PROTOCOL FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES OFFERING CERTIFICATION AGAINST RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE STANDARDS

Version 11.1

2021

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1. Background

Assured Food Standards operates Red Tractor Assurance (RTA), covering most farming production sectors as well as other parts of some food supply chains. Each sector has a set of documented Standards to be used as product certification standards. Regular assessments establish the compliance and maintain certification for the various scheme members. These assessments are delivered by third party Certification Bodies (CBs) who, by contract ('the Certification Contract'), are licensed by RTA to use the standards and provide certification to food businesses.

2. Confidentiality

This Protocol must be kept confidential between the Certification Bodies and RTA and must not be shared without the express permission of RTA.

3. Aim

This Protocol supports the Certification Contract between RTA and the CB and is intended to set out the working arrangements agreed between the two parties.

The aims of the Protocol are:

- To set out the core requirements for CBs carrying out assessments and certification against RTA Standards
- Provide clear procedures to be followed by CBs
- Outline key performance level criteria, monitoring and management information requirements

4. Scope

The scope for which a Certification Body is licensed to use RTA Standards is included at Schedule 4 of the Certification Contract.

4.1. Extension of scope

CBs wishing to use additional RTA Standards beyond those for which they are currently licensed should apply in writing to the RTA Head of Assurance. The application should include a business case indicating which RTA Standards the CB wishes to have access to, proposed timescales and activities together with any other relevant information that will help to determine the CB's ability to meet the requirements of the Certification Contract.

RTA will then provide the CB with start-up costs and will consider whether to visit the CB in order to better understand its capabilities in relation to RTA requirements as well as to understand the structures / business / ways of working and to establish relationships. The CB will also be required to provide RTA with a copy of a valid certificate of insurance consistent with clause 8.2 of the Certification Contract.

Should the application be successful RTA will provide the CB with a copy for signature of the certification contract and all necessary attachments. Progressing is conditional on the Certification Contract being signed by both parties.

The CB must apply to UKAS for extension of their scope of accreditation to include all the RTA Standards identified in the Certification Contract within 10 working days of the signing of the contract. The criteria for achieving UKAS accreditation are indicated in clause 8.6 of the Certification Contract.

The CB must notify the RTA Head of Assurance as soon as UKAS accreditation has been achieved and supply supporting evidence.

RTA recognises that in order to extend the scope of their accreditation to undertake the RTA Scheme assessments, the CB must have been carrying out assessments against the relevant RTA Standards. RTA will allow the CB to commence this work provided that they have satisfied RTA through the RTA visit / visits that they have the required working practices.

If successful, RTA will provide the CB with an amended copy for signature of Schedule 4 of the Certification Contract.

4.2. UKAS Accreditation

RTA requires CBs to achieve UKAS accreditation[1] and reserves the right under Clause 9 of the Certification Contract to act as an observer at UKAS assessments of the CB.

RTA also reserves the right under Clause 15 of the Certification Contract to makes its own inspections of the CB. Any such inspection will be agreed between the RTA HoA and appropriate Senior Manager / Director of the CB as identified in section 5.1.

The CB will also allow any relevant Competent Authority or Enforcement Body to make its own inspections and witness assessments if required to do so in order to verify the terms of any earned recognition arrangements or voluntary scheme status of the Red Tractor scheme are being adhered to.

CBs must notify immediately the RTA HoA of any information affecting UKAS accreditation status e.g. suspension of accreditation.

5. CB Management Accountabilities & Communications

5.1. CB Senior Manager / Director

CBs must have a nominated Senior Manager / Director with the overall accountability for RTA work. This person must be made known to the RTA HoA. Key accountabilities include:

- Communicating key and strategic decisions to RTA e.g. key personnel changes
- Ensuring all RTA requirements in both the Certification Contract and the CB Protocol are met
- Ensuring suitable IT solutions are in place to meet the data requirements of RTA e.g. capture and transfer of data on certified businesses
- Attending regular communication meetings with RTA personnel, in particular Service Level Review meetings
- To provide CB input into all other RTA consultations, in particular Scheme Standards reviews

[1] Safe Haven and Cold Crush Oilseeds Standards do not require UKAS accreditation

- To receive and act upon RTA management information / Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports as outlined in Section 5.3 of this protocol
- To ensure that all communication from RTA is effectively communicated to the relevant staff within the CB in a timely manner
- To ensure that measures and procedures are in place to prevent bribery and corruption at all levels of its organisation

5.2. Operational Management

CBs must have in place people accountable for the day-to-day running / delivery of the Scheme. These people must also be identified to the RTA HoA. Key accountabilities include:

- Liaison with RTA Technical Team
- Ensuring assessments are carried out consistently in terms of quality
- Ensuring RTA is notified about assessors' details as set out in section 6.5
- Ensuring that assessments are delivered on time and in a professional manner
- Ensuring robust and efficient certification management process
- Integrity / accuracy of data provided to RTA in a timely manner
- Provide regular feedback to RTA HoA and Technical Team on any issues with applying the Standards or opportunities for improvement
- Attending regular liaison meetings with RTA HoA and Technical Team

5.3. Management Information / Key Performance Indicators

The integrity and reputation of the RTA scheme is dependent on the relationships with CBs and how the Scheme requirements are delivered. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) measure the operational delivery performance of the CB as required by RTA and detailed in the Certification Contract, this Protocol and the CB IT Data Protocol. They will be produced and issued on a 6-monthly basis.

KPI reports will be produced by RTA and submitted to the nominated Senior Manager / Director in the CB who is accountable for the RTA work. RTA will require written responses on actions being taken by the CB against any red or amber classified performance.

Where continual poor performance issues are experienced with the CB it is likely to be deemed breach of the terms of the Certification Contract and may result in termination of the agreement.

5.4. Annual Service Level Review Meeting

The Annual Service Level Review meeting will take place with the nominated CB Senior Manager / Director with the accountability for the RTA Scheme and the RTA HoA. The review will discuss:

- Individual performance and compliance of the CB (including KPIs)
- The effectiveness of the strategic partnership between the two parties
- The strategic direction of RTA and how the CB can help its delivery
- What could be improved

5.5. Subcontracting Assessments out to any Third-Party Company

If a CB wishes to subcontract assessments out to any third-party company, the terms of clause 4.3 of the Certification Contract and Clause 6.2.2 of ISO 17065 applies. The essence of 4.3 is that prior approval by RTA is necessary before work is subcontracted. The work of subcontractors must be covered by indemnity insurance to the levels set out in clause 8.2 of the Certification Contract. The RTA HoA will be the principal contact. Where third-party companies are used the CB must ensure that they manage the third-party contractor to deliver the requirements of the Certification Contract and this Protocol. For the avoidance of doubt the assessor requirements set out in sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 of this Protocol equally apply to assessors working for a third-party company and it is the responsibility of the CB to liaise with them to ensure this is delivered.

5.6. IT – Systems and Data Integrity

CBs are required to ensure that they have a person / company either employed or contracted with the ability to design, build and maintain IT systems suitable to meet the specification. This person / company must be made known to RTA and the RTA database service provider (TLR).

5.7. Communication with Scheme Members

CBs must have systems in place to be able to communicate effectively with Scheme Members, in particular to ensure that renewals and assessment planning is carried out in a timely manner.

RTA welcomes the opportunity for transparency of our royalty fees, however, where CBs are communicating this information the figure itemised on the invoice must be that which is paid to RTA and not include any other costs that the CB may consider are incurred.

Where royalty fees are quoted they must be accompanied with the following statement adjacent to the royalty fee figure: -

“The royalty fee paid to Red Tractor Assurance covers the costs of running the scheme and promoting farm assured products. Red Tractor Assurance operates on a not for profit basis.”

5.8. Public Communications

CBs must ensure that any of their staff managing and dealing with the RTA Scheme use the authorised terminology at all times. Generically the Scheme must be referred to as “Red Tractor Assurance” or “Red Tractor” and the more specific farm sector standards or those covering other links in the supply chain must be called by the names listed in Schedule 4 of the certification contract. This should apply to all communications both written and verbal.

Where written communications or printed material produced by the CB refers to “Red Tractor” or “Red Tractor Assurance” or uses any of the Red Tractor logos, it must be done in accordance with the Red Tractor logo rules.

Where requested by RTA, CBs must provide copies of promotional material in use that refers to Red Tractor in order that RTA can ascertain compliance with the Red Tractor logo rules.

Where any material is found to be non-compliant with the Red Tractor logo rules, the CBs must remove all material and make the necessary amendments.

5.9. Reproducing the RTA Scheme Standards

It is the responsibility of the CBs to provide copies of the Scheme Standards and other necessary documentation to RTA members they certify in a suitable format that has been agreed with RTA. RTA will co-ordinate printing centrally of all documents and CBs will be responsible for covering the costs of the quantities they require to fulfil their obligations.

6. CB Assessors, Reviewers and Certification Managers

6.1. Recruitment, Induction, Training and Competence of Directly Employed and Subcontracted Assessors, Reviewers and Certification Managers

CBs must recruit sufficient competent personnel to carry out the work required. CBs may either directly employ people or use individual subcontractors.

CBs must ensure that written contracts are in place with both employees and subcontractors so that they can exercise the necessary management control to meet the terms of the Certification Contract.

CBs must ensure that all assessors to be used for the RTA Scheme are aware that they represent RTA and the CB and therefore maintain a professional code of conduct at all times consistent with the requirements set out below and not behave in a manner which may bring RTA into disrepute.

6.2. RTA Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct outlines principles which RTA expect CBs to follow and the steps it requires of CBs to ensure that all employees and persons involved in assessments and certification against RTA standards adhere to the Code.

RTA requires CBs to:

- Ensure that actions or activities do not bring RTA name into disrepute.
- Operate in a professional way to ensure public confidence in RTA and the whole assurance chain is upheld.
- Publicly embrace and promote the concept of the whole assurance food chain and of RTA's involvement in it.
- To ensure that activities and public statements do not bring the name of any of RTA's licensees or scheme members (and/or their contracted CBs if applicable) into disrepute
- Ensure employees and contractors do not use the assessment to promote other business opportunities or consultancy work
- Ensure employees and contractors do not have any conflict of interest that could affect their judgement during an assessment.

For the avoidance of doubt this Code does not restrict CBs from promoting their activities to any third party or from seeking clarification from the proper authorities on issue of concern. However, they are required to ensure that any issues of concern are raised privately and without publicity so as not to harm the public market perceptions in the meantime. This does not of course restrict the obligation that might fall on the individual employed by the CB to provide information to the competent authority in the course of legal proceedings.

Breach of the Code of Conduct is considered grounds for termination of an RTA CB licence.

6.3. Assessor Training and Performance Monitoring

The CB must ensure that all aspects of RTA requirements for Assessor Training and Sign off are met and that there are systems in place to check the quality and consistency of assessments.

Feedback from Scheme Members, RTA or other third parties that demonstrates performance or conduct issues with assessors must be acted upon. Information gained from feedback that may be helpful to RTA to improve the RTA Scheme or Standards must be fed back to RTA.

The following sets out the RTA requirements for the recruitment, training. And performance management of assessors completing RTA assessments.

6.3.1. Qualifications, Experience & Competency Requirements

The following qualifications, experience and competencies are required of all assessors being recruited:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Qualifications & Experience Requirements</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Qualifications</td><td rowspan="10">AND / OR</td><td>Experience</td></tr>
<tr><td>Livestock (Beef and Lamb, Dairy, Pigs, Chicken, Duck, Turkey)</td><td rowspan="9">NVQ Level 3 or higher in an Agricultural related subject</td><td>On farm experience preferably having worked on a farm and had some farm management or stockman experience with responsibility for the health & welfare of livestock. Experience must be appropriate to the species the assessor is being recruited in</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combinable Crops & Sugar Beet</td><td rowspan="4">On farm experience preferably having crop management experience, managing the safety and legality of the product grown and harvested.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fresh Produce</td></tr>
<tr><td>Safe Haven</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cold Crush Oilseeds</td></tr>
<tr><td>Livestock Markets & Collection Centres</td><td rowspan="2">Management or stockman experience with responsibility for the health and welfare of livestock either on farm, in a livestock market, collection centre or livestock haulier</td></tr>
<tr><td>Livestock Transport</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meat Processing</td><td>HACCP Level 3</td><td>AND</td><td>Experience in the sector the assessor is being</td></tr>
</table>

	Lead Auditor or equivalent WATOK Ideally BRC approved for species to be assessed		recruited in, ideally at Processor Technical Manager level

For Fresh Produce, in addition to the qualifications and/or experience above, assessors **must have** BASIS Certificate in Crop Production and FACTS Certificate (CBs may request a derogation from Red Tractor on individual circumstances).

Competency Requirements

- The ability to communicate with and engage with both the farming community and colleagues in a confident and patient manner whilst ensuring understanding
- Enthusiastic and energetic with a keen eye for detail and a passion to improve standards
- Ability to manage conflict / difficult situations
- Able to manage own time, plan in work and organise themselves to meet deadlines
- General IT skills

6.3.2. Training Required Prior to Sign Off to Assess

CBs are accountable for supplying assessors with copies of RT Scheme Standards and for talking the assessor through the document prior to completing the RT training.

Trainee assessors must register on the RTA Training Academy. The CB is then responsible for managing the assessor completing the required courses.

The following training requirements are those that must then be completed prior to completing any Red Tractor assessments.

RTA Training Academy

Module 1A: All About Red Tractor

Module 1B: The Red Tractor Scheme Standards and Scheme Rules

Module 2A: Managing the Assessment Process

Module 2B: How to Assess and Assessment Techniques

Red Tractor Scheme Standards (including tests): For all schemes the assessor is training in

- Beef, Lamb & Dairy
- Pigs
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Crops
- Fresh Produce
    - Microbiology

- Meat Processing
- Livestock Transport

Assurewel Welfare Outcome Scoring

All trainee assessors for Dairy must have undertaken the Assurewel "Welfare Outcome Assessment for Dairy Cows Training", delivered by an Assurewel representative or a trainer qualified to deliver the Assurewel training, and completed the Assurewel online tests for the following before they are signed off:

- Body Condition
- Cleanliness
- Mobility
- Hairloss & Lesions
- Swellings

Refresher courses must be undertaken after 12 months of carrying out Dairy assessments.

6.3.3. Shadowing, Witnessing and Sign Off

The following outlines the process that trainee assessors must go through before they are signed off to assess:

Shadowing

Trainee assessors must shadow RTA assessments for the standards they are to operate in. They must observe at least two different qualified assessors conducting assessments on a cross section of businesses to ensure the trainee assessor is fully equipped to deal with different scenarios. This means different production systems within a sector and businesses with both good and bad conformance history.

Where a trainee assessor is shadowing a dairy farm assessment they should be asked to make a note of their own welfare outcome scores on the cows, so they can be compared and calibrated with the assessor leading the assessment afterwards.

Witnessing

Following completion of the shadowing requirements, trainee assessors must lead assessments for the standards in which they are to operate in. These should be on a cross section of businesses in accordance with the same criteria as outlined above in "Shadowing". These assessments must be witnessed by senior assessors nominated by the CB to have that responsibility. This person must take detailed notes on the trainee assessor's performance. This must include core skills such as:

- pre-assessment preparation
- opening meeting
- closing meeting
- thoroughness of site inspection
- observational skills
- thoroughness of documentation review

- clarity of non-conformances
- questioning techniques
- knowledge of RTA standards
- observational evidence gathering
- managing difficult discussions.

These notes must be used for feedback to the trainee assessor and kept as part of their training records.

Number of Shadow & Witnessed Assessments

The table below identifies the minimum number of shadow and witnessed assessments which must be done before a trainee can be signed off.

Category	Definition	Minimum number of shadow and witnessed assessments	Notes
New assessors	Someone not signed off for any RTA scheme standards for any CB	6 (3 must be witnessed)	
Extending scope	Someone signed off for one or more RTA scheme standard and adding another RTA standard	4 (2 must be witnessed)	This applies to each additional RTA standard they will be assessing A minimum of 1 shadow and 1 witness must be stand-alone assessment for the new standard.
From another CB	Someone already signed off who wishes to work for a different CB	4 (2 must be witnessed)	A minimum of 1 shadow and 1 witness must be stand-alone assessment for the new standard

In circumstances where the CB feels less than the above minimum is justified they can request a derogation from RTA. In doing so they must provide evidence to back up the request (e.g. background information on the individual and their performance). RTA will consider each case on an individual basis.

CB Sign-off

A 'sign-off' assessment must be witnessed by the CB person accountable for the day to day running of the scheme or assessors nominated by the CB to have that responsibility who have not witnessed the assessments under "Witnessing" above. They must have access to the detailed notes from the witnessed assessments.

RT Sign-off

CBs must notify RTA when they believe an assessor has reached an acceptable level of competence for final approval. All new assessors must be signed off by RTA prior to conducting assessments unaccompanied.

Assessors will be assigned a Fresh Produce Crop Category by RTA based on their Red Tractor Academy Fresh Produce and Microbiology test results. Assessors must not assess higher than their assigned Crop Category unless expressly agreed by Red Tractor following an independent witness assessment. If assessors wish to improve on their assigned Crop Category, the CB must request an independent witness assessment from RTA, and the assessor must not assess against the higher Crop Category apart from the assessment being independently witnessed. If the assessor does not pass the independent witness assessment, they must not assess higher than their assigned Crop Category.

6.3.4. Ongoing Performance Monitoring

CBs must have a process in place to monitor the on-going performance of assessors.

The process must ensure that the standards are being correctly applied and each assessment completed is fair and accurate.

An annual formal review with every assessor must be completed by the person accountable for the day to day running of the Scheme or nominated individuals to ascertain any refresher training needs.

The outputs of individual assessors must be compared against others to ensure a consistent approach is being maintained across all assessors, (a report setting out by assessor what types of and number of non-conformances they raise and how frequently).

All assessors must be witnessed by the CB. The table below indicates the minimum frequency of witnessed assessments RTA requires:

Assessor Scope (i.e. the number of RTA Scheme standards assessed)	Minimum number of witnessed assessments	Notes/exceptions
1	1 every 2 years	
2 (including those doing Meat and Poultry Processing and RTA Licensing Traceability Challenges)	2 every 2 years	Each scheme standard must be witnessed at least once every 2 years. A combination of stand-alone and combined witnessed assessments should be done wherever possible
3	3 every 2 years	
4+	4(+) every 2 years	

Witness assessments must be undertaken by the CB person accountable for the day to day running of the scheme or persons nominated by the CB to have that responsibility.

Where the CB finds issues with how assessors are assessing the standards, RTA must be informed, and corrective action must be taken which may include refresher / further training, more frequent witnessed assessments or ceasing to use the assessor. Where RTA finds issues with how assessors are assessing the standards through its own internal review these findings and actions will be communicated to CBs.

As RTA standards are updated the CB must have systems in place to train all assessors with the updated requirements before the date at which certified businesses must begin to implement them. RTA will, from time to time, develop further courses on the Red Tractor Academy or recognise other external courses. This may be driven by:

- New standards that may be introduced
- New legislation
- Assessor skill and knowledge gaps identified

Any new courses will be developed and communicated to CBs. RTA will work with CBs to agree reasonable time frames for assessors to complete the courses and any associated tests.

6.4. Documented Records of Assessor Training and Performance

CBs must retain documented records of assessor training and performance including:

- Past relevant qualifications and experience achieved prior to starting RTA assessments
- All training provided to the assessor including by the CB, RTA e-learning courses and other external parties if relevant
- Results of any RTA e-learning tests relevant to the RTA assessments they are undertaking
- For a trainee, that the requirements set out in Section 6.3.3 have been complied with
- Individual on-going performance monitoring including detailed notes on their performance during assessments where they were witnessed
- Any feedback relating to an assessor's performance whether from a Scheme Member, a third party or RTA and any subsequent actions and corrective plans.

RTA has the right to reasonable information from an assessor's training record.

6.5. RTA Record of Assessors

RTA will maintain a record of all assessors carrying out RTA assessments through the RTA Training Academy including their contact email address, the CB or CBs for which the assess and the RTA standards which they assess. Nominated CB managers will have 'CB Admin' access to the RTA Training Academy for their assessors.

To ensure all assessors have access to the right courses on the RTA Training Academy and ensure that RTA has all the relevant information to maintain the record of assessors CBs must:

- provide any new assessors with the link to the Red Tractor Training Academy, instruct them on how to register and authorise their registration to enable them to undertake the training
- notify the RTA Technical Assistant if an existing assessor is extending the RTA Standards they will be assessing in future, and ensure that the assessor amends their record on the Red Tractor Training Academy to reflect the change
- contact the RTA Technical Assistant when an assessor is no longer working for them on RTA work or stops assessing any RTA Standards

The RTA Training Academy will collect and hold the following information from the assessor:

- the CB(s) the assessor works for

- the RTA scheme standards the assessor assesses (including the categories they assess for Fresh Produce)
- if an assessor works for a third party assurance company or another farm assurance scheme (e.g. Soil Association, AB Sustain, BRC Global Standard)
- if they are also responsible for certification decisions for RTA standards
- the regions the assessor covers
- the Red Tractor Academy training courses undertaken by the assessor
- the results of the Red Tractor Academy tests

7. Assessment and Certification Process

7.1. Application Process for New Members

New applicants contacting a Certification Body for the first time (new to Assurance) must be provided with a Scheme Registration pack which must include a copy of the Scheme standard and an application form. The application form must ask the applicant for:

- Information on any prosecutions brought or likely to be brought against them, or in relation to any business, site, holding or vehicle owned or occupied by them or referred to in the application, which relates to any issues covered by the Standards including without limitation food safety, product traceability, animal health, animal welfare, animal identification and movements, veterinary medicine records, trade description, animal transport, environmental legislation or relevant consumer protection legislation.
- Any previous or current RTA memberships related to the site or company

Where both beef cattle and sheep are farmed, both species must be assured under the RTA Beef and Lamb scheme i.e. the applicant cannot opt out of one. In exceptional cases, there may be circumstances where the sheep (or cattle) are kept as pets, and not for consumption. In these very rare cases it is permissible for the farm just to assure the species that is being reared for consumption.

All RTA dairy farms must also be assured for beef (either through RTA or QMS/FAWL/NIBL FQAS in the devolved regions). Where a producer does not want beef assurance the CB must explain that none of their cattle can be sold as assured. In such instances, RTA requires the CB to obtain a signed declaration from the farmer that they understand and accept that.

The application form must ask the applicant to sign that they agree to abide by the “Red Tractor Assurance Membership Rules”.

All new applicants must be checked on the RTA Member Checker to establish if they have ever been assured in the past, regardless of whether they declared a previous membership or not.

The CB must acknowledge receipt of the completed and returned application form within 14 days. The CB must also register the name of the business and a named, nominated person who has functional responsibility for the management decisions and operating systems to be assessed under the Scheme.

Dairy

The Dairy Sector operates a Milk Purchaser / Processors structure, i.e. the Milk Purchaser / Processor makes the application to the CB to deliver the assessment and certification of its supplying farms. When approached by a new Milk Purchaser / Processors to offer certification for their farms the CB must make sure the Milk Purchaser / Processor is registered as a member of the RTA First Purchaser scheme with RTA. No applications to certify individual farms can be accepted until this confirmation is received from RTA. The CB must ensure that the farmer (either as part of an application or during the first assessment) signs a form that they agree to abide by the "Red Tractor Assurance Membership Rules" and a declaration on prosecutions as outlined in Section 7.1 above. Should the CB receive an application for certification to the RTA Dairy standards from an individual farmer who is not contracted to supply milk to a specific Milk Purchaser / Processor the CB must contact RTA to discuss the case before accepting and progressing with the application. RTA will only allow these applications to be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

For farming enterprises CBs are required to hold separate registrations for every farm holding / site / business (holdings or sites are places where animals can be housed, feed stored, or in cropping sectors where fertilisers or pesticides are kept, or harvested products stored (See Scheme Rule 16)). All holdings / sites entered into a single application must be under the same management control and the holdings must fall within the relevant description(s) set out below. Where additional holdings/ sites are allowed, the named nominated person with the functional responsibility for the management decisions and operating systems for the additional holding / site must be named on the application form.

<table>
<tr><th>Dairy</th><th>Poultry</th><th>Pigs</th><th>Beef/Lamb</th><th>Crops</th><th>Fresh Produce</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Each milking premises requires a separate registration</td><td rowspan="2">A self-contained live poultry facility functioning with defined poultry stock management, operational control and biosecurity standards</td><td>Main holding + max 3 small nursery or finishing units</td><td>Main site + additional sites where livestock are kept.</td><td colspan="2">Main holding + any additional sites where fertilisers and pesticides are kept or harvested products stored or processed.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Additional sites must be close to the main unit and agreed by the Certification Body</td></tr>
</table>

Livestock Markets & Collection Centres	Livestock Transport	Poultry Catching & Transport	Meat & Poultry Processing
A separate registration is required for each site with a separate Animal Gatherings Order (AGO) Approval Number	A separate registration is required for each commercial livestock vehicle or trailer.	A separate registration is required for each catching and/ or transport company.	A separate registration is required for each site with a separate FSA Approval Number. Where companies outsource slaughter/cutting,

Additional external sites used as field lairages can only be registered under the same registration if they are covered under the site's AGO			those sites must be registered and certified in their own right.

7.2. Membership Renewal

CBs must have systems in place to annually invite scheme members to renew their membership. Renewal forms and letters must be dispatched to the member at least 6 weeks before expiry. If no response to the renewal request is received, at least 2 reminders must be issued.

Renewal forms must ask the member for information on any prosecutions brought or likely to be brought against them, or in relation to any business, site, holding or vehicle owned or occupied by them or referred to in the application, which relates to any issues covered by the Standards including without limitation food safety, product traceability, animal health, animal welfare, animal identification and movements, veterinary medicine records, trade description, animal transport, environmental legislation or relevant consumer protection legislation.

The certificate must be renewed within 14 days of the receipt of the renewal payment.

Systems must be in place to terminate the membership of Scheme members who have not renewed within one month of the certificate expiry date.

7.3. The Assessment

The initial assessment must be carried out within 28 days of registration, or within 14 days of the dairy farm commencing supply to the member Milk Purchaser / Processor. Thereafter, assessments must be carried out at the frequency defined below:

Beef and Lamb / Dairy

A maximum of 18 months between assessments. The assessor must see both species during the assessment. If, at the time of the assessment there is only one species (e.g. beef cattle) on the farm then the scope of the certificate must be for beef only, and lamb can only be added to the scope of the certificate once there are sheep on the farm that have been assessed by the CB.

Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet

Assessments must be completed annually, within the membership year with a maximum of 14 months between assessments. In any two-year period one assessment must follow harvest when stores are likely to be in use

Pigs / Poultry

Assessments must be completed annually, within the membership year with a maximum of 14 months between assessments. For Poultry Catching and Transport, the assessor must see the physical catching and loading of the species for which the business requires certification.

Fresh Produce

Assessments must be completed annually, within the membership year with a maximum of 14 months between assessments.

Initial assessments must be carried out at harvest and applicants must have a minimum of three months' records prior to the date of the assessment

Products that are harvested before registration cannot be certified.

If the producer requires a GlobalG.A.P. certificate, the assessment should not normally be shorter than three hours per legal entity

In addition:

- Category 0/1 – One assessment in two years must be carried out at harvest / during in-field packing
- Category 2 – One assessment every three years must be carried out during a period of in-field packing / packhouse activity
- Category 3 – One assessment every three years must be carried out during a period of packhouse activity or when product is in the store

Annual regular inspections/ audits and unannounced inspections/ audits must be carried out during two separate visits that shall be a minimum of 30 days apart from each other.

CBs must have procedures in place for assessor rotation, ensuring that a Fresh Produce Scheme Member does not have the same assessor for more than 3 consecutive assessments.

Livestock Markets and Collection Centres

Assessments must be completed annually, within the membership year with a maximum of 14 months between assessments. The assessor must see the species for which the business requires certification. The standards specify that sites can be assured for beef and lamb and/or pigs.

Livestock Transport

Assessments must be completed annually, within the membership year with a maximum of 14 months between assessments. For businesses with multiple vehicles the assessor must see each individual vehicle for which the business requires certification at the initial assessment and thereafter a minimum of 50% of the vehicles must be assessed at each assessment, with no vehicle going more than 24 months without being assessed.

Meat and Poultry Processing

Assessments must be completed annually, within the membership year with a maximum of 14 months between assessments. In addition, for those sites certified for pork, a second assessment focussing on traceability and pork quality is required. For those plants carrying out slaughter the assessor must see slaughter of the species for which the business requires certification.

Where, due to exceptional circumstances, a Scheme Member requests to change the assessment date outside of the maximum assessment interval, the CB must liaise with the RTA HoA.

Members must be given a maximum of 28 days' notice of a routine assessment.

7.3.1. Categorisation of Non-Conformances

For all Schemes except Meat and Poultry Processing

Non-conformances against Key Standards are categorised as Major or Minor. A Major non-conformance means there is little to no evidence that the requirement of a standard is met and will result in suspension of the certificate until it is rectified.

Minor non-conformance means that there is evidence that the Scheme Member has taken steps to comply but with some gaps.

Normal standards are those which must be met or raised as a non-conformance which must be rectified.

Excessive numbers of non-conformances or repeats of the same non-conformance may result in suspension of the certificate.

Recommendations do not affect certification but must still be raised as non-conformances if not complied with. Recommendations are sometimes used to introduce points that are likely to become standards in the future.

For Meat and Poultry Processing

Non-conformances for the Meat and Poultry Processing standards are classified as:

Critical – Where there is a major risk to food safety, traceability or animal welfare, or a failure to comply with the relevant legislation. Critical non-conformances result in suspension of certification and the plant has been reassessed and shown to comply

Major – Where there is a substantial failure (little to no evidence) to comply with any clause of the Standards or on the basis of objective evidence (from external sources), there is evidence of complete failure to comply with a clause of the standards

Minor – Evidence that a clause of a standards has not been fully met, but steps have been taken to comply.

7.4. Assessment Reports

Assessment reports must be written up in sufficient detail to include:

- Time spent on farm, measured from opening meeting to closing meeting
- Objective evidence established against each point assessed. Evidence of non-conformances must be sufficiently detailed to enable the certifier and future assessors to establish whether they have been rectified. This may be on a paper record retained by the CB or on the report recorded on the CB's IT database.

On completion of the assessment the assessor must leave the scheme member with a record of the non-conformances against the standards and the recommendations. Non-conformances must still be recorded even if it is corrected by the member during the assessment. The assessor may note the corrective action that the member has taken or proposes to take but must not advise or suggest what the corrective action must be or agree timescales for completion. The assessor must inform the member of the next steps that they must take before certification can take place. In the case of dairy assessments, the member must be left with a completed copy of the Welfare Outcome Scoring sheet.

The assessor must make it clear that non-conformances against recommendations do not affect certification.

Non-conformance reports must ask the scheme member for information on any prosecutions brought or likely to be brought against them, or in relation to any business, site, holding or vehicle owned or occupied by them or referred to in the application, which relates to any issues covered by the Standards including without limitation food safety, product traceability, animal health, animal welfare, animal identification and movements, veterinary medicine records, trade description, animal transport, environmental legislation or relevant consumer protection legislation.

Following the assessment, the report must be written up and the data submitted to the RTA database within the following timescales following assessment:

	Assessment date	Non-conformances	Assessment report forwarded to CB office
No non-conformances found	14 days	N/A	14 days
Minor non-conformances found	5 days	5 days	14 days
Major/minor non-conformances found (Meat & Poultry Processing)	5 days	5 days	14 days
Major non-conformances found	2 working days	2 working days*	2 working days
Critical non-conformances found	2 working days	2 working days*	2 working days

*The assessor must notify the CB on the same day of assessment of any Major/Critical NCs raised and invoke procedures to immediately suspend the member. The certification status change must be fed into the RTA database by the end of the same working day to ensure that the RTA Checkers are accurate the following day. Where NCs are sufficiently serious, the CB must notify RTA on the same day. If major NCs are raised on an initial dairy assessment, for a farm already supplying a Milk Purchaser/Processor, then the CB must inform the Milk Purchaser/Processor of the assessment outcome on the same day as the assessment. Milk cannot be consigned as assured until the NCs are rectified and a certificate is issued.

