

# MEMBER MATTERS



Have your say on Red Tractor Beef & Lamb and Dairy Standards | OCTOBER 2026

Farming rarely stands still, but the pace of change facing livestock farmers now is particularly significant. The weather, volatile input costs, government policy, increasing regulatory expectations, developments in international trade and pressure from across the supply chain are all adding to the challenge of running a productive, resilient farm business.

Against that backdrop, it is more important than ever that farm assurance is practical, proportionate and delivers value. Red Tractor needs to provide confidence to customers and consumers, but it also needs to work in practice for the farmers who make the scheme possible.

**That is why the current standards review matters.**

Over recent months, Technical Advisory Committees and Sector Boards have gone through the standards line by line, drawing on the experience of farmers, vets, technical experts and representatives from across the industry.

Every requirement has been challenged: **does it need to be there, is it clear and does it reflect how farms actually work?**

The result is a set of proposals focused on removing unnecessary duplication, simplifying requirements and making sure that what we ask of farmers is justified, auditable and reflects the realities of farming today. Most of what farmers do day to day will not change, but the standards should be clearer, more practical and easier to navigate.

The proposals also include a more farm-specific approach to livestock health planning, including an annual review focused on each farm's health priorities and an agreed action plan. And there are some sector specific changes, such as proposals for a new code of conduct on animal care and handling for dairy farmers. More detail on these can be found on pages 2 and 3.

**We now want to hear from everyone from across Beef & Lamb and Dairy sectors – particularly farmers.** What works? What doesn't? Is there anything we have missed? And, importantly, will these proposals work in practice on your farm? Have your say at [redtractor.org.uk/bld-consultation](https://redtractor.org.uk/bld-consultation)

Other sectors will have the same opportunity later in the year.



This isn't a tick-box exercise. The feedback we receive will be considered before the standards are finalised.

Getting the standards right is crucial to us and making sure farmers have a meaningful voice in shaping them is fundamental.

**Best, Paul McLaughlin, CEO**

## Join us at our autumn member meetings

This autumn, we're getting out and about to meet members face-to-face, hear what's happening on farm and talk about the issues that matter to you. Our member meetings are an opportunity to meet the Red Tractor team, hear the latest from the scheme, including the Standards Review, ask questions and, most importantly, share your views directly with us.

**We hope that you'll join us.**

If you haven't already registered, there's still time to join us. **Register via [redtractor.org.uk/memberevents](https://redtractor.org.uk/memberevents) or call 020 7630 3327**

**Northern Ireland: Cookstown**  
Monday 19 October, 1pm–3pm

**Scotland: Ayr**  
Thursday 22 October, 1pm–3pm

**England: North, Skipton**  
Thursday 29 October, 7pm–9pm

**Wales: Carmarthen**  
Tuesday 10 November, 1pm–3pm

**England: East, Suffolk**  
Tuesday 24 November, 1pm–3pm

T: 020 7630 3320 | [memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk](mailto:memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk)

[redtractor.org.uk/assurance](https://redtractor.org.uk/assurance)



## Standards that reflect farming today

The proposed Beef & Lamb and Dairy standards are designed to be clearer, more practical and less prescriptive, while maintaining the robust assurance customers, consumers and the wider supply chain expect.



### What we've heard from farmers

Throughout the review, farmers told us they wanted:

- **Simpler, clearer standards**
- **Less duplication and unnecessary prescription**
- **A more practical approach to inspections**
- **Requirements that reflect how farms operate today**
- **Strong assurance that adds value and works on farm**

These proposals are designed to respond to that feedback.

### Clearer and easier to navigate

Across both schemes, related requirements have been brought together, sections reordered and unnecessary prescriptive detail removed. By consolidating and reordering requirements and removing prescriptive detail where it does not add value, the proposals reduce the requirements for Beef & Lamb by one third, and for Dairy by one quarter. Guidance is also being strengthened to make it clearer what is required, why it matters and where to find practical support.

On farm, that should mean less time searching through standards documents and more confidence in understanding exactly what is required. The aim is to make the standards easier to use day to day and simpler to follow when preparing for an inspection.

### A health review built around your farm

One of the biggest proposed changes is to livestock health planning. The current health and performance review would become an annual, farm-specific livestock health review with your nominated vet or veterinary practice. Rather than working through a generic template, you and your vet

would focus on what is happening within your herd or flock, resulting in a practical 12-month action plan with agreed priorities and timescales.

You will still need a nominated vet and there will still be a cost associated with the review. The difference is what you get from it: a more useful conversation focused on your farm.

### Nutrient management planning

In England, the existing manure management plan would be replaced by a nutrient management plan, matching applications more closely to crop need. Members in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland would continue to follow their relevant national requirements. For many members, this is likely to reflect practices already in place and provides a closer fit with wider environmental and nutrient management expectations.

### Assurance beyond standards

This consultation focuses on the standards. We're also reviewing assessment cycles, what is checked during assessments, and how technology can better support assessments. The aim is to deliver further efficiencies while maintaining rigour. More on this will follow in 2027.



# Practical welfare and resilience

The proposals include changes focused on practical welfare and resilience for all cattle, sheep and goats.

