



Spring 2026 briefing



Veryan Bliss - Six months as Sector Chair

It's now almost six months since Red Tractor appointed Veryan Bliss as Chair of the Fresh Produce Sector Board. With over 30 years' experience across the global fresh produce supply chain, Veryan has expertise in growing, packing, technical assurance, innovation, and UK retail governance.



Previously Commercial and Technical Director at Suncrop Produce, Veryan oversaw technical farm-to-shelf operations, ESG responsibilities, brand protection, and grower-retailer relations. She now leads Food Intelligence Limited, providing strategic advice across the sector.

Talking about her role at Red Tractor, Veryan said:

"I care deeply about bridging the gap between growers, retailers, and consumers."

Red Tractor is a platform for trust and progress, and I want to help ensure it adds real value to the people who produce our food."

Veryan has served on the Red Tractor Fresh Produce Board since 2019 and holds multiple industry roles, including non-executive Director of The Andersons Centre, and Trustee of the East of England Agricultural Society. She is a mentor and thought leader supporting Women in Agriculture and agri-tech innovation.

As Sector Chair, Veryan will lead the Fresh Produce sector strategy and help shape Red Tractor's overarching priorities, supporting producers while maintaining consumer trust in British farming and food.



New board members

John Walgate (British Growers Association) and **Jenny Heath** (independent potato grower) have joined the Red Tractor Fresh Produce board.

Their appointments reflect a key priority of the Farm Assurance Review: ensuring that growers have a strong voice in decision-making, standards development, and sector initiatives.

Jenny brings practical farming experience to the board, helping to champion on-farm perspectives while supporting Red Tractor's mission to deliver trusted assurance for British food, and John's addition helps broaden our representation of the sector through the British Growers Association.



Leafy Salads Food Safety Module – A sector-wide achievement

In response to the 2024 STEC outbreak linked to supermarket sandwiches, the salads sector has come together to strengthen food safety practices at farm level. At the request of the industry, respected experts from across the supply chain collaborated closely with Red Tractor to develop a dedicated module for leafy salads. The aim is to raise standards at grower level, demonstrate credible practices to customers, and reduce the need for multiple, overlapping audits.

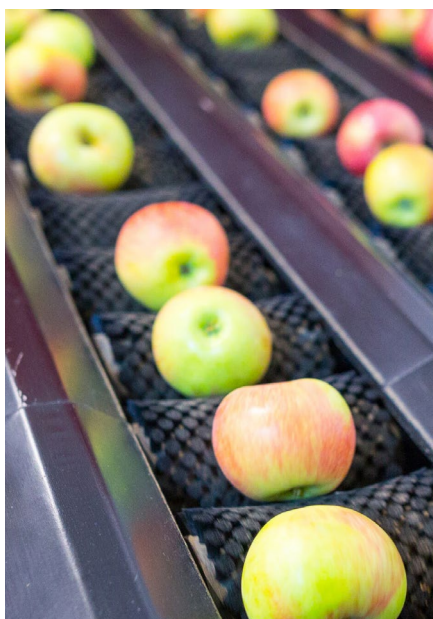
Chaired by Barbara Bray MBE, the specialist working group drew on expertise from across the supply chain to ensure the module is science-based, practical, and informed by real-world growing experience. Stakeholder consultation is now complete, the standards are being finalised.

The module is scheduled to launch in the coming months as an add-on for growers of

high-risk leafy salad crops. The standards combine both protocols and practical actions. Physical requirements will be viewed during your routine Red Tractor assessment, while documents which demonstrate compliance with the requirements can be uploaded to the Red Tractor portal.

Further details will be shared as the launch date approaches.

This initiative highlights the power of collaboration across the sector and reinforces Red Tractor's commitment to high food safety standards. By working together, the supply chain is helping to protect consumers, support growers, and maintain confidence in assured British produce.



