



MEMBER MATTERS

News and updates from your Red Tractor Assurance team

DECEMBER 2025

Moving forwards together

Dear Members,

British agriculture is under real pressure, and now more than ever, Red Tractor's role as a trusted, industry-led assurance scheme matters. As your first farmer chairman, I've been clear from day one: Red Tractor must work for and with farmers to deliver for the whole supply chain.

We've committed to delivering real, tangible change, including streamlining assessments and reducing audit burden.

As we come to the end of 2025, I'm proud to reflect on the meaningful progress made: we've strengthened governance, improved transparency, upgraded the Red Tractor Members Portal, and we've sought new opportunities to reduce duplication

through joint assessments. We've also increased our presence at farmer events and are changing how we communicate. Encouragingly, member feedback shows growing confidence in the scheme.

But we know there's a lot more to do. Next year Red Tractor's Sector Boards will lead a review of farm-facing standards with the shared objective of reducing audit burden. This process will take onboard the views of all stakeholders, and we welcome your input. Sector Boards will also be leading sector-specific initiatives to support farmers and growers in meeting customers expectations more efficiently.

Rising to the challenges facing British agriculture demands



collaboration and leadership across the entire supply chain. The Red Tractor scheme was built on the spirit of working together and remains one of the strongest shared assets British farmers have.

So, as we look ahead, my message is simple: we must move forward, together. Let's put politics aside and focus on strengthening what matters most, the trust British consumers place in your food.

All the best
Alistair Mackintosh

Improving farm assessments and standards

Have your say on the future of Red Tractor

We've published priorities for delivering improvements to Red Tractor farm-facing schemes.

These priorities have been identified collaboratively by representatives on the relevant Sector Board - including farmers, growers, processors, brands and retailers. They sit alongside wider improvements

already in progress including to the Red Tractor portal, communications and assessor training.

As part of efforts to deliver sector-specific improvements, over the next 12 months Sector Boards working with Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) will review all six farm-facing standards.

The collective focus of the review is to support reduction of unnecessary audit burden, delivering efficiency while maintaining rigour and ensuring that every audit point helps farmers to demonstrate due diligence or meet their customers' expectations.

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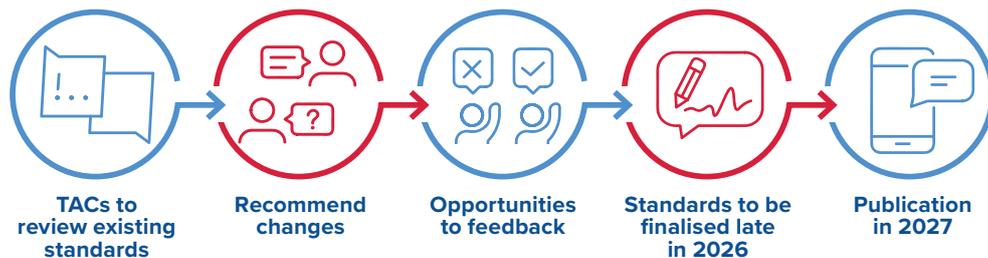


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What happens next?

The next step is for TACs to review existing standards in detail and to recommend changes that will deliver the short-term objectives agreed by Sector Boards. Proposed updates will be shared

for stakeholder comment throughout 2026. The aim is for updated standards to be finalised late in 2026. The standards delivery process then needs to be approved by the UK Accreditation Service, UKAS, before they're implemented in 2027.



Scan the QR code to read the objectives for each sector and share feedback.



Feedback closes on 1 February 2026.

In conversation with members

Over the summer we attended more than 60 farmer facing events, and in October we hosted more than 100 members at events in Devon, Staffordshire, Bedfordshire and Yorkshire.

These meetings weren't easy, they involved frank, sometimes tough conversations, but also a shared commitment to listen, learn and shape meaningful change together.

Farmers asked our team, that included Chair Alistair Mackintosh, Vice Chair John Pain, and several Sector Chairs, lots of questions and highlighted challenges. The conversations were honest, practical and full of insights that will directly

inform how standards develop.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part.

We plan to visit more areas across the UK to continue these conversations. If you want us to visit your region, please let us know.

Common topics of discussion: Assessor consistency and competency

One concern raised was that different assessors interpret the same standards differently. We understand that inconsistency can create a lot of frustration and have been working with certification bodies to make sure assessors have the right background, practical farm knowledge, and up-to-date training. We hope to see the impacts of this work coming through in your experiences. Please look out for an email requesting anonymous feedback from us after your assessment.

Cereal imports

Arable farmers expressed concerns that UK cereal growers are being held to high assurance and environmental standards, while imported cereals don't always have to meet the same requirements. This concern is a



priority for the Red Tractor Crops Sector Board, working with AHDB, AIC and processors to understand how we can support fairer recognition for assured British farmers.

