of both reports, to determine how farmer sentiment towards the scheme has changed as a result of this programme of work. 	NFU & AHDB	RT will collaborate with the lead bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT will collaborate with the sponsoring bodies in their assessment of the impact of these changes.

Comments from Red Tractor Board Members

Alistair Mackintosh, interim Chair of the Red Tractor Board: “All involved with Red Tractor want farmers to feel heard, involved and proud to be part of Red Tractor. The detailed response published today is testament to our genuine commitment to deliver real change for farmers.

“The Farm Assurance Review has offered us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take stock of how assurance does and doesn't work for producers, and a renewed focus on delivering tangible, positive change for them. Our commitments balance rigour and speed while also ensuring Red Tractor continues to deliver value for farmers and reassurance to customers.”

Jim Moseley, Red Tractor CEO: “This review is a turning point for farm assurance in the UK. It is a call to action for all farm assurance schemes to deliver better outcomes for farmers and producers. Where possible, Red Tractor has committed to immediate action, prioritising improvements where we can have most impact. For more complex issues where there is a need or opportunity to work with others, Red Tractor has already written to those involved to offer collaboration and looks forward to working with them if requested to do so.”

David Exwood, Industry Director, NFU: “I welcome the positive response to the Farm Assurance Review from Red Tractor and the input from all the sector boards. It demonstrates a desire to listen and make changes where appropriate. The key now is that we collectively use this opportunity as a reset moment, giving farmers a stronger voice in assurance, delivering better outcomes for everyone involved. I feel we are now on the right track, ready to make positive changes at pace.”

Will Jackson, Industry Director, AHDB: “The Farm Assurance Report has given the industry the firepower to drive positive change. The response to this report from Red Tractor demonstrates their clear commitment to improvement. The actions outlined are significant in ensuring the future success of assurance.”

Sophie Throup, Industry Director, British Retail Consortium: “Retailers support Red Tractor because it assures customers of the high standard of care that goes into producing British food. However, for standards to work effectively, the farming sector must be engaged, listened to and well-understood. The Farm Assurance Review has helped surface key issues that all assurance schemes need to prioritise. The Red Tractor Board's response has the collective endorsement of all Board representatives, including retail, and is one that I hope will be welcomed as we work hard to deliver our immediate and future commitments.”

David Neilson, Industry Director, British Poultry Council: “The British Poultry Council welcome the findings of the Farm Assurance Review. We look forward to working with the Red Tractor team to apply the recommendations and build on the foundations already in place.”

Dean Holroyd, Industry Director, British Meat Processing Association: “On behalf of BMPA and its membership I welcome the FAR and the opportunity to deliver material change for a modern, efficient and valued Farm Assurance system that delivers benefits for the whole supply chain. Key within this is resetting relationships with the farming community as equitable partners that are invested in delivering assurance that is agile to meet changing needs, eases the audit burden and makes greater use of technology. I look forward to using our position along with the rest of the board to seize this opportunity to deliver the much-needed actions committed to by the Red Tractor Board and leadership team as part of the FAR review.”

John Dracup, Beef & Lamb Sector Chair: “An independent review is not always a comfortable experience for any industry but the Farm Assurance Review has created an opportunity for Red Tractor to look at existing practices and embrace change, providing the opportunity to implement new ways of working. This is especially important to the Beef & Lamb sector where communication and representation are key. Red Tractor has engaged with and seriously considered its response, which is to embrace the recommendations and implement them through collaboration with our stakeholders. Some of the recommendations may be challenging, uncomfortable and not popular with all, but recommendations cannot be viewed in isolation all the recommendations of the report need to be considered.”

Kit Papworth, Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet Sector Chair: “The UK FAR calls for action on all parts of the combinable crops sector which, as chair of the Red Tractor Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet Board, I fully support. It also signals the opportunity for us to re-engage with farmers, rebuilding trust and confidence. Red Tractor will undertake all of the steps suggested of it in the UKFAR. Combinable crops is the only sector singled out for specific recommendations with wider crops supply chain organisations and AHDB identified to lead this work. The RT team is fully committed to helping and supporting all these stakeholders to establish how best to address the import equivalence challenge for the sector.”

Tim Lock, Dairy Sector Chair: “In the dairy sector the Farm Assurance Review provides a useful platform from which Red Tractor can redouble its commitment to engage with farmers across all four nations of the United Kingdom, in order to reduce audit burden on farm without diminishing the rigour of our standards. This point in time will be a valuable reference point to measure progress towards those goals.”

Lucy MacLennan, Fresh Produce Sector Chair: “The Fresh Produce Sector Board unanimously welcomed the findings from the farm assurance review. Audit burden has become an overwhelming issue for the sector and the Board are eager to work collaboratively to address this. Indeed there is appetite to broaden the scope of activity beyond the burden from assurance schemes to include additional retailer and brand audit requirements. It is essential that the industry works together to eliminate unnecessary duplication which adds both stress and cost to a sector that is under unsustainable strain. There is enormous potential for Red Tractor to lead the change that is needed, through harnessing its unique position and better utilising technology such as its online portal. It is also necessary to recognise the role of certification bodies in this activity and to ensure that they are actively included in the development of appropriate solutions.”

Stewart Houston, Pigs Sector Chair: “The Pig Sector Board is dedicated to delivering the relevant recommendations listed in the Farm Assurance Review. Working with our processor and retail colleagues we will invest in a particular focus on reducing audit duplication and refining standards, including new standards to meet the whole industry's needs.”

Iain Gardner, Poultry Sector Chair: “I am looking forward to working with the poultry sector board to improve communications with farmers, increase the consistency of audits and improve technology to reduce audit burden.”

Find out more about how Red Tractor is responding to the Farm Assurance Review

Visit: redtractor.org.uk/FAR

Email: memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk

