Combinable Crops & Sugar Beet Standards Review

Detailed Supply Chain Justifications

Fertilisers (FS)

The following justifications have been provided by supply chain organisations represented on the Red Tractor Combinable Crops & Sugar Beet Board.

These justifications supplement the overarching justifications provided within the 2026 consultation on proposed changes to the Red Tractor Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet Standards.

Aim

This section supports the core purpose of farm assurance by providing confidence that farms are operating responsibly, controlling environmental risks and protecting shared natural resources. It demonstrates industry commitment to good nutrient stewardship and helps maintain trust in UK agricultural production.

Supply chain justifications

Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)

AIC supports retaining fertiliser security and safe handling requirements within Red Tractor to complement the Fertiliser Industry Assurance Scheme (FIAS). FIAS provides assurance of safety, security and traceability up to delivery; on-farm controls help maintain these safeguards through secure storage, responsible handling and effective stock management, reducing the risk of theft and misuse.

British Sugar

We, and our customers, expect the sugar beet we process to have been farmed with care for the soil, water and wider environment. Red Tractor's fertiliser standards give us reassurance that nutrients are planned, applied and recorded responsibly, and that this is independently verified. Maintaining confidence through quality assurance, rather than relying on quality control checks alone, helps manage the audit burden across the supply chain while upholding high standards of production.

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Maltsters Association of Great Britain (MAGB)

It is a requirement of UK malting barley to align to SAI Silver benchmarking standards. Without the inclusion of a soil management plan in the Red Tractor Assurance Scheme, further industry auditing would be required to demonstrate this requirement to allow market access. It is important to show correct use of fertiliser application and storage to demonstrate UK farmers as a responsible source of barley and malt to end customers, the more regular Red Tractor auditing provides a higher level of confidence to malting customers compare to the infrequent inspections conducted by the Environment Agency.

Seed Crushers and Oil Processors Association (SCOPA)

Seed Crushers and Oil Processors Association

Independent assurance of fertiliser and nutrient management gives SCOPA members confidence that growers supplying the oilseed supply chain are managing inputs responsibly and can provide credible evidence of good environmental practice. This helps processors respond to customer requirements around responsible sourcing, nitrogen use and sustainability without having to establish separate farm-level verification.

UK Flour Millers

This is important to demonstrate that due diligence and stewardship is conducted when applying fertiliser (either synthetic or organic manures) to land. Modern, productive agriculture requires the application of nutrients to produce crops of the necessary quantity and quality required by the supply chain. This usage faces pressure and is criticised by those concerned about negative environmental impacts if due diligence is not exercised. A system ensuring that applications are made only when necessary and with consideration of crop need and pollution risk is an important aspect of environmental stewardship and protection. This issue is particularly relevant for UK milling

wheat, which requires additional nitrogen fertiliser to facilitate both yield and high grain protein. If good stewardship cannot be demonstrated, there is a risk that stricter limits on fertiliser application are introduced, limiting the production of UK milling wheat and reducing UK food security. Auditing of Red Tractor standards is a more robust mechanism to ensure this stewardship is being conducted versus the infrequent inspections conducted by the Environment Agency.

Weetabix

This a Weetabix requirement. We are frequently asked by our consumers and other stakeholders that we source from responsible suppliers. When poor fertiliser practices are highlighted in the media it is important to demonstrate that the growers we work with have controls in place.

British Oat & Barley Millers' Association (BOBMA)

This is important to demonstrate that nutrient applications are based on crop requirements and are managed in a manner that minimises the risk of environmental pollution. Oat growers require access to fertiliser to produce crops of the quality and consistency demanded by the food supply chain. Red Tractor fertiliser standards provide assurance that nutrient planning, application timing and pollution risk assessments are undertaken appropriately. This demonstrates responsible stewardship and helps protect soil health, water quality and the wider environment.

Oat millers depend on reliable supplies of high-quality oats that meet contractual and processing specifications. Appropriate fertiliser management is fundamental to achieving the crop performance, grain quality and economic sustainability required for UK oat production. Red Tractor standards provide confidence that nutrient inputs are applied according to best practice and agronomic need, helping to support a resilient domestic supply chain capable of meeting processor and customer demand.

Food manufacturers, retailers and consumers increasingly expect evidence that ingredients are sourced responsibly and with consideration for environmental impacts. Red Tractor fertiliser standards enable oat millers to demonstrate that growers are applying nutrients within a recognised assurance framework that promotes efficient nutrient use and environmental stewardship. Independent auditing provides confidence that responsible farming practices are consistently implemented across the supply base.