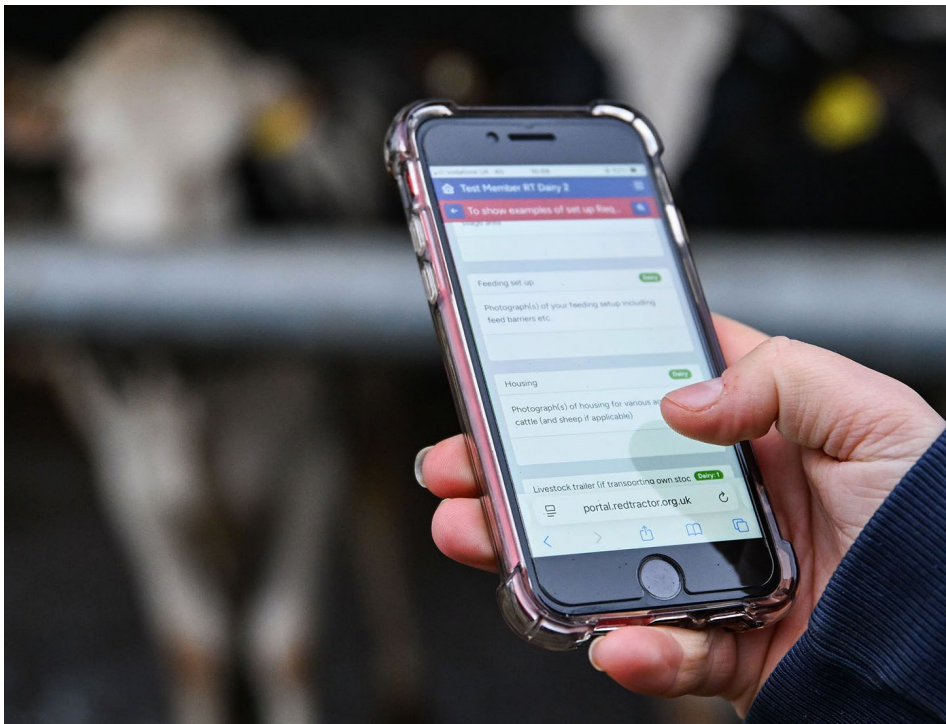
Standards review and stakeholder feedback

The Fresh Produce Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is making strong progress on reviewing the Red Tractor Fresh Produce Standards. Taking a detailed, line-by-line approach, the TAC is reviewing all requirements to create smarter, outcomes-focused standards that reflect legislation, evidence, and real-world compliance.

We want to know what you think; a complete draft of the revised standards will be shared with you later this year. Your feedback, alongside the TAC's industry expertise, will be central to shaping standards ahead of their 2027 launch.

The full list of TAC members is available on [our website](#).





Consider using the Red Tractor member portal to save time

The portal is a central tool designed to help you manage documentation that demonstrates compliance. By uploading your documents in advance, the assessor can review the details before the farm visit, potentially reducing the amount of time spent on-site examining paperwork.

If you participate in more than one Red Tractor scheme, the portal lets you upload the required information just once; it is then accessible to the assessor across all schemes. Additionally, if the same details apply to other schemes or standards being assessed alongside Red Tractor, the assessor can also use the uploaded documents to capture the detail required.

To make the process as efficient as possible, ensure document names clearly reflect their content and, where possible, upload files as PDFs. You only need to upload each document once, even if it covers multiple standards.

You can also use the comments function within the portal to guide

your assessor. If a document covers multiple standards, consider adding a note to explain what information is included, rather than uploading duplicate files.

The portal includes a shortlist function that highlights the most important documents to share ahead of your assessment, helping you focus on what really matters. You can also now take and upload live, geo-stamped photos with your mobile phone as evidence of compliance, cutting out manual paperwork.

Guidance on using the new portal features, including 'how to' videos can be found [here](#).



