



Spring 2026 briefing



John Dracup
Beef & Lamb Sector Chair

Dear Members

There's a lot going on in the beef & lamb sector at the moment, and I wanted to set out where we are with reviewing the Red Tractor standards.

One thing that's come through clearly from our recent surveys is that many of you feel the system has become too complex in places, with duplication between requirements and assessments that don't always join up as well as they should. These points are being taken seriously and are exactly what we are working through.



Paul McLaughlin was recently appointed CEO of Red Tractor

The aim here is straightforward: standards that are clear, practical, and make sense on farm. They need to be robust, yes, but also reflect how beef and sheep systems operate day to day, without unnecessary burden or confusion. That's the balance we're trying to get right, and we are moving at pace with a significant piece of work to review the standards and deliver that.

Thank you for continuing to engage with us, for taking the time to respond to our surveys and for being open and honest about where the system isn't working as well as it should. That input will directly shape how the standards evolve.

Following a comprehensive open recruitment process Paul McLaughlin was recently appointed CEO of Red Tractor, he started on 5 May. He brings senior experience across food, farming and assurance, including leadership roles at Scotland Food & Drink and Scotty Brand. Joining at this pivotal time Paul will support the ongoing standards review. He will be attending numerous events over the summer, please do say hello.

Best, John

Beef & Lamb Standards Review: Expert-led development through the Technical Advisory Committee

At the heart of the Beef & Lamb Standards Review is the detailed, technical work being undertaken by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This group is central to ensuring that the standards remain credible, practical, and firmly rooted in real-world farming practice.

Led by well-known figure in the livestock sector Professor Jude Capper, the TAC is made up of a broad and balanced mix of representatives from across the red meat and livestock sector.

The TAC brings together a wide range of expertise and perspectives, including:

- Beef and sheep farmers from different production systems and regions
- Practising veterinarians with day-to-day herd and flock health experience
- Industry technical experts in animal health, welfare, and production systems
- Representatives with knowledge of food safety, traceability, and supply chain assurance
- Sector experts with a strong understanding of legislation, regulation, and compliance frameworks

This diverse representation ensures that every standard can be tested not only against regulatory and scientific requirements, but also against practical application on farm. The TAC brings together both technical depth and hands-on experience, allowing it to challenge assumptions, identify duplication, and ensure requirements are proportionate and achievable.

The committee is currently working through every standard and audit point line by line. This detailed approach is designed to ensure clarity, consistency, and usability across the scheme. A key focus is removing unnecessary complexity, reducing duplication, and making sure that each requirement has a clear purpose and outcome.

This is a significant and structured programme of work, reflecting a clear commitment to reviewing the scheme to make the standards easier for members to understand and implement. The goal is not only to maintain credibility and assurance standards, but also to improve practicality and relevance for modern beef and lamb production systems.

As valued members, your feedback is a critical part of this process. We are committed to ensuring the standards are shaped not only by the TAC's technical and sector expertise, but also by the experience of those working directly within the industry. A full draft of the revised standards will be shared with you later this year, giving you the opportunity to review the proposed changes in detail and provide feedback.

Together, the TAC's breadth of expertise and your input as members will play a key role in shaping the final standards ahead of their planned launch in 2027.

TAC members

Alastair Sneddon

Auctioneer

John Royle

NFU

David Barton

Farmer

Oli Lee

Farmer

Bryan Griffiths

NSA

Zoe Lloyd

AHDB

Neil Shand

NBA

Beatrice Yates

British Cattle
Veterinary Association

Vicki Tripney

Processor

Eleanor Thornton

Processor

Tom Green

Sheep Vet Society

Iestyn Tudur-Jones

WBLP
(devolved representative – observer)

Kathryn Kerr

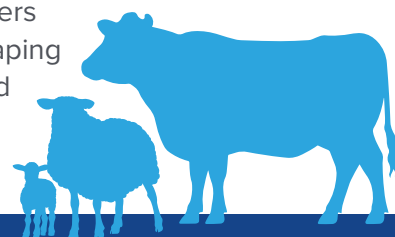
QMS
(devolved representative – observer)

Laura Hamilton

LMC
(devolved representative – observer)

John Dracup

Red Tractor Beef & Lamb Chair





Out and about in 2026: Talking to Beef & Lamb members

This summer, Red Tractor is getting out on farm and into the field, with one clear aim: listening directly to farmers.