Audit points

Some members said that parts of the audit process can feel unnecessary or overly complicated. Some checks don't seem to add real value, yet they still take time and add stress. The upcoming review of Red Tractor standards will review every requirement to make sure that it is necessary and justified.





Share your feedback

Red Tractor is working with agricultural research experts, Grounded Research to listen to and better understand the views of assured farmers. Look out for an email from **Red Tractor Research** to make sure your views are heard.

You'll also receive an email from us after your assessment asking for feedback on the process. All surveys are anonymous, but there's an option to share your details if you'd like to tell us more about your experiences.



Use of farmers' data

There was concern expressed about what happens to all the data farmers provide through assurance schemes, including Red Tractor. We want to reassure you that Red Tractor is certified as Farm Data Safe by the Farm Data Principles. In fact, data collected by assessors is held by your certification body and we do not have access to individual farm data.

The value of assurance

Members felt that while being part of an assurance scheme is often essential to sell their produce, the benefits beyond that aren't always obvious. We're committed to demonstrating clearer value of Red Tractor, including improved market access, recognition for good practice, and upholding the industry's reputation.

"These sessions were about collaboration – building understanding and shaping Red Tractor's future together."

Alistair Macintosh

Connecting with consumers: Red Tractor's new TV advert goes live



In October, Red Tractor's new TV advert launched across ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky. The TV advert is the centrepiece of our wider 'With You For 25 Years' campaign, supported by radio, online and in-store advertising.

The new animated TV advert follows a British family over 25 years of mealtimes, spotlighting how the Red Tractor logo has been a symbol of safe, traceable and responsibly produced food throughout that time. The campaign is expected to reach 93% of shoppers on average seven times.

TV advertising campaigns are at their most effective when

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they establish a deep emotional connection with the viewer. By depicting relatable family moments, we are strengthening our emotional connection with consumers and reminding them of the value of choosing Red Tractor and the reassurance that brings. This encourages consumers to look for Red Tractor assured products when they shop and deepens their appreciation of the British farmers working daily to uphold world-leading standards in food and drink.

We've evolved our existing stop-motion animation style into a new computer-generated imagery (CGI)



The campaign is expected to reach 93% of shoppers on average seven times.

format. This change has enabled us to modernise our visual style and deliver more dynamic and emotive storytelling in a cost-effective way. The new format also allows us to more easily utilise the characters and environments we have created across other channels including in-store marketing and social media.

Alongside our advertising, we've been rolling out a targeted consumer PR campaign. We've worked with former children's TV presenter and Celebrity Masterchef Winner, Angellica Bell, as well as 10 social media content creators, asking them to spotlight the nostalgic recipes that have been passed down through their families. This wholesome, family-focused content works hand-in-hand with the new TV advert in connecting with our consumers on a more emotional level.

On the launch day of our PR campaign, Angellica was joined by Red Tractor's Member Communications Manager, Debbie Smith on 12 regional and independent

radio interviews, including BBC Cumbria, BBC Solent and Fix Radio.

The story also gained widespread coverage across online news media and trade media, with articles published on The Express, the Mirror, Daily Star and the Grocer, amongst others.

As part of the 25-year celebrations we also sponsored the Mixed Farmer of the Year Award at the 2025 Farmer's Weekly Awards.



It was a privilege to visit the Red Tractor assured farms shortlisted for the award and to host members who entered our competition to win tickets. Congratulations to Ashley Jones of Smeaton Farm, who won the award for his beef, sheep and arable farm in Cornwall.

Support for farmers – You are not alone

Red Tractor knows that while farming is rewarding, it can also be very tough. Mental health and well-being are just as important as physical health, and everyone faces challenging times.

Our newly appointed Vice Chair, John Pain will be making sure that the wellbeing of members is incorporated into all Red Tractor's decision making. John is already speaking with relevant organisations, such as RABI and FCN, to seek their input.

Need to speak to someone?

If you're struggling, talking to someone can make a real difference. Whether it's family, friends, or a professional, reaching out is a sign of strength.



Organisations there for you:

• **Farming Community Network (FCN)** – Pastoral and practical support, helpline 7am–11pm every day. t: **03000 111 999**

• **YANA Project** – Confidential mental health support and counselling funding in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Worcestershire. t: **0300 323 0400**

• **DPJ Foundation** - Welsh mental health charity to support those in agriculture with mental health problems. t: **0800 587 4262**

• **R.A.B.I** – Financial support for farming families facing hardship. t: **0800 188 4444**

• **Addington Fund** – Housing and hardship grants for farming families

in England and Wales. t: **01926 620135**

• **RSABI** (Scotland) – Practical, financial, and emotional support for those in Scottish agriculture. t: **0808 1234 555**

• **Rural Support** – Guidance for farmers and family members in Northern Ireland in support of their farm business and personal wellbeing. t: **0800 138 1678**

You are never alone. Remember, call 999 if someone is in danger and always if firearms are involved.