The CB must retain records of assessment reports, and any relevant supporting information, such as handwritten notes, for a minimum of six years. Where CBs are working on paper based rather than electronic data capture systems, either the paper assessment report must be retained or it can be scanned and saved electronically, providing that the scanned copy is legible. The CB must be able to obtain assessment reports and supply them to RTA within 24 hours' notice when required.

7.5 Closing off Non-Conformances

With the exception of Dairy and Collection Centres, new Scheme members have 3 months to provide CBs with evidence that non-conformances have been rectified and can be closed off. Where insufficient evidence is supplied by the applicant by the end of the 3-month period the application must be closed.

For dairy new members, unless a specific extension is granted, initial non-conformances must all be rectified within 28 days of the assessment. If non-conformances have not been rectified within 28 days, milk cannot be consigned as assured.

For existing members, all non-conformances must be rectified within 28 days from the date of the assessment, unless a specific extension is granted. In granting an extension for specific non-conformances, the interim conditions must not present any risks to traceability, food safety, animal welfare or environmental protection.

The suitability of the corrective evidence must depend on the type of standards and the degree to which the Scheme Member did not conform.

Where the non-conformance relates to a record / policy / document, evidence must be supplied in the form of the record / policy / document. Where the non-conformance is physical or operational, evidence must be in the form of a written description of the action taken, and further substantiated by photos, copies of invoices confirming work has been completed or a letter from a vet / qualified adviser if applicable. The CB must make a judgement on whether a revisit is required to close off the non-conformances, taking into account the severity of the non-conformances.

Non-conformances must be reviewed and closed off by someone other than the assessor and must be based on evidence supplied by the CB by the Scheme Member.

CBs must have sufficient personnel and processes in place to ensure that documentary evidence of corrective actions received is reviewed within 7 days of receipt.

For Collection Centres where minor non-conformances have been recorded at the initial assessment, and if requested by the applicant, the CB can issue a derogation to the business confirming the date the site was assessed, that it is not yet certified but it can collect assured cattle and sheep (and they can retain their assurance status) whilst the site rectifies their non-conformances. The derogation must be clear about the site address and dates the derogation is applicable to.

7.6 Certification Decision

Assessment reports, detail of any non-conformances and any associated corrective evidence must be reviewed prior to granting certification. The certification decision must be made by a Certification Officer / Manager or Scheme Manager and must not be the assessor who undertook the assessment or any subsequent revisits.

The certificate must clearly state which RTA Standards are certified and the relevant enterprises. If some enterprises were not covered at the time of the assessment, then they cannot be included in the certification (e.g. crop specific protocols / species being slaughtered).

Where no non-conformances are recorded at the assessment, certification must be granted within 7 days of receipt of the assessment report in the CB office and the certificate and any Scheme stickers must be dispatched to the member.

7.7 Spot Checks

CBs must have systems in place to undertake spot checks as required and as advised by RTA from time to time.

In fresh produce, CBs must have systems in place as follows to undertake spot checks on minimum of 10% producers. Annual regular inspections/ audits and unannounced inspections/ audits must be carried out during two separate visits that shall be a minimum of 30 days apart from each other.

7.8 RTA Pigs Scheme Quarterly Veterinary Reports

For every Red Tractor Pigs Scheme Member, a quarterly veterinary report (QVR) form must be received every quarter (on an ongoing basis) from the retained vet/ veterinary practice and recorded for each member. QVRs must be supplied promptly on request to Red Tractor staff if required.
The CB must have an in-house system in place to notify when a QVR is overdue. The in-house system must alert the CB on the day the QVR is overdue. The CB must follow up any overdue QVRs within a day of being notified by contacting the relevant pig member and/or vet to request the overdue QVR.
Any veterinary comments present on the QVR in the top right-hand comments box relating to non-conformances/ veterinary surgeon's comments against the Red Tractor Pigs Farm Standards must be acted upon on receipt and without delay and corrective action from the producer (to close out any non-conformances) required within a 28-day timeframe. The exceptions to this are:

- Where a non-conformance is noted on the QVR against standard AM.f.1 for not having sufficient antibiotic usage data uploaded on eMB to meet the RT standard. If veterinary comments are noted against AM.f.1, sufficient corrective action from the producer must be received within a 14-day timeframe and failure to do so must result in suspension from the RT Scheme.
- If the non-conformance/ veterinary comments indicate a severe breach of the standard and the vet has recommended suspension from the Scheme, the CB must inform the RTA Technical Manager by the end of the same working day and agree further actions.

7.9 Risk Based Approach to Assessments

As Risk based assessments are implemented to the RTA scheme, the CB must ensure that the 'Risk Based Approach to Inspections - Guidance for Certification Bodies' Protocol is followed.

7.10 Suspension of Certification

Where a member fails to provide sufficient evidence of rectification within 28 days from the date of the assessment the certificate must be suspended immediately. The certification change to 'suspended' must be fed into the RTA database by the end of the same working day.

7.11 Withdrawal of Certification

CBs must have systems in place to withdraw certification from suspended members who have not rectified their non-conformances within 3 months of their suspension date and change the certificate end date to the date of withdrawal. Membership must then be closed and an only be regained following the procedure for a new applicant. The RTA database must also be updated with this information.

7.12 Managing RTA Fresh Produce Scheme Members Supplying Tesco

Where CBs are managing RTA Fresh Produce Scheme Members who are supplying Tesco, APPENDIX 4 – Managing RTA Fresh Produce Scheme Members Supplying Tesco must be adhered to.

8. Dealing with Material Changes

CBs must have procedures in place to consider information provided by Members in accordance with Rules 26-29 Material Changes.

8.1. Periods where the farm is destocked

There may be long periods of time when livestock farms are empty of livestock/birds. When the CB becomes aware, either as a result of trying to book an assessment or from direct communication from the Member, the CB must alter the certification status to 'destocked / no stock' and feed this certification change to the RTA database within 7 days of the notification. The member will show as NOT VALID on the RTA checker. The member should be reminded that it is their responsibility to confirm when stock are back on the farm and until they do so the certificate will remain NOT VALID. When the CB is informed by the Member that the farm has been restocked with livestock/birds the certification status must be changed back to reflect the certification status and expiry date as it was before the status was changed to destocked and the information fed into the RTA database within 3 days of the notification.

The break in certification must not affect the assessment cycle and so the next assessment must still be in accordance with section 7.3. The exception is when the next assessment or spot check is due whilst the farm is destocked. In this instance the assessment must be done within 4 weeks of the notification that the farm/site has been restocked and the certification status being updated to assured.

Should the Member's renewal be due whilst certification is classified as 'destocked / no stock' the CB must still invite the Member to renew as per section 7.2. If the Member chooses to renew and confirms the site is still destocked, then the certification status at renewal must continue as 'destocked / no stock'. If the Member chooses not to renew then their membership should be terminated as per section 7.2 and the Member will have to apply as a new member should they wish to once the farm/site is restocked.

Where farms certified for both beef and lamb are destocked of one species for a period of time (e.g. sheep are only farmed during certain months whereas cattle are present all year round) and the routine assessment cannot assess both species then the routine assessment must go ahead within the normal assessment cycle. All aspects of the standards for both species must be assessed and the certification for both species can continue as per the procedures outlined in section 7.6. The destocked species must be present on farm during the next routine assessment for continued certification to be allowed. If they are not, then certification for that species must be removed.

8.1.1. Seasonal milking

When a CB is notified by a Milk Purchaser / Processor or farmer that a farm has temporarily ceased milk production then the CB must alter the certification status to 'no milk' and feed this certification change to the RTA database within 7 days of the notification. The member will show as NOT VALID on the RTA Checker. The Milk Purchaser / Processor / farmer should be reminded that it is their responsibility to confirm when the farm is due to resume milking and until they do so the certification will remain as not assured. This section applies where no cows are in milk, and therefore then milk production standards would not apply. If the farm is still milking cows but not supplying a processor this section is not applicable and the normal procedure must be followed.

When the CB is informed that the farm is due to resume milking the certification status must be changed back to reflect the same certification status and expiry date as that before it was changed to 'no milk' and the information fed into the RTA database within 3 days of the notification.

The break in certification must not affect the assessment cycle and so the next assessment must still be in accordance with section 7.3. The exception is when the next assessment or spot check is due whilst the farm is destocked. In this instance the assessment must be done within 4 weeks of the notification that the farm/site has been restocked and the certification status being updated to assured.

8.2. Member requests closure

Should a member request their RTA membership is closed before the certificate or membership expiry date, CBs must have systems in place to get the request in writing and to ensure that the member understands that the business cannot claim products / services as 'Assured' as per the membership rules. The CB must then close the membership (but not amend the certification status or expiry date) and the RTA database must also be updated with this information.

8.3. Dairy Farmer no longer supplying Milk Purchaser / Processor

When a CB is notified by the Milk Purchaser / Processor that a farmer is ceasing to supply them, the CB must have systems in place to keep the certification in place for 28 days unless it is transferred to a new CB in the meantime. After the 28 days the membership must then be closed. The RTA database must also be updated with this information.

9. Members requesting a transfer between CBs

Members are permitted to transfer from one CB to another for their assessment and certification providing they have no outstanding non-conformances with their existing CB. In Dairy the need to transfer may arise when a producer switches Milk Purchaser / Processor or when a Milk Purchaser / Processor changes CB. In Dairy the timings of the transfer will often not coincide with the existing certificate expiry date or the next assessment due date and therefore specific procedures are required to accommodate this and they are detailed under Section 9.2.

All new applicants must be checked on the RTA Cross Scheme Member Checker to establish if they have ever been assured in the past regardless of whether they declared a previous membership or not.

9.1. Pre – Transfer Review & General Procedures

Where the applicant has previously been certified for the same Standard, the new CB must carry out a pre-transfer review of the certification of the prospective member. The review must look at the following elements and the review must be documented:

- Confirmation that the activity falls within the accredited scope of the CB
- The reasons for seeking the transfer
- Confirmation that the site (or sites) hold a current valid certificate for the appropriate scope
- Review of the last certification and non-conformance reports including confirmation that there are no outstanding non-conformances (some information can be accessed via the RTA

Transfer Wizard, the RTA Cross Scheme member checker database **or** a copy of the non-conformances obtained from the existing CB)

- Any complaints received and action taken (information to be obtained from the applicant)
- Stage in the certification cycle (**NB**: If the middle, further investigate)
- Details of any current engagement with regulatory bodies, including previous and pending prosecutions (information to be obtained from the applicant) (for Dairy and Minor Beef this will be obtained at the time of assessment).

Where the previous CB is contacted by the prospective CB for information, the previous CB must disclose to the new CB, all previous assessment and certification information in order to allow the new CB to complete the pre-transfer review and decide on whether to accept and progress the application. The pre-transfer review should include a visit to the applicant, unless the pre-transfer review indicated that all the above elements have been satisfied and there are no outstanding non-conformances. Justification must be given if any of the criteria cannot be verified.