We'll be at key events, taking a stand at the **NBA Beef Expo (30 May, Melton Mowbray)** and the **NSA Sheep Event (28 July, Malvern)**, alongside visiting major agricultural shows such as Balmoral, the Royal Highland and the Royal Welsh.

These events aren't just about showing up, they're about having open, practical conversations with members. As we continue work on the standards review programme your input is essential. We want to understand what's working, what isn't, and how standards can better reflect the realities of running beef and sheep enterprises today.

While our recent surveys have been useful, nothing replaces a face-to-face conversation. Hearing directly from farmers helps ensure future standards are practical, workable, and grounded in real farm life. So, if you see us at an event, come and have a chat and pick up some Red Tractor merchandise, your feedback will help shape the future of the scheme.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

30 May 2026
NBA Beef Expo
Melton Mowbray

28 July 2026
NSA Sheep Event
Malvern



Red Tractor awareness hits 75% after 25th anniversary campaign



Richard Cattell

Three quarters of UK adults now recognise the Red Tractor logo, according to recent new YouGov tracking data. Research earlier in the year demonstrated that awareness has risen to 75%, up 3% on that in early 2025, putting Red Tractor on a par with the very well-established Lion Mark for eggs for the first time.

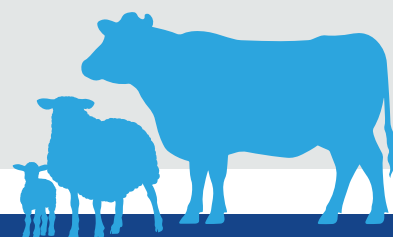
The increase is attributed to the scheme's broad market reach, strong on-pack visibility, and our **"With you for 25 years"** consumer campaign, launched in August last year.

This growing awareness comes at a particularly important time, as new trade deals could increase the volume of imported food on UK shelves, often produced to different standards and at lower cost. In this context, clear and trusted assurance marks such as Red Tractor play a vital role in helping shoppers distinguish

British produce, understand how their food is produced, and make confident choices in an increasingly competitive and complex marketplace.

Richard Cattell, Director of Marketing Development & Supply Chain at Red Tractor, said farm assurance schemes play a key role in helping shoppers make informed choices. He said the logo has represented "safe, traceable and responsibly produced British food" for more than 25 years, supported by over 40,000 farmers and growers, and that the campaign reinforces trust across UK supermarkets.

He added that rising recognition shows "consistent, trusted marks can establish themselves in shoppers' minds" amid ongoing questions around food labelling clarity.



Giving hauliers access: A simple step that keeps livestock moving

We've recently received feedback from livestock hauliers that, in some cases, they are struggling to access farms when arriving to collect animals. While this may seem like a small logistical issue, it can have serious knock-on effects for animal welfare, schedules, and the wider supply chain.

Put simply: livestock lorries are large, heavy vehicles, and they need space, planning, and consideration to operate safely and efficiently.

Why access matters

Hauliers often work to tight schedules, coordinating multiple collections and deliveries in a single day. Delays at one farm can quickly impact the rest of their route, as well as arrival times at abattoirs or markets.

More importantly, poor access can create animal welfare risks. If loading is delayed or conditions are unsuitable, animals may be left waiting longer than necessary, particularly in warm weather or challenging conditions.

Common issues being reported

Hauliers have highlighted several recurring problems, including:

- Gates that are too narrow or difficult to access with a large vehicle
- Yards blocked by parked machinery or vehicles
- Unsuitable or muddy tracks, especially in wet weather
- Lack of a clear turning area for large lorries
- No one on site to meet the driver at the agreed time

What farmers can do

A few simple steps can make a significant difference:

1. Plan for large vehicles

Livestock lorries are significantly larger than standard farm vehicles. Make sure access routes, gateways, and yards can accommodate them safely. Lorries need room to manoeuvre. Tight or confined spaces increase the risk of damage or delays.

2. Keep access routes clear

Before the haulier arrives, ensure gates are open (where safe to do so), and that yards and tracks are free from obstructions.

3. Consider ground conditions

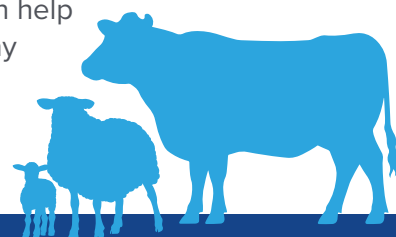
Wet or uneven ground can quickly become impassable for heavy vehicles. If conditions are poor, communicate with your haulier in advance to agree the best approach.