Technical update

Amend to PR.PL.6.g – Electrical installations in worker accommodation

Following member feedback, the requirement below has been reviewed:

PR.PL.6.g. Electrical installations must be inspected annually (or every three years if underground) by a qualified electrician.

The inspection frequency for underground electrical installations has been amended to every **FIVE years** rather than the currently stated three years. Although only a small adjustment, we hope that this change, which brings the requirement in line with legislation and electrical sector practice, will help to reduce burden and costs.

All other elements of the requirement are unchanged. Above-ground electrical installations must continue to be inspected annually by a qualified electrician to ensure systems remain safe and compliant.





Member guidance

Batch traceability and mass balance

Our standards require an annual test of your traceability system. This established requirement must demonstrate that, in the event of a food safety incident, all quantities from a specific batch can be fully accounted for. The ability to quickly and effectively identify and isolate all product within a defined batch is a key food safety protection.

The test is not conducted during the assessment. Instead, your business is expected to have completed it within the previous period and be able to provide evidence of this at the time of assessment.

The exercise should demonstrate the total quantity harvested, where the product was distributed (for example, to customers), what remains in storage, and any losses such as waste. It only needs to be

conducted for the batch selected as part of the annual traceability challenge.

For some crops, such as potatoes or apples, the precise harvested weight of a batch may not always be known. In these cases, reasonable estimates are acceptable, provided growers can demonstrate that the product has been fully accounted for through sales records, storage records, and waste or disposal records.

The key objective is to show that the movement and destination of the crop can be clearly traced, which is vitally important in the event of a serious food safety incident.

A template for recording this exercise can be [found here](#).

GLOBALG.A.P. logo use

As part of the 2025 changes to the Fresh Produce Standards, we took a new approach to GLOBALG.A.P. benchmarking, and introduced a short, optional “add-on” section for those members who require GLOBALG.A.P. certification. This allows us to separate out specific requirements only relevant for those who need it and minimise the burden on those who don’t.

It has since become clear that further clarification is needed to ensure consistent understanding and compliance with the benchmarking requirements.

PR.GG.3: Where growers are using the GLOBALG.A.P. logo, use must be in accordance with the “GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use Policy and guidelines” (NEW)

PR.GG.3.a: Transaction documentation includes reference to the GLOBALG.A.P. status and number (GGN)

Our current wording suggests that these requirements apply only where the logo is used; however, clarification has confirmed that **all GLOBALG.A.P. certified growers must include their GGN on transactional documentation**, regardless of logo use. These points will be separated in the next version of the standards to improve clarity.

For reference, the GLOBALG.A.P. trademarks use policy can be [found here](#). It does state that if using the logo then your GGN must be quoted under the logo amongst other requirements.



Guidance on food fraud

The 2025 standards update introduced a requirement for growers to consider the risk of food fraud. In the context of fresh produce production, this primarily relates to the risk of inadvertently purchasing fraudulent or counterfeit inputs, such as:

- Counterfeit plant protection products (PPPs).
- Non-food-grade packaging materials.
- Counterfeit or illegally traded seed.

While the risk to most growers is low, it is important to remain vigilant and source inputs from reputable suppliers. Purchasing counterfeit inputs can create serious food safety, legal, and crop performance risks.

Further information on this topic is available from industry sources:

- [International Seed Federation](#)
- [Farmers Weekly](#)
- [Harper Adams](#)
- [National Food Crime Unit](#)





Access for Red Tractor members to Fera's LIAISON Pesticide Approval Database

As a Red Tractor member, you're not only upholding the highest standards in food safety and quality - you're also getting exclusive benefits that streamline your farming operations.

A valuable resource available to you is access to Fera's **LIAISON** pesticide approval database; something that would cost £356 a year if you were not a Red Tractor grower.

Red Tractor foots the bill so you can access this essential tool at no additional cost!