- **Shade during extreme weather:**

Livestock would have access to shade during periods of extreme weather, alongside existing expectations around shelter and suitable conditions. For many farmers, this will reflect management practices already used during periods of prolonged hot weather.

- **Stronger feed safety:** New requirements around the safety, sourcing and storage of feed, including co-products and surplus food products used as feed. For most members, this would formalise existing good practice and provide clearer expectations around the use and storage of feed products.

- **Planning for disease restrictions:**

Where the health review identifies risks that could lead to lockdown or movement restrictions, farms would need a plan for managing livestock numbers and stocking density without compromising welfare. The intention is to help farms think ahead and avoid welfare challenges if restrictions are imposed unexpectedly.

- **Housing:** Greater prominence would be given to stocking density and slat design, reflecting their importance in maintaining good livestock welfare.



*"This review has been through and has been led by people embedded in the beef and lamb sector, including those who understand what it's like to farm. I'd encourage everyone involved in the industry to take a look at what's proposed and tell us what it would mean for you – this consultation only works if we hear from you directly."*



**John Dracup,**  
Beef & Lamb  
Sector Board Chair

## Dairy: animal care and cow comfort

Dairy members will see additional proposals focused on animal care, competence and cow comfort:

- **A clear commitment to animal care:**

Everyone who interacts with animals would complete and sign a Red Tractor code of conduct on animal care and handling, setting clear expectations about how animals are treated and the responsibility to report mistreatment. This would help ensure everyone working with livestock understands the same standards and expectations.

- **Cow comfort and enrichment:**

New recommendations include providing more cubicles than cows within a group, environmental enrichment during housed periods, ensuring those trimming cows' feet are trained and competent, and stronger guidance on cow comfort.

Environmental enrichment is broader than brushes. It could include different feed types and textures, outdoor loafing areas and other ways of giving cows greater choice and stimulation. The proposals are intended to encourage practical improvements that suit different farming systems, rather than prescribe a single approach.

- **Medicines:** Other proposals include strengthened medicine training, changes following repeated antibiotic milk-test failures and an individual risk assessment before cows are dried off using antibiotics.

*"These proposals reflect what the Dairy Technical Advisory Committee has heard from farmers and others stakeholders over several years-standards that are clearer, and welfare improvements that make a real difference, ensuring standards remain fit for the future. Please take the time to review then and have your say before 3 November"*



**Tim Lock,**  
Dairy Sector  
Board Chair

### Consultation NOW OPEN

Review the proposed standards on our website and tell us what you think.



**Consultation closes:**  
3 November

**Visit:** [redtractor.org.uk/bld-consultation](https://redtractor.org.uk/bld-consultation)

Your feedback will be considered before standards are finalised.



## Young farmers take to the streets

What do consumers really think about British farming, and what does the Red Tractor logo mean to them? We decided to find out, handing the microphone to six young farmers and sending them onto the high streets of Cardiff, York, Cambridge and Brighton to speak directly to shoppers about the food they buy, their support for British farming and whether they recognise and trust the Red Tractor logo.

The conversations provided some encouraging answers. Our young farmers found strong support for British produce and were encouraged by how many people recognised the Red Tractor and understood the reassurance behind it.

And that experience is backed up by our wider consumer research. Over three quarters of main household shoppers recognise the Red Tractor logo, while almost 22 million say they trust it.

The campaign is an important part of the work we do on behalf of members. Farmers and growers put a huge amount into meeting Red Tractor standards, so we need consumers to understand the value behind the logo. By putting young farmers directly in front of consumers, we brought together the two ends of the food chain – and heard first-hand the support that exists for British farmers and British food.



Scan QR code to watch the videos and find out more

## Red Tractor joins forces with Love British Food



Red Tractor has joined forces with Love British Food as its Lead Assurance Partner for 2026, bringing together two organisations committed to championing British food and farming. The partnership will help strengthen demand for assured British produce across retail, foodservice and the public sector, while building consumer understanding of the standards and provenance behind the Red Tractor logo.

## There's no such thing as 'just a farmer'

Coming soon! Look out for 'Proud to Farm', a new farmer-led film celebrating the skill, hard work and pride behind producing British food. Featuring real Red Tractor assured farmers and growers, the film will shine a light on the many roles they fulfil, from food producers and business owners to mechanics, livestock experts and custodians of the countryside.

Its message is simple: there's no such thing as 'just a farmer'. The campaign is part of our commitment to champion our 40,000 assured farmers and growers and help everyone better understand the skill, care and high standards behind British food.

## Show your support for British farming



Show your support for British farming with our new 'Backing British Farming' window stickers, available free to Red Tractor members. You can also order free leaflets, bunting, notepads and for open days, shows and community events.

Order at [redtractor.org.uk/merch](https://redtractor.org.uk/merch) using your membership number.



## Red Tractor back on TV

During November and December our Red Tractor TV advert will be returning to screens nationwide. Over 25 million viewers will see the advert during this time.

Our TV advert drives awareness and understanding of the role Red Tractor plays in helping ensure the safety of food eaten by British families. It will be supported by in-store advertising, encouraging the public to 'Look for the Red Tractor when they shop'.