If no outstanding or potential problems are identified by the pre-transfer review, if the applicant has a full valid certificate (i.e. has no outstanding non-conformances), the new CB can accept the applicant and issue a new certificate with an expiry date of twelve months on from the previous certificate. The programme for on-going assessments must then be based on the previous assessment cycle, and the next assessment scheduled for an appropriate date.

Where no full valid certificate can be supplied, they can then be transferred as an applicant without a certificate and the applicant must be notified that they can only be accepted as a new applicant and a certificate not issued until an assessment has taken place and all the non-conformances closed off.

The transfer must be registered on the RTA database via the CB Transfer Wizard available to all licensed CBs on the RTA Certifier Services Portal. The wizard automatically limits the number of transfers per month, however, if additional transfer operations are required the certifier should contact RTA's Technical Executive.

The old CB must not close the existing certificate before the current expiry date until a new certificate is in place and then no later than 21 days after the transfer. Should the old CB have additional intelligence/information on the member that they feel the new CB should be aware of they must contact the RTA HoA to provide more information

9.2. Dairy Specific Procedures

Arrangements that CBs have in place with Milk Purchaser / Processors must require the Milk Purchaser / Processor to notify the CB of any likely transfer requirements and expected dates as soon as it is known in order to facilitate assessment arrangements.

In the dairy scheme where the applicant may be the Milk Purchaser / Processor, the applicant referred to in 9.1 is the farmer/producer.

If an assessment is due by the existing CB in the month preceding the planned transfer date it is acceptable to delay the assessment in order that the assessment can be conducted by the new CB, but the assessment must be carried out by the new CB within 14 days. **If there is more than one**

month before the next assessment is due the existing CB can carry out the next assessment but must close out any non- conformances prior to the transfer being completed.

At point of transfer, once the new CB has completed a satisfactory pre transfer review (as outlined in Section 9.1), and there are no outstanding non-conformances, a new certificate must be issued by the new CB covering the period up to the next renewal date, within 14 days of transfer. The old CB must not close the certificate or membership until a new certificate is in place – but no later than 21 days after the transfer (NB: An assessment by the new CB must only be carried out under the conditions set out in Section 9.1).

If the next renewal date comes before the next assessment is due, assuming no other change of circumstances the new CB must re-issue an annual dairy certificate with fees charged by the new CB to the new Milk Purchaser / Processor.

If the next assessment date comes before the next renewal date the new CB must undertake the assessment in order to maintain the producer's dairy certificate with fees charged by the new CB to the new Milk Purchaser / Processor.

Where a producer also has a Red Tractor Beef & Lamb Certificate with an existing CB, delivered via an integrated assessment, and has:

- Less than 10 beef cattle (Minor Beef) the new CB must also transfer their Beef & Lamb certificate and follow the same procedures as for the dairy certificate.
- More than 10 beef cattle the new CB must also ask whether the producer would like to transfer their Beef & Lamb certificate and follow the same procedures as detailed above. If the producer decides not to transfer their Beef & Lamb to the new CB the existing CB must follow normal renewal and assessment procedures to maintain the Beef & Lamb certificate.

Where a producer has a Beef & Lamb certificate for one of the Beef & Lamb Schemes in the devolved regions, where contractual arrangements allow, the new CB must endeavour to offer integrated assessments.

10. Accuracy of Information

The RTA database must be kept up to date and accurate at all times. It is the CB's responsibility to provide data according to clause 8.7 of the certification contract and the specification in Schedule 5 of the certification contract. The RTA CB IT Data Protocol will set out the working arrangements which CBs must follow.

11. Appeals against Certification Decisions

CBs must have a documented procedure for managing appeals against certification decisions. The investigation and decisions must be carried out and made by persons independent of the assessor and certifier and all information (including decisions) documented.

CBs should aim to manage and close appeals within thirty calendar days of the appeal date

12. Procedure for Complaints and Information from Third Parties

12.1. Background

RTA as the Scheme owner allows standards to be used by several CBs who then have the right and responsibility to make the certification decisions. This procedure is for dealing with any information supplied by third parties, outside of normal assessment situations that suggest significant breaches of Scheme Rules.

Third party complaints may include, but are not limited to, information from a trade customer, a competitor or a whistleblower within the certified business. The 'complaint' may be in the form of information about a pending or completed prosecution of the business in regard to regulations relevant to the scope of the Scheme.

Serious or wilful disregard for the law and/or Scheme Standards can potentially bring the Scheme and the RTA brand into disrepute. The aim of this section is to ensure that appropriate action is taken and sanctions applied that are proportionate to the case.

The primary responsibility for action in the case of breaches of the Red Tractor Standards lies with the CB that issued the certificate. The principle underlying this procedure is that whilst the CB should respond to any information that suggests non-conformance by a certified producer, the CB cannot act on hearsay or unsubstantiated information. The first step must be to gather evidence on which reliable certification decisions can be made. In the most serious cases the CB must liaise closely with the Scheme owner.

Where action might be considered to terminate membership for a breach of the Scheme Rules then the primary decision making will shift from the CB to the Scheme owner, (Notwithstanding that in the dairy section the CBs and the Milk Purchaser / Processors stand between the Scheme owner and the member, the Scheme rules create a contractual relationship between the Scheme and member which allows the Scheme to make decisions about membership)

12.2. Procedure

Notwithstanding the maximum response times cited (e.g. in 12.2.3 & Breach of Standards) there will be some cases where any delays in resolving complaints may have significant commercial impact. Every opportunity should be taken to reach a conclusion as quickly as possible.

12.2.1. The Initial Complaint

A complaint may be made to the CB or to the RTA team. Information about pending or completed prosecutions may come from contacts in enforcement agencies including Trading Standards or may be found by scanning of reports by RTA team or the CB. These must be treated as complaints following this procedure.

Complaints made to the RTA team will be recorded and passed on to the relevant CB.

It is possible that complaints may be made in the first place to a CB other than the one that has issued the certificate currently in place. CBs must pass all relevant complaints alleging non-conformance of certified businesses to the RTA HoA for forwarding to the relevant CB.

12.2.2. Evaluation

The CB must evaluate the initial information and decide on a course of action. Options are:

- **No further action**. For example: Information is unreliable, trivial, not relevant to the scope of the Scheme or the nature of the allegation might leave no reasonable expectation of confirming the complaint; or the supplier might have been visited very recently, etc. The decision will be recorded.
- **To be followed up.** Most complaints should be followed up with collection of further information. Any complaint of pending or completed prosecutions for offences relevant to Scheme standards must be followed up.

12.2.3. Collect Evidence

The CB must gather evidence that is sufficiently robust to support a decision on certification. Normally this will mean a visit to the site. Information about (relevant) pending prosecutions will normally trigger a visit.

The visit must be made within 14 days of receiving the complaint. In very serious cases, such as complaints from the FSA or other competent authorities, the visit should be made as quickly as possible and ideally within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. The visit must be done as an un-announced or very short notice (maximum 48 hours) spot check. What the member is told in terms of the purpose for the visit must be agreed between the CB and Red Tractor in advance of the visit. The assessment must, in the first place, focus on topics relevant to the complaint (and any substantive non-conformances from the previous routine assessment). If a major non-conformance is found in these areas a full assessment must be completed.

If major non–conformances are found the assessor must report to the CB operational management team immediately after leaving the site – failing this, the report must be submitted within 48 hours.

In some cases a visit might not be necessary. Completed prosecutions for relevant breaches are unlikely to require a follow-up visit if the prosecution comes from information gathered many months previously; and/or the businesses has had one or more CB assessment since; and / or sufficient information can be found from the regulatory agency, TSOs or indeed from the certified business itself to allow us to resolve the complaint. Even when a business is not prosecuted a visit might not be needed if information of evidential quality is available from third parties for example documentary evidence from trade customers.

12.2.4. Liaison with RTA

The CB must liaise with the RTA Technical Manager whenever necessary during this procedure and certainly to discuss points of judgement. The CB will inform the RTA team of any significant complaints at the initial complaint stage (section 12.2.1) (unless the complaint has come via RTA) and the course of action to be followed at evaluation stage (section 12.2.2). The CB must consult with RTA before making any final decision at subsequent stages in the procedure. CBs should contact the HoA (or as a final resort CEO) when the Technical Manager is unavailable.

The RTA Technical Manager will be the normal point of contact for CBs. Technical Managers will liaise with colleagues in other sectors where necessary and notify the sector chairman, HoA and/or CEO in the event of serious incidents.

In the event of a serious complaint that might have PR implications for the reputation of RTA, RTA technical staff will inform the designated member of the RTA communications team who will activate the ‘Issues Management’ procedure.

If the site is also certified under other schemes than RTA or through other CBs for other modules RTA staff will be the point of liaison to ensure consistent reaction. The sector staff and HoA will decide between them who will deal with this.

12.2.5. Evaluate Evidence and Agree Action

The CB must evaluate evidence gathered and, in consultation with RTA agree a course of action. A number of Scheme rules allow termination of membership or privileges under the Scheme notably:

- Rule 13 (False and misleading statements)
- Rule 52 (Bringing the Scheme into disrepute)
- Rule 67 (Use of the Red Tractor trademarks or logos)

Should the circumstances indicate that action is not simply a breach of standards but may deserve action under Scheme rules the investigation will be taken over by RTA.

12.2.6. Breach of Standards

A final decision should be made by the CB (and where necessary communicated to the producer) ideally within 14 days of collecting evidence (section 12.2.3). For more serious complaints in which the status of the producer might be in question every attempt should be made to reach a conclusion as rapidly as possible. Options are:

- No evidence of N/C. Complaint not proven. No further action.
- N/C found – sanctions to be applied proportionate to the case. These should be consistent with action taken in the case of N/C found during routine surveillance and will include the following:
- Rectification within a defined time period (certificate not suspended)
- Certification suspended pending rectification
- Certification withdrawn for a defined period irrespective of rectification. If the business wishes to re-join the Scheme at the end of this period they must be subject to an initial assessment as a new applicant and will normally be subject to surveillance at a higher than normal frequency for a defined period and/or until a pattern of good conformance is established. The member will pay the costs of extraordinary assessments.

The table in Section 13.3 provides guidance on proportionality.

12.2.7. Breach of Scheme Rules

By definition any complaints reaching this stage in the procedure will be serious. A decision will be made by a high level team to include at least ***one of*** CEO and HoA, ***plus*** at least ***one of*** Chair of the relevant RTA Sector Board and Technical Manager. Legal advice will be taken as necessary. Decisions will be made expeditiously and the outcomes communicated to the CB and where necessary the Scheme member.

The options available are:

- The circumstances warrant no further action under the Scheme rules

- Termination of membership is warranted but will not be enforced subject to special conditions, e.g. the member can demonstrate that positive action has been taken and agrees to special assessment measures for a period going forward.
- Membership should be terminated. (In very serious cases membership may be terminated even if the initial fault has been put right as a punishment, a deterrent to others and to protect the reputation of the Scheme.)