LIAISON is a useful tool for managing plant protection products. It offers real-time access to crucial information like GB pesticide approvals, detailed product labels, safe harvest intervals, and Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). This database can be accessed directly through your Red Tractor Checkers and Services account, making it easier than ever to stay compliant and make informed choices for your crops.

By simplifying access to this pivotal information, Red Tractor ensures you can focus on what really matters: producing high-quality, safe food.

Stephen Shields, Technical & Sustainability Director at Huntapac says

"We find it as an invaluable resource as it provides a live list of approved products, harvest intervals and maximum rates for the products we utilise."

[Click here to find out how to register for a Red Tractor checkers and services account and get access to LIAISON.](#)

Note: this is the same login for access to the Red Tractor portal



Meet us at the Festival of Fresh on 10th June and speak directly with members of our team. Discover insights, ask questions, and connect with us in person.



If you'd like to catch up, we recommend reaching out in advance to arrange a time.

Feel free to get in touch.



Be aware of cybercrime

Growers should remain alert to cybercrime and financial fraud. There have been recent reports of phishing attempts where criminals impersonate organisations such as DEFRA or the RPA to obtain bank account details or other sensitive information.

These frauds often take the form of unexpected emails or phone calls requesting financial details. Always verify the identity of the caller or sender before sharing any information and avoid discussing bank details unless you are certain with whom you are communicating.

Further advice on protecting your farm business is [available here](#)

Make your surplus produce count

As a trusted assurance scheme for UK farms and growers, Red Tractor standards set out how members should manage waste responsibly. Where waste cannot be used on farm, it must be disposed of legally and in a way that minimises contamination and pollution risks with registered waste carriers.

This focus on responsible waste management complements efforts to divert fit-to-eat surplus fresh fruit and vegetables away from landfill and into organisations that are helping growers meet both environmental and social goals.

FareShare and The Felix Project have joined forces this year to become the UK's largest food redistribution charity, working across the food industry to rescue surplus food and get it onto the plates of people in need. They work with 8,000 organisations supporting people in need around the UK. Each year an estimated 4.6 million tonnes of good to eat food is wasted across the UK's food supply chain, with 2.9m tonnes of that waste occurring at the farm gate. At the same time, more than 1 in every 7 people in the UK don't get enough to eat.

Giving your surplus fresh produce to FareShare and The Felix Project is a practical way to make a real difference. At Red Tractor, we understand the time, energy and resources that go into growing high-quality food. By working with these organisations, your hard-earned harvest can help feed people in need, rather than going to waste.

Thanks to a grant from the government's Tackling Food Surplus at the Farm Gate scheme, FareShare and The Felix Project have invested in infrastructure and logistics, improving their ability to store, process and redistribute fresh fruit and vegetables.

Diverting surplus produce is straightforward, and funding support is available to help cover costs such as harvesting, grading, and packaging. You can turn unsold produce into a positive story for your business, while supporting local communities.

Half of the food redistributed in 2025 was fresh fruit and vegetables. This allowed more local charities to provide healthier, more nutritious meals to those in need.

Holly Wright, East of England Regional Manager at FoodCycle, an organisation supported through the FareShare and Felix Project network, explains why fresh produce matters to the charity:

"Having a variety of different fruit and vegetables means our cooking team can come up with interesting recipe ideas and create balanced meals without relying on store-cupboard items to bulk out the meals."

FoodCycle provides community meals with the aim of tackling both food poverty and food waste, while fostering connections within local communities.

Tim Casey, of J&V Casey & Son, explains why he recently donated surplus crop to FareShare:

"We had got to the end of the leek season and found we were looking at a surplus, we also still had the staff available and able to work, so after a quick conversation with FareShare we agreed to harvest and load out several pallets of leeks, for which FareShare covered our costs to harvest, prep and outload. It meant the crop was used, and it saved us having to mulch the crop back in, with the additional cost and time that entails."

Contact FareShare to discuss how you can make a difference at givefood@fareshare.org.uk