4. Be ready at the agreed time

Having someone available to meet the driver and assist with loading helps keep everything running smoothly and reduces stress for both animals and people.

Communication is key

If there are any known access challenges on your farm, it's best to inform the haulier, or whoever arranged the transport, in advance where possible. A quick conversation can help prevent issues on the day and ensure the most suitable vehicle or approach is used.





How Red Tractor protects the logo – and your reputation

Red Tractor assured beef and sheep farmers work hard to produce honest, high quality British food. The Red Tractor logo is there to protect that effort and help customers trust what they are buying.

That trust can be knocked very quickly when stories about food fraud hit the headlines especially when imported products are passed off as British. These cases are not linked to Red Tractor, but they show how easily confidence in British farming can be damaged if provenance isn't clear.

At the same time, more products are using Union Flags or claims like “packed in the UK”. This can confuse shoppers and makes it even more important that genuine British food is properly protected. The Red Tractor logo does exactly that, it clearly shows food is British, fully traceable, and produced to robust standards.

Clear rules on logo use

Red Tractor has strict rules on how its logo and name can be used, including terms like *Red Tractor*, *RT Assured* and *Red Tractor Assured*. These rules are there to protect farmers as much as consumers. The logo is a promise to shoppers that the product comes from British farms and has been independently checked. If it's used wrongly, that promise is weakened and that risks the reputation of everyone in the scheme.

All Red Tractor logos are registered trademarks. Only businesses that are licensed and approved are allowed to use them. Any packaging, menus or marketing that show the logo must be checked and signed off first, so it's used correctly and consistently.

Before a business can join the scheme, it must be technically approved. This confirms that it meets Red Tractor standards at its stage of the supply chain whether that's processing, packing or food service.

Checks, inspections and enforcement

Protecting the logo isn't just about paperwork. Red Tractor carries out unannounced inspections and traceability checks across the supply chain – including processors, packers, wholesalers and food service operators.

Under the Traceability Challenge Programme, assessors check records and physical product movements. Businesses must be able to show exactly where Red Tractor beef and lamb has come from, right back to assured farms, even when supply chains are complex.

If problems are found, such as incorrect logo use or misleading claims, action is taken. This can include sanctions and, in serious cases, loss of the right to use the Red Tractor logo.



Red Tractor's Head of Supply Chain Assurance, Joanna King explains the label is more than just a logo, it's a symbol of trust, integrity and world-leading standards in British food production.

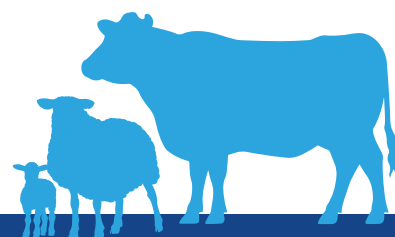
[Find out more here.](#)

Everyone has a part to play

Protecting the Red Tractor logo is a shared responsibility. Correct use by everyone in the scheme helps protect:

- the value of assured livestock
- the reputation of British farming, and
- trust with customers

From farm to pack, Red Tractor assurance covers the full journey of British beef and lamb to the supermarket shelf. This end-to-end accountability is a key reason consumers trust British food and helps ensure that when shoppers choose Red Tractor, they are choosing genuinely assured British produce backed by verified standards.



Member portal update eases farm paperwork burden

Developed in response to farmer feedback recent updates to the Red Tractor member portal are designed to make compliance simpler, faster, and less paperwork heavy.

At the heart of the update is a move towards more practical, on-farm recording. Farmers can now take live, geo-stamped photos directly through the portal using a mobile phone, creating instant evidence of routine tasks such as animal husbandry checks, hygiene practices or vermin control measures. For example, a quick photo of freshly placed bait stations or inspected traps not only shows that these measures are in use, but helps build a clear picture of active, ongoing pest management. Similarly, images of cleaned housing, disinfected equipment, or feed storage areas provide time-stamped evidence of biosecurity practices in action.

This approach reflects a wider shift in mindset - demonstrating that the requirements of the standards are already part of everyday life on farm. Routine, day-to-day tasks naturally provide the evidence needed for compliance, removing the need to treat assessments as a separate exercise or something to “get ready” for at the last minute.

The system automatically records the time, date and location, reducing the need for manual logbooks. This is intended to cut duplication and streamline evidence gathering, while also giving farmers a simple way to build a visual, verifiable record of daily compliance activities as they happen.