The Table in Section 12.3 gives guidance. *Breaches of Scheme Rules will fall into the bottom row of this table only.*

Any decision to terminate will be communicated in the form of a 'minded to' notice that invites the member to indicate (within 14 days) why membership should not be terminated. Any response will be considered by those identified at the start of this paragraph who made the initial decision and communicated within 7 days.

A final appeal against this decision will be entertained if received within a further 7 days. It will be decided by the Chairman of the Company, who might consult other Directors, and whose decision will be final and binding.

12.2.8. Records and Reporting

Following the final decision by the CB or the Scheme, any amendments to the RTA database must be uploaded immediately.

RTA Sector Managers in liaison with HoA will assess whether pro-active information to (selected) trade customers is necessary and actioned.

Where certification is withdrawn or suspended RTA will inform other CBs / Schemes to avoid the supplier re-joining through another route.

The RTA technical team will inform the RTA Communications and Issues Management team.

CB must keep a complete record of the complaint log. RTA Tehcnical Managers will also log complaints in which they are involved and the action taken.

For a diagrammatic summary of the Complaints Procedure Decision Tree see APPENDIX 2 - Complaints Procedure Decision Tree

12.3. Sanctions

The following table of sanctions will apply to all cases of non-conformance whether identified through normal assessments or complaints. It assumes that the examples in the final row and final column **are more likely to be identified through complaints rather than routine assessments.**

MATRIX OF SANCTIONS FOR NON-CONFORMANCE			
Impact / ***Nature of N/C***	**Technical breach**	**Potential risk of pollution, contamination or detriment to animal**	**Actual and significant risk through breach of key standards &/or legislation***

		welfare by breach of key standards	
System for conformance in place but not always followed through	**Must be rectified within specified time. Cert not suspended**	**Must be rectified within specified time. Cert not suspended**	**Must be rectified against usual guidelines**
No system or inadequate system **(Normal definition of Major N/C)**	**Must be rectified within specified time. Cert not suspended**	**Suspend until rectified****	**Suspend until rectified or withdrawn for a period****
Wilful or fraudulent disregard for the standard, the Scheme rules or the law*	**Suspend until rectified or withdrawn for a period****	**Suspend until rectified or withdrawn for a period****	**Period of withdrawal****

*In addition the Scheme reserves the right, to inform the competent authority where there is a significant & immediate risk of pollution, contamination or detriment to animal welfare.

**Where a certificate is suspended or withdrawn the Scheme or its Certification Body may impose particular conditions if and when the certificate is re-instated, for example enhanced frequency of assessments. The producer will be responsible for any additional costs. (Rule 45d)

PERIOD OF WITHDRAWAL

The period of withdrawal will not normally exceed 24 months which will be the default withdrawal period where the producer has shown wilful disregard for the standard *AND* this has created a serious and immediate risk of contamination, pollution or animal welfare problems.

The period of withdrawal may be shorter according to the facts of the case. Mitigating factors will include:

- Less serious safety, environment or welfare risks
- N/C results more from carelessness rather than wilful disregard
- Previous compliance history
- The level of co-operation by the business in the Scheme's investigation of the complaint, including whether pending prosecutions were reported to the Scheme as required
- Length of time elapsed before the complaint came to the attention of the Scheme.
- Confidence in the attitude of the business to future conformance with standards
- The speed and extent to which problems have been rectified
- The nature of the business and the impact of withdrawal of the certificate
- Legal penalties that might also have been imposed on the business

The Scheme reserves the right to exercise other sanctions that might be more appropriate to the case. For example isolation and disposal of a discrete batch of product.

12.4. Changes to Business Structure to Avoid Withdrawal from the Scheme

The guiding principle must be that to allow a token restructuring of the business to sidestep Scheme sanctions will bring the Scheme into further disrepute.

Normally this should be treated as a separate event to the original complaint. That is, the original complaint is investigated, considered and decided upon. All considerations will hinge on the merits of the evidence regarding the complaint and should be decided and finalised accordingly. The sanction that has been determined will apply.

Should a 'new' or restructured business at the same holding apply for immediate re-entry to the Scheme this is a new event. The application will be considered on its merits, having regard for the existing transfer procedures. If the holding is currently subject to termination of membership under the procedure at 12.2.7 the application will be referred to RTA and will follow the same decision making process outlined in that clause.

The principles below should apply. If RTA decides that the new application is not acceptable, or is only acceptable under certain specified conditions, any complaints or appeals will be appeals against the decision not to allow the new application and will NOT be appeals against the original case which will be deemed to be already closed.

- The Scheme membership unit is *either* the holding *or* the business and termination of membership can apply to the **holding** not only a named business. The Scheme rules allow this interpretation.
- It is self-evident that if a totally independent business were to take over the holding then the application would be acceptable as a new applicant.

Where the 'New applicant' has connections to the previous business:

- Changes to the business structure to exclude an individual who will take (legal) responsibility for a misdemeanour is not in itself sufficient to allow a new partnership
- Where a person (or persons) has been excluded from the business partnership we must have credible assurances that he/she/they will also be removed from day to day operation of the unit or at the very least properly supervised.
- Where a restructured business includes partners who were also partners of the business at the time of the infraction they must be able to explain why it was able to happen without their knowledge

13. Integration of audits

CBs carrying out assessments of the same site/Scheme Member for a number of different RTA enterprises or non-RTA Schemes must ensure that they liaise with the member in order to deliver in a cost efficient way for the member - where possible assessments must be conducted in one visit not multiple visits and all the necessary data collected. Pre and post assessment administration should minimise duplication as much as possible.

Where CBs with extension of scope for RTA Fresh Produce and Global G.A.P carry out a joint RTA Fresh Produce/Global G.A.P assessment the additional requirements detailed in Appendix 6 must be met.

14. Business Continuity

CBs must have the necessary systems, infrastructure and procedures in place to maintain the operation of the Scheme at all times.

14.1. Outbreaks of disease, inclement weather etc.

It is recognised that from time to time assessments may have to be postponed beyond their due date due to factors beyond the control of the CB. E.g. inclement weather, outbreaks of disease. In the event that assessments cannot be completed due to these factors alternative contingency plans will be agreed between CBs and RTA. However, during these situations the administrative elements of the Scheme management must be maintained at all times (e.g. communication with Scheme Members, data capture and certification).

14.1.1. Outbreaks of Notifiable Disease Outbreak

In the event of an outbreak of a notifiable disease 9e.g. Avian Influenza) the CB must make reference to APPENDIX 5 – Disease Outbreak Protocol .

14.2. Staff and Public Holidays

CBs must endeavour to have all offices manned during all normal working hours, however, where this is not possible due to staff breaks, holidays and team days a message must be left on the office phone directing callers to leave a message or call an alternative number for any urgent issues**.**

During non-office hours. e.g. weekends and public holidays a message must be left on the office phone asking callers with urgent issues to leave a message and the CB must have arrangements in place to check the messages daily, or the message must direct the caller to another number.

15. Biosecurity

CBs must ensure their assessors adhere to at least the minimum biosecurity measures specified by RTA when conducting farm, livestock market and collection centres and livestock transport assessments. These measures vary by sector and are specified below.

Before the assessment

- Ascertain what the site's biosecurity policy requires

Including the number of pig/poultry free days (observe a 72 hour pig/poultry free period (minimum) unless the site is part of an integrated business and biosecurity policy states less)

- Ascertain where the assessor should park their car and if there are any vehicle cleaning and disinfection requirements on arrival

Upon arriving at the site

- Ensure that your vehicle is clean (inside and out)
- For beef, lamb and dairy sites, the following are worn:
    - Clean (freshly washed) overalls or
    - Single-use disposable overalls or
    - Clean and disinfected waterproof trousers & jackets or

  - Protective clothing provided by the site

- For pig and poultry sites, the following are worn:
  - Clean (freshly washed) overalls or
  - single-use disposable overalls or
  - protective clothing provided by the site

- Clean and disinfected wellies or footwear provided by the site are worn
- Sufficient Defra approved disinfectant for the purpose, a means of application and a means of measuring to ensure correct dilution is carried and used
- Disinfectant application equipment is clean and maintained.

During the assessment

- Assessors' vehicles are not be driven near livestock
- All biosecurity requirements of the site are adhered to

Pig and poultry specific requirements

- For pig and poultry assessments, assessors must not keep or live on a farm that keeps the species they are assessing.
- For poultry assessments, disposable overshoes are put on as the assessor exits the vehicle (before their shoes touch the ground)
- Hands are washed or sanitised at the beginning and end of the assessment

After the assessment

- Separation of clean and dirty overalls/footwear in vehicle to prevent contamination
- Single use disposable overalls/overshoes are bagged and disposed of off-site or given to the farmer for responsible disposal

Wherever possible, assessors should also follow any additional measures required by individual producers. In the event of a disease outbreak or other higher risk situations, RTA may notify CBs of additional requirements or even impose a temporary suspension of assessments. Such measures will typically be agreed with other industry bodies and relevant statutory authorities. In the event of a prolonged suspension of visits, it may be necessary for RTA and CBs to make and implement interim contingency arrangements (e.g. mandatory self-assessments) to help ensure standards are maintained.

16. Crisis and Incident Management

CBs must have effective and documented crisis/incident management systems in place. Systems must ensure that CBs can provide timely provision of services to RTA in the event of a major issue with potential to impact on the reputation of RTA.

In the event of a crisis/incident, RTA reserves the right to request copies of information appertaining to any element of the CB's delivery of the Protocol at any time and to receive the information within forty eight hours of the request.

17. Implementation and review of this Protocol

The protocol and its operational detail will be reviewed and updated as and when required. The details of changes will be discussed and agreed in advance with the appropriate notice for implementation given.

APPENDIX 1 – What You Must See During The Farm Tour

Farm Assessment Requirements – Livestock

- Definition of 'assess all stock'; we are not expecting each animal to be assessed in detail, but you **must** satisfy yourself that there are no health or welfare issues by checking the stock
- Additional sites – you must assess **all** additional sites

Sector → **Area of Standards ↓**	**Beef & Lamb**	**Dairy**	**Pigs**	**Poultry**
Livestock/ Birds	You must assess all housed stock. Aim to assess as much of the outdoor stock as possible, all if you can. You must assess each species and category of stock (cattle/ sheep/ breeding/ youngstock etc…) in each management system (housing/ grazed etc...).	You must assess all housed stock. Aim to assess as much of the outdoor stock as possible, all if you can. You must see each category of stock (milking cows/ dry cows/ youngstock etc...) in each management system (housing/ grazed etc...).	You must assess all housed stock. Aim to assess as much of the outdoor stock as possible, all if you can. You must see each category of stock (sows/ gilts/ piglets, including any supplementary reared piglets/ weaners/ growers/ finishers/ boars) in each management system (farrowing accommodation/ loose sow housing/ finishing accommodation etc...)	You must assess all birds – housed or free range.
Housing (inc. outdoor housing/corrals)	The interior of all housing must be assessed, even if it is empty.	The interior of all housing must be assessed, even if it is empty.	The interior of all housing must be assessed, even if it is empty.	The interior of all housing must be assessed, even if it is empty.
Fields/ Grazing	You must assess as much of the in-use grazing as possible, all if you can.		For outdoor pigs you must assess each field and more thoroughly check at least 25% of the	For free range you must assess each range.