The Red Tractor team is also here if you need help understanding the process you need to follow for Red Tractor certification.

Backing British farming through traceability

British farmers work hard to earn the public's trust, but that trust can be shaken when food fraud hits the headlines. Reports of imported meat being marketed as British, even when unrelated to Red Tractor, make it clear how easily confidence in homegrown food can be undermined. And with more imported products carrying "packed in the UK" claims or Union Flags on their labels, it's never been more important to defend the integrity of genuine British provenance.

The Red Tractor logo is a guarantee of British provenance. This is because the scheme is backed by a comprehensive traceability verification process. We always move quickly to correct any misuse of the Red Tractor logo whether deliberately or in error.

Robust, unannounced audits

Our criteria for how food businesses and supermarkets use the Red

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

The visit, wherever it takes place within the supply chain, requires evidence of the farms which have supplied a Red Tractor assured product, even if that means going back through multiple businesses in the chain.

For example, a visit to a food service restaurant who is licensed to make a Red Tractor claim on chicken be required to present

trace evidence of each Red Tractor licensed stage of the chain – such as 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 product's journey to the supermarket shelf. This accountability is a big factor in consumers' trust in British food.

We've made a short video showing how the Red Tractor Traceability Challenge works. You can watch it on our website.





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A shared responsibility: Protecting animal welfare and British farming's reputation

Recent headlines have once again put animal welfare in the spotlight, and with them, the integrity of British farming. Each exposé not only harms the individual business involved but casts a shadow across the entire sector. It's a reminder that our strongest defence is prevention: ensuring every animal on every farm receives the care and respect it deserves, every single day.

The power of doing the right thing - always

No amount of CCTV, policies or whistleblowing systems can replace a genuine culture of care. The best way to prevent exposés is to ensure poor welfare never occurs on your farm. Upholding high standards, such as those set out by Red Tractor, is not only a mark of pride but also an essential safeguard for your business and for British agriculture.

Protecting the reputation of British farming

Animal welfare exposés don't just damage one farm; they undermine the trust consumers place in British farmers everywhere. Food buyers and retailers are increasingly focused on sourcing from suppliers they can trust. When that trust is broken, it opens the door to imported alternatives, putting additional pressure on UK producers who work hard to do the right thing.

By maintaining the highest standards, you help protect both your business and the reputation of British farming, something we've all worked hard to earn.

The role of Red Tractor assurance

Red Tractor certification gives both farmers and buyers confidence

that animal welfare standards are being met. But certification alone isn't enough, it must be backed up by consistent action. Everyone in the farm's team plays a role in ensuring those standards are lived out, not just checked off at assessment time.

That means training, clear communication and creating what we call a "culture of continuous care" where welfare is embedded in every decision, every day of the year.

How we support members

When concerns are raised, Red Tractor acts swiftly but fairly. We investigate in collaboration with independent experts, always prioritising the welfare of animals.

- Farms are only suspended where there is a potential serious breach of standards.
- We work closely with businesses to put special measures in place to safeguard animals and restore confidence.
- Once corrective actions are taken, giving confidence that standards are upheld, certification is reinstated.

In serious cases, certification may be revoked, but only where it's clear that corrective action cannot guarantee animal welfare going forward. Our aim is always to protect animals while supporting farmers to make necessary improvements.

Collaboration is key. By engaging openly with Red Tractor during an investigation, issues can often be resolved in days rather than weeks. Measures may include additional staff training, vet inspections, unannounced spot checks or CCTV installation, all designed to ensure



welfare standards are robust and transparent.

Pride in British standards

The UK has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world, and that's something we should be proud of. Most farmers take immense care of their animals, for them, seeing mistreatment is not just distressing, it's unacceptable.

That's why upholding welfare isn't just about compliance, it's about protecting our shared values and the reputation of British farming.

Rising activism: A challenge for farmers

Livestock producers across the UK are being urged to stay alert following reports of a surge in activist incursions.

Campaigns by groups such as Animal Rising, Animal Justice Project and Animal Rebellion include covert filming, media campaigns and potential private prosecutions under the Animal Welfare Act. This is a serious concern with reports of activists using high-spec camera kits, covert 5G devices, and even posing as employees to gain access.

All livestock producers are being reminded to:

- Verify all job applicants carefully
- Follow all Red Tractor standards to the letter
- Keep security tight

Making sure that your farm complies fully with all legal and assurance scheme standards is the first line of protection.

Tips for upholding standards year-round

Maintaining standards on your farm is not about 'passing' an assessment, it's about upholding standards year-round. By keeping your facilities, records and farming practices up to date all the time, you not only make your assessments less stressful but also demonstrate the care, professionalism and commitment that define your business.