Other improvements include tools that help farmers:

- Manage compliance documents more easily
- Set expiry reminders for key records
- Apply documents across multiple requirements in one step
- Use more tailored, site-specific checklists
- View all uploaded evidence in one place

Together, these changes aim to reduce the “last-minute scramble” often associated with assessments by embedding record-keeping into everyday routines. Assessors also benefit from improved access to pre-uploaded evidence, allowing them to review information in advance of farm visits and spend more time focusing on the practical assurance requirements.

This update is part of a wider effort to modernise the process and make the system “fit for the future.”



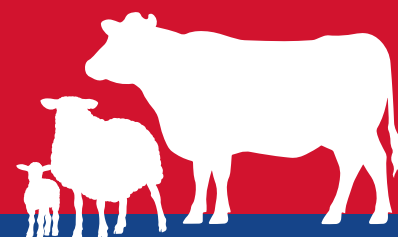
Megan Roworth,
Dairy, Beef & Sheep
and Crops farmer
Derbyshire.

“I can’t recommend using the portal enough, being able to upload documents throughout the year as they come in or keeping electronic records of various things like calibration records as we do them, then having them readily available to submit all in one folder on the computer, when the time comes is brilliant. It also allows me to work on Red Tractor paperwork when I have the spare time.”

This year our visit was about 90 minutes long because all paperwork had been submitted electronically in advance, so there were just a few additional questions followed by the farm walk around, it fell in the school holidays and with 5 children in tow and the farm still to run I was extremely grateful.

Another bonus is when I come to do the paperwork each year, there are some documents that are on the system from the previous year that are still valid or the previous documents remind me quickly, what it is exactly I’m looking for. I can also use some of these documents across our dairy, beef and lamb and crop assessments which saves me time and having lots of duplicate paperwork.

The first time doing it can take a little while, but I promise it will be worth the effort the following assessors visit”



Understanding the residency rule

To remain compliant with Red Tractor standards, cattle must be resident on a Red Tractor assured holding for a minimum of 90 days before slaughter, and sheep for 60 days.

The day animals arrive on farm (“Day ON”) does not count towards the residency requirement. Day 1 is classed as the first full day after arrival.

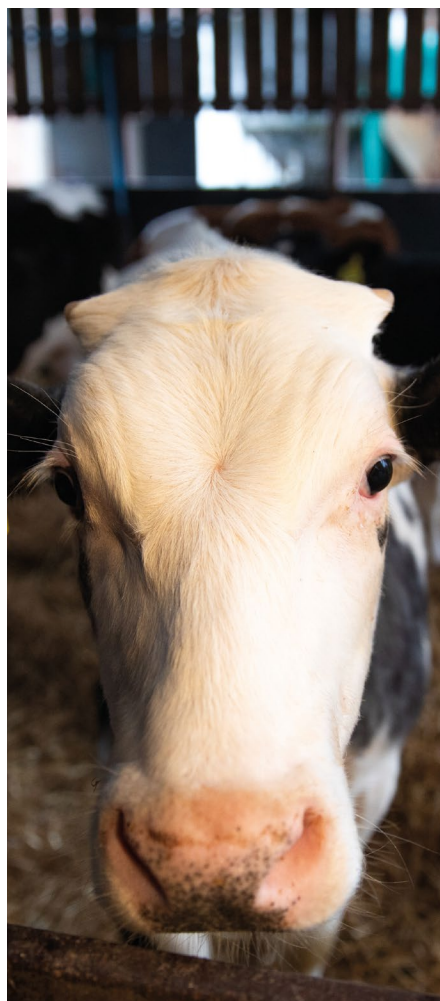
Note: The day of arrival on the holding **does not count** as part of the residency period. The start date entered should be the **day after the animals arrived on the farm**.

60 Days (Sheep)

Ending

Select a date

Calculate



If animals move between holdings under the same management control during the residency period, each holding must also be included within Red Tractor membership details to maintain full assurance coverage.

While cattle originating from outside the UK may become farm assured once they have met the required residency period, they are **not eligible to enter supply chains using the Red Tractor logo**.

This rule ensures that the Red Tractor logo, a trusted symbol of UK origin, upholds its reputation for certifying livestock raised entirely within the British Red Tractor Assurance framework.

Allowing foreign born cattle to enter Red Tractor-branded supply chains would seriously compromise consumer confidence in the logo's promise of 100% British products. By maintaining this clear distinction, Red Tractor is reinforcing its commitment to supporting UK farmers and providing clear, reliable assurance to buyers and consumers.