	If fields are used for growing forage/ animal feed for use on that farm, assess at least one field of each crop. Use a farm map to identify areas of high pollution risk and ensure you visit a number of these.		arcs/ kennels/ tents ranging across the fields. If fields are used for growing animal feed for use on that farm, assess at least one field of each crop. Use a farm map to identify areas of high pollution risk and ensure you visit a number of these.	If fields are used for growing animal feed for use on that farm, assess at least one field of each crop. Use a farm map to identify areas of high pollution risk and ensure you visit a number of these.
Handling & Holding Pens	The main crush, race and handling pen must be assessed. Any handling pens in grazing blocks must be assessed.	The main crush, race and handling pen must be assessed. Any handling pens in grazing blocks must be assessed.	Any areas used for handling (e.g. A.I. facilities/ stalls for feeding sows/ loading ramps) must be assessed.	n/a
Hospital/Segregation/ Isolation Pens	Assess all facilities used to segregate or isolate stock.		All hospital pens must be assessed.	Assess all facilities used to segregate or isolate birds (i.e. turkeys).
Feed Stores (inc. silage storage)	All feed stores, bins and silage storage areas must be assessed.			
Medicine Store	All medicine stores must be assessed.			
Slurry/FYM Storage	All slurry/ FYM storage must be assessed.			
Fallen Stock Storage	Assess the fallen stock storage area and on-farm incinerator (if applicable).			
Pesticide/ Fertiliser/ Chemical (e.g. disinfectant)/ Fuel Storage	All pesticide/ fertiliser (organic and inorganic)/ chemical (inc. those used for cleaning milking equipment)/ fuel stores must be assessed.			

Livestock Trailer/ Vehicle	All livestock trailers/ vehicles must be assessed.			n/a
Parlour	n/a	Whole parlour must be assessed, preferably whilst in use.	n/a	n/a
Dairy/ Tank Rooms	n/a	All tank rooms must be assessed.	n/a	n/a

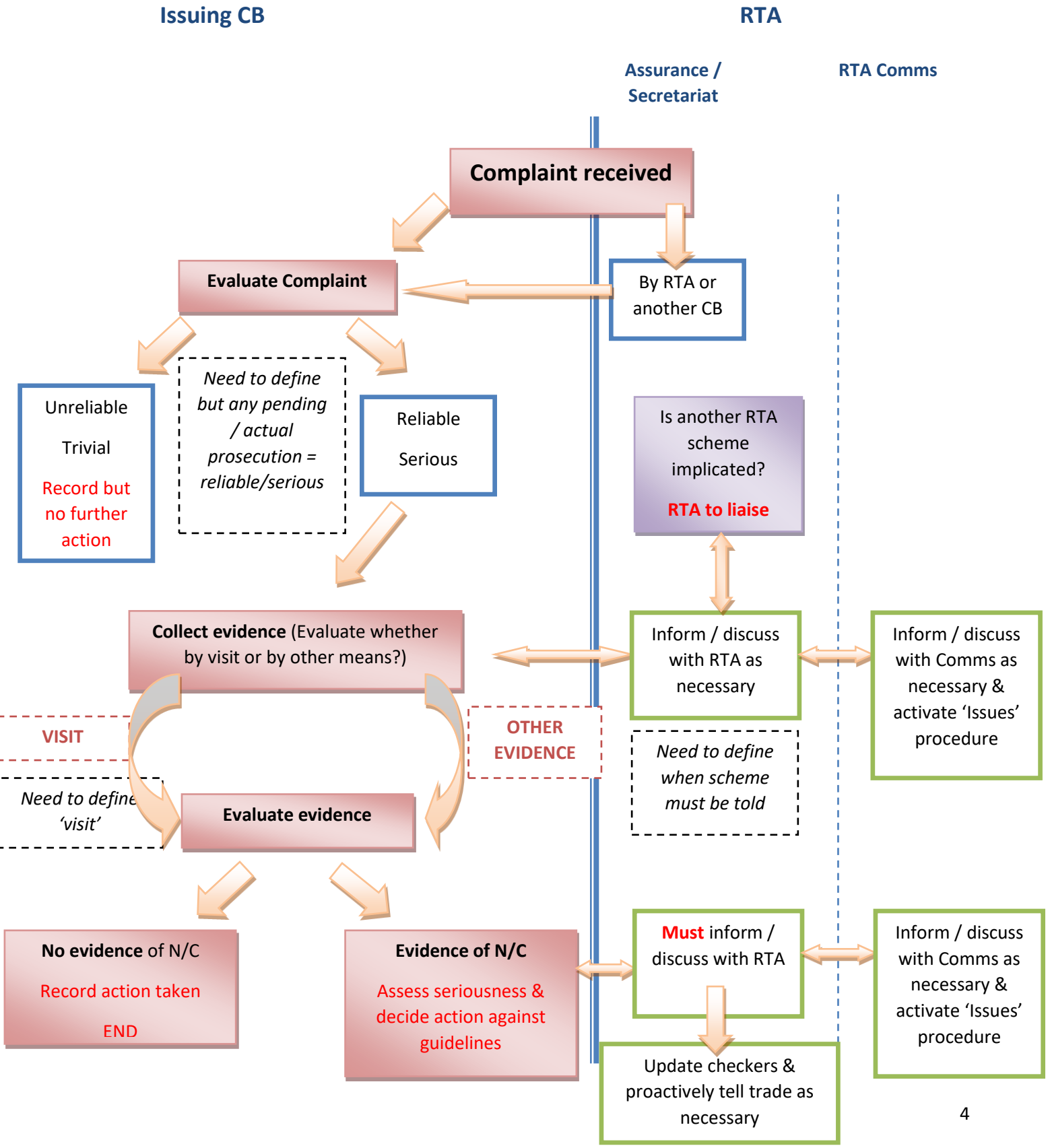
Farm Assessment Requirements – Combinable Crops and Fresh Produce

- Additional sites – you must assess **all** additional sites

Sector → **Area of Standards ↓**	**Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet**	**Potatoes**	**Fresh Produce**
Fields/ Growing Crops	Assess 10% of the fields. When crops are in the field you must assess each crop being grown. Use a farm map to identify areas of high pollution risk and ensure you visit a number of these.	Assess 10% of the fields. Use a farm map to identify areas of high pollution risk and ensure you visit a number of these. *Cat 3 – Low risk crops – one assessment every three years must be carried out when product is in packhouse/ store*	Assess as many of the fields/ glasshouses/ orchards etc… as possible, all if you can. You must assess each crop being grown. Use a farm map to identify areas of high pollution risk and ensure you visit a number of these. *Cat 0& 1 – High Risk Crops - one assessment every two years must be carried out at harvest/ in-field packing* *Cat 2 – Medium Risk Crops – one assessment every three years must be carried out during a period of in field packing/packhouse activity* *Cat 3 – Low risk crops – one assessment every three years must be carried out when product is in packhouse/store*

Pesticide/Fertiliser/ Chemical/ Fuel Storage	All pesticide/ fertiliser (organic and inorganic)/ chemical/ fuel stores must be assessed.	
Crop Storage	All crop storage areas, interior and exterior, must be assessed, **including** temporary storage and/ or outside holding areas. *In any two-year period one assessment must follow after harvest when stores are likely to be in use.*	All fresh produce storage areas, interior and exterior, must be assessed, with the exception of the interior of controlled atmosphere stores when in use.
Crop Handling Areas	All crop handling areas must be assessed.	All fresh produce handling areas must be assessed.
Equipment	Assess all equipment that comes into contact with combinable crops and sugar beet (e.g. combines/ driers/ augers etc...)	Assess the equipment that comes into contact with fresh produce (e.g. harvesters, packing rigs, knives, crates, boxes, PPE etc...).
Own Trailers/ Vehicles	Assess all farmer owned trailers/ vehicles that are used for transporting combinable crops and sugar beet.	Assess all farmer owned trailers/ vehicles that are used for transporting fresh produce.
Packhouse	n/a	Every packhouse and all packhouse facilities must be assessed.
Worker Welfare	n/a	Assess all staff toilets, including those in field. Assess 10% of worker accommodation, randomly selected.

APPENDIX 2 - Complaints Procedure Decision Tree



APPENDIX 3 - Summary of Key Activities & Timescales

ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE
Acknowledge Receipt of Application Form	14 days from receipt
Complete Initial Assessment **NB: First assessment is on day of first Membership year**	Dairy– Within 14 days of commencing supply to the Member Milk Purchaser / Processor The Rest–28 Days from registration **NB : Registration is the day that the application is accepted by the CB**
Assessment Report, Writing & Recording	**No non-conformances** – Assessment date fed into RTA database and assessment report forwarded to the CB office both within fourteen days of the assessment **Minor non-conformances** – assessment date and non-conformances fed into the RTA database within five working days of the assessment and assessment report forwarded to the CB office within fourteen days of the assessment **Major non-conformances against key standards (farm) or critical non-conformances (in Meat and Poultry Processing)** - reported to the CB immediately on leaving the site. Assessment date and non-conformances fed into the RTA database within two working days of the assessment and assessment report forwarded to the CB office within two working days of the assessment.
Review evidence of non-conformance rectification from applicant	7 days from receipt
Terminate application if non-conformances not resolved	Dairy – 28 days from assessment The rest - 3 months from assessment
Certification Decision / Issue certificate etc.	No non-conformances – 7 days from receipt of assessment report in office 7 days from non-conformance closure
Meat and Poultry Processing Report to RTA	Within 14 days of Certification Decision