1 Understand what's expected The first step is understanding the standards. Take time to familiarise yourself with the relevant requirements and make them part of your daily routine rather than a last-minute checklist.

If you use third-party help to manage your records, are they familiar with the relevant standards to ensure they deliver what you need? Make use of the templates available on our website, even if you already have your own record-keeping system, cross-referencing it with these templates can help confirm that all required details are captured.

2 Organise your records Accurate and up-to-date documentation is at the heart of compliance. Always keep animal health and vaccination records, crop management documentation, chemical and fertiliser application details, waste disposal records, and evidence of traceability accessible.

If your site records are stored in common farm management software, the assessor can review the details directly during the assessment. Alternatively, you can use the Red Tractor Member Portal.

3 Use the Red Tractor Member Portal The Red Tractor portal is your go-to tool for managing records and documentation year-round. It's secure, simple and accessible only to those with permission through your Red Tractor membership. Upload your records so the assessor can review them ahead of any visit, helping to

streamline the process and reduce stress. Using the portal allows you to showcase your farm's high standards while keeping everything organised and accessible.

4 Check facilities and equipment Regularly inspect animal housing, feed and chemical storage areas and feed presentation set-ups: well-maintained facilities demonstrate ongoing care and ensure compliance is not left until the last minute. Think like an assessor: what would they see if they walked through your farm today?

5 Staff awareness and training Certification is a team effort. Make sure everyone on the farm understand their responsibilities and can explain the procedures they follow. Regular training and clear records of competence show that maintaining standards is part

of everyday life, not just for assessment day.

6 Conduct self-checks year-round A pre-assessment check should become a routine part of farm life. Walk through your business systematically, identify any areas where standards are not being met, and address them promptly. Continuous self-review reduces stress and ensures that when your assessment occurs, you are already in a strong position.

7 Keep up to date We'll notify you by email if anything in the standards changes. Staying aware of any changes to the standards allows you to incorporate them into your business practices as soon as possible, ensuring a smooth assessment process with no surprises. If your email changes, be sure to notify your certification body.

TOP TIP

Preparation isn't just about getting ready for one specific day; it's about meeting standards every day. By keeping records organised, undertaking regular training and carrying out routine self-checks, you create a culture where standards are consistently met. This proactive approach means that when assessment day arrives, you're ready, making the whole process smooth, confident and stress-free.





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Important update to Red Tractor Pigs Standards

From 1 February, amongst other changes, new guidance clarifying legally permitted euthanasia methods will be added to the Red Tractor Pigs Standards.

This guidance clarifies accepted methods of euthanasia.

Producers should use a specially designed device that delivers mechanical blunt force trauma as the primary method for piglets under 5kg and ensure the correct equipment and training are in place

These changes, agreed unanimously by the Red Tractor Pigs Sector Board and industry partners, aim to support legal compliance and maintain industry reputation.

A full Technical Briefing and FAQs are available on the Red Tractor website.



New Modules for Pig Producers

We recently launched two new modules in the Red Tractor Pigs Scheme: **Enhanced Welfare** and **Outdoor Bred** and **Free Range**. The new standards were developed at the request of and in consultation with the industry. They provide an opportunity to demonstrate welfare practices that are a step above the already high standards of welfare required by Red Tractor's core standard. They are also expected to provide outdoor producers with a way of reducing their on-farm audits while maintaining access to existing markets.

Visit our website for more information.



Changes to certification when buying professional rodenticides

As a Red Tractor assured farmer, you'll be aware of the importance of maintaining high standards in all aspects of farm management, including pest control. From 1 January 2026, new regulations mean that your farm assurance status alone will no longer qualify as proof of competence for the purchase or use of professional rodenticides.

To continue purchasing these products, you'll need to meet the new CRRU UK competence requirements.

From January 2026, you must be able to show either:

- Proof of training from a CRRU UK – approved course completed within the past five years, or
- Membership of a CRRU UK – recognised Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme.

Find full details, including approved training and CPD options, at: thinkwildlife.org/training-certification

Backing British farming in the heart of London

In early November we took to the streets of London to proudly back British farming! Our team joined forces with the NFU, Surrey Docks Farm and The Worshipful Company of Farmers at the Lady Mayor's Show, an iconic event that celebrates British heritage, community and industry.

Marching through the capital, we helped shine a spotlight on the incredible

work our British farmers do every single day, producing quality, safe, and fully traceable food that feeds our nation. The energy from the crowds was electric.

For our team, the show is one of the highlights of the year. It brings us together, reminds us why we do what we do, and reinforces how important it is to take our message beyond the farm gates and into the streets.



Read all the previous editions of Member Matters in full on our website: redtractor.org.uk

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