Appeals against Certification Decisions	Within 30 days of the appeal being received by the CB
Renewal date **NB: Anniversary of first assessment**	
Dispatch of Renewal Forms and Letters	6 weeks before expiry
Terminate Membership of Non-Renewing Members	One month after renewal date
Certification at Renewal	14 days from receipt of renewal payment
Routine Assessment **NB :** **For Dairy, Beef & Lamb Routine Assessments are 18 months** **For Fresh Produce, Crops, Pigs & Poultry Routine Assessments must be completed during the membership year** **For Livestock Market and Collection Centres, Livestock Transport and Meat and Poultry Processing routine assessments must be carried out once per membership year. Routine Assessments must be completed during the membership year**	Fresh Produce – Annual with **maximum** 14 months between consecutive assessments. **In addition**: Cat 0/1 – High Risk Crops – one assessment every two years must be carried out at harvest/in-field packing Cat 2 – Medium Risk Crops – one assessment every three years must be carried out during a period of in field packing/packhouse activity Cat 3 – Low risk crops – one assessment every three years must be carried out when product is in packhouse/store Crops – Annual with **maximum** 14 months between consecutive assessments. In any two year period one assessment must follow after harvest when stores are likely to be in use. Pigs & Poultry – Annual with **maximum** 14 months between consecutive assessments Dairy, Beef & Lamb -18 Months Livestock Market and Collection Centres – Annual with **maximum** 14 months between consecutive assessments Livestock Transport – Annual for each business with **maximum** 14 months between consecutive assessments. For businesses with multiple certified vehicles a minimum of 50% of the vehicles must be assessed once per membership year and each individual vehicle must go no longer than 24 months without an assessment. Meat and Poultry Processing – Annual with **maximum** 14 months between consecutive assessments. In addition for

	those sites certified for assured pork a second assessment focussing on traceability and pork quality is required.
Assessment Report, Writing & Recording	**No non-conformances** – Assessment date fed into RTA database and assessment report forwarded to the CB office both within fourteen days of the assessment **Minor non-conformances** – assessment date and non-conformances fed into the RTA database within five working days of the assessment and assessment report forwarded to the CB office within fourteen days of the assessment **Major non-conformances against key standards (farm) or critical non-conformances (in Meat and Poultry Processing)** - reported to the CB immediately on leaving the site and immediately suspend the member (fed into RTA database within 12 hours of assessment completion) Assessment date and non-conformances fed into the RTA database within two working days of the assessment and assessment report forwarded to the CB office within two working days of the assessment
Review evidence of rectification of non – conformances	7 days from receipt
Certification Decision: - Confirmed certification Suspend certificate if non-conformances not closed off within time specified (normally 28 days)	No non-conformances – 7 days from receipt of assessment report in office 7 days from non-conformance closure 28 days from assessment or whatever time has been specified. Certification status change fed into RTA database within 24 hours of the 28 day deadline.
Withdraw Certification	3 months after suspension
Appeals against Certification Decisions	Within 30 days of the appeal being received by the CB
All Invoice Queries	Within 3 weeks of the invoice.

NB: WHERE WORKING DAYS ARE SPECIFIED THIS IS TO REFLECT THE URGENCY OF THE ACTION

APPENDIX 4 – Managing RTA Fresh Produce Scheme Members Supplying Tesco

The following additional requirements must be met by CBs carrying out assessments and certification of RTA Fresh Produce Standards for Scheme Members supplying Tesco.

T1.0 SCHEME MEMBERS

T1.1 Identification of Scheme Members supplying Tesco

RTA will have a process to ensure all Scheme Members supplying Tesco are clearly identified and the Scheme Member will be required to complete a grower profile indicating all the crops they grow for Tesco.

RTA will provide data-feeds to notify the CB which of the Scheme Members they certify for RT Fresh Produce also supply Tesco and which crops they grow for Tesco.

T1.2 RTA Royalty fee payable by Scheme Member

RTA will set a royalty applicable to all Scheme Members supplying Tesco. This will be charged by the CB in addition to the normal RTA Fresh Produce Royalty rate when the Scheme Member renews their RTA Fresh produce membership

T2.0 ASSESSORS

T2.1 Assessor training

All assessors must be registered on the RTA Training Academy, have done all relevant training for the current RTA Fresh Produce standards. Assessors must only carry out assessments for crops which RTA has confirmed they are competent to do so. CBs are not permitted to sub-contract any assessments to any third party CB or agent as per the RTA CB Contract.

In addition before carrying out any RTA assessments on any Scheme Member supplying Tesco all assessors must have undertaken any supplementary training as required on the Red Tractor Training Academy and passed any relevant tests.

When necessary, all assessors will also attended any CB in-house training course to ensure all aspects of the way in which Tesco Scheme Members are to be assessed and procedures are understood. RTA staff will send a representative to attend the in-house CB training course to answer any questions.

T2.2 Assessor rotation

CBs will ensure that each Scheme Member can only have the same assessor for a maximum of 3 consecutive assessments.

T2.3 Assessor ratios

CBs will ensure that each assessor carries out a minimum of 10 RTA Fresh Produce assessments every 12 months on Tesco supplying growers to ensure they are familiar with the requirements. Derogations led by geographical and role may be requested from Red Tractor, these will be considered on a case by case basis.

T2.4 Transmission of information

CBs will ensure that no information relating to a RTA Scheme Member is passed via personal email addresses. In particular any personal data, details of assessment results and non-conformances must only be transmitted between CB staff or with RTA staff via internal CB data systems or company specific email addresses to avoid data security issues.

T2.5 Feedback on assessors

Where CBs have systems in place to capture feedback from Scheme Members on their assessor performance and responses are provided by Scheme Members who supply Tesco a quarterly report will be provided to RTA. The report will detail the number of responses and summarise the feedback. In the cases of negative feedback the CB will confirm the action taken.

From time to time RT may conduct a survey of Scheme Members supplying Tesco to gain feedback on all aspects of this procedure including CB service, assessors performance and conduct. A summary of results will be shared with the relevant CB and where feedback highlights issues the CB will be asked to act upon it.

T3.0 ASSESSMENTS

T3.1 Assessment procedures

CBs will ensure internal data systems clearly identify to the assessor that the Scheme Member is a Tesco supplier when given instructions to do a RT assessment. During the opening meeting the assessor must check the information relevant to Tesco provided by RTA to the CB is correct. Namely the crops grown for Tesco.

CBs will ensure their assessment report system flags up to remind the assessor to check for a current Food Experts PPPL when checking RTA standards relating to PPP application records and stores.

T3.2 Reporting non-conformances to Tesco

CBs must report non-conformances against an identified list of standards which have been provided by Red Tractor. Tesco must be notified of any critical non-conformances within a maximum of 2 working days and information must be provided to Tesco via the agreed reporting form.

The report must be sent to the appropriate members of staff at Tesco as agreed with the Fresh Produce Technical Manager.

Red Tractor will monitor the data provided to Tesco.

T3.3 PPPL missing during assessment

If no PPPL for a crop is seen during an assessment, then assessors will only record the PPPLs which were seen. If no PPPL is seen, no Tesco score will be calculated for the crop with the missing PPPL and the grower can’t supply it to Tesco.

CBs will be required to re-visit the member (at the grower's cost) to confirm that the missing PPPL has been seen and is recorded.

T4.0 DATA REPORTING

CBs will ensure their IT systems capture the required data and report the information in the correct format and in-line with the current RT requirements for the RTA Fresh Produce scheme – ie once per working day.

T5.0 MEMBER REQUESTING A TRANSFER TO NEW CB

Scheme Members supplying Tesco are free to transfer their RTA certification from one CB to another. All procedures outlined in Section 10 of the RTA CB Protocol must be followed. RTA datafeeds will notify the new CB that the Scheme Member is supplying Tesco once the RTA transfer has been processed by the CB.

T6.0 MEASURING COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PROCEDURE

CBs will allow RTA staff to visit CB offices from time to time to measure compliance with this procedure. Normally 2 weeks notice will be given although RT have the right to give less notice. CBs will make available any records or data requested by RTA in relation to the delivery of this procedure and will allow RTA to speak to any CB staff involved in the administration, assessment or certification of Scheme members who supply Tesco.

APPENDIX 5 – Disease Outbreak Protocol

1.0 BACKGROUND

Notifiable disease outbreaks, such as Avian Influenza (AI), occur in the UK and can disrupt the ability for assessors to carry out full on-farm assessments.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

A solution needs to be in place to ensure that robust assessments are still carried out when a notifiable disease outbreak has occurred. This solution needs to ensure that the Red Tractor assessments remain robust whilst avoiding the potential for further disease spread.

3.0 AIM

This Protocol is intended to set out how a Certification Body (CB) should manage assessments during a disease outbreak that prevents assessors from getting out on-farm.

4.0 SCOPE

All Red Tractor Assurance assessments during a notifiable disease outbreak that prevents assessors from getting on-farm.

5.0 NOTIFIABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK (e.g. Avian Influenza)

As a first step Red Tractor and the CBs must have a conference call to discuss:

- the seriousness of the disease outbreak
- an estimate of how many members' assessments are likely to be affected
- likely timescales of the disease outbreak
- if any members are still continuing to allow assessors on farm

Using this information, a decision will be made regarding how to continue with assessments (e.g. for a highly pathogenic notifiable disease outbreak all assessments may be halted).

The CB must collate a list of all those members whose assessments will be affected and identify those members who are high risk. The risk assessment must take into account:

- previous non-conformances (past 3 years) – both number and type
- any general concerns the CB has regarding that farm
- any known changes in farm management
- previous assessment type (i.e. was it also during a disease outbreak)

- whether the farm is part of an integrated business or is independent

The CB must make a judgement as to whether a farm poses a high risk to the reputation of the Red Tractor Scheme and their own business. This may be due to a number of factors but as a guide any farm who has 5 or more non-conformances or a major non-conformance at any of their assessments in the past 3 years should be treated as high risk.

The list must be shared with the relevant Red Tractor Technical Manager.

6.0 TYPE OF ASSESSMENT

Depending on the risk rating the CB must carry out one of the following types of assessment for each member:

6.1 Low Risk members

- off-site (site refers to area where birds/livestock are kept) desktop assessment, using photo or video evidence if there are areas of concern and/ or previous non-conformances
- on-site assessment of all observational standards once the disease outbreak has ceased including a cross check of supporting records (e.g. training, temperature, medicines etc…)

6.2 High Risk members

- firstly, request to carry out a full physical audit, declaring assessors will comply with stringent biosecurity.
- if full assessment is refused carry out an off-site desktop assessment, using a video link to the site in order to assess all observational standards
- on-site assessment of all observational standards once the disease outbreak has ceased including a cross check of supporting records (e.g. training, temperature, medicines etc…) and any previous paperwork non-conformances

6.3 New members

- new members must receive a full assessment before they can be allowed to join the scheme

7.0 ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Assessment reports must be written for each assessment carried out e.g. one for an off-site assessment and another for an on-site assessment, which is carried out on a separate date. Assessment reports must clearly state where the assessment was carried out (e.g. central/ regional office, site managers house, on-farm), how the assessment was completed (e.g. paperwork assessment with photo evidence, paperwork assessment only, video link) and what the assessment covered.

8.0 IT - ASSESSMENT DATA

Assessment dates, non-conformances and type of assessment (paperwork, paperwork plus photo/ video, observational standards only, full on-site assessment) for each assessment must be recorded in an excel spreadsheet and shared with the relevant Red Tractor Technical Manager once the disease outbreak has finished.

9.0 IMMEDIATLEY ONCE DISEASE OUTBREAK HAS FINISHED

A schedule must be set out by the CB for on-site assessments of those members whose assessments were affected by the disease outbreak.

9.1 Low Risk members

- on-site assessments to be completed within 3 months

9.2 High Risk members

- on-site assessments to be completed within 1 month