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CROPS TECHNICAL BRIEFING

News, updates and advice from your Red Tractor assurance team

JUNE 2023

Dear Members

I am delighted to be introducing my first technical briefing since taking on the role of sector board chair in September 2022. In the first six months of my chairmanship, I have listened carefully to all sides of the industry, and I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that your voices have been heard.

At my first board meeting we agreed that there would not be a



review of standards in this period, as would have been the case normally, but we would use the time to streamline the standards. In the coming months, I hope to share with you our plans for the Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet standards.

Recently, several organisations within our supply chain, including UK Flour Millers, British Sugar, BOBMA (the British Oat and Barley Millers Association) and SCOPA (the Seed Crushers and Oil Processors Association) have publicly backed

our scheme, reminding us of the importance of our standards to these premium markets.

Thank you for your continued support for our scheme - we look forward to continuing to work alongside you all.

Kit Papworth

Red Tractor Crops Sector Chair

Say hello to Kit at Cereals. Come to the Red Tractor stand at 11am or 2pm on Tuesday or at 1pm on Wednesday.

STAKEHOLDERS SHOW SUPPORT FOR RED TRACTOR

The milling, malting, oilseed crushing, breakfast cereal, biofuels and animal feed sectors and British Sugar account for around 95% of the market demand for combinable crops. Red Tractor delivers a clear and consistent industry benchmark, and stakeholders have been voicing their support for the benefits of a single set of standards for the sector and the market access that this offers to farmers.

Joe Brennan, UK Flour Millers Technical Manager said 'The Red



UK FLOUR MILLERS



BritishSugar

An AB Sugar company

Tractor crops scheme is well understood and has excellent compliance rates. Unlike in other countries, the scheme is developed with significant farmer input, ensuring it reflects real farm practice.' He added 'If a farmer wishes to sell unassured grain to a UK flour mill, they will need to provide agrochemical and mycotoxin test results for at least every 200 tonnes of grain

drawn from the same bulk, at their own expense. This is clearly a less efficient means of providing assurance and it is no wonder that Red Tractor is well supported by processors.'

British Sugar believes that by working with Red Tractor, they are driving sustainable agriculture that promotes best practice, embraces creating a quality



product and ensures safety in the efficient production of sugar beet. The recent confirmation that the crops scheme has retained its Silver benchmark from SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment, is critical to this relationship. Read their recent press release [here](#).



Angela Bowden,
Secretary General at
the Seed Crushers
and Oil Processors

Association (SCOPA) said
'SCOPA has been involved with
Red Tractor assurance since its
inception and values the role of

their standards in providing a simple scheme for suppliers to meet the safety and environmental demands of the market. All domestic oilseed rape bought by SCOPA crushers is Red Tractor assured and our preference will always be for UK produced seed when this is available.'

Brin Hughes, representing the British Barley and Oat Millers Association (BOBMA) said 'BOBMA recognises the importance of Red Tractor Standards in providing a robust scheme that balances grower input with industry requirements for safety, traceability and sustainability.'



The Red Tractor logo is used by major food companies who recognise the value it adds to their brand. YouGov research regularly reveals that most British primary shoppers know about Red Tractor and trust the logo.



Nick Morris,
Head of
Agriculture at
British Sugar
said: 'We have

worked closely with Red Tractor and SAI Platform to support the benchmarking process. SAI Platform is used by several of our large customers as part of their buying specifications. This is great news for our sugar beet growers – all of whom are Red Tractor assured – as it means their high standards of production are recognised by both without additional audits and assessments, and we can continue to market their products globally.'

BALANCING THE ASSURANCE EXPERIENCE

Red Tractor continues to work with our certification bodies, Intertek SAI Global and NSF, on the need to be compassionate and empathetic to members' needs and balancing this with their role to assess how members are meeting Red Tractor's rules and expectations.

At a time of great uncertainty, rising living costs and increasing pressures within the industry, it is more important than ever that we collaborate with our partners to support members however we can. We acknowledge that the Red

Tractor assessment regime can add to these challenges and that mental health is an important issue for the agriculture sector. Supporting personal resilience has never been more important.

"We are always looking at ways to improve your experience with the assurance process."

We are always looking at ways to improve your experience with the assurance process. Reducing the audit burden is one of the most common comments that we hear from farmers up and down the

country. We continue to listen and review what steps can be taken to achieve this - without reducing the robustness of the scheme upon which the whole of the food industry relies on.

There are several resources you can access and many charities which offer specialist help in times of need - details can be found on the Red Tractor Assurance website [here](#). Often working alongside our certification bodies, the practical advice, guidance, and support charities offer can make an enormous difference.

INDUSTRY ASKS RED TRACTOR TO HELP RETAIN ACCESS TO UREA

The government consultation on reducing ammonia emissions from solid urea fertilisers closed in January 2021. In March 2023 Farming Minister Mark Spencer warned that, should the industry fail to self-regulate the use of urea this year, Defra planned to impose regulations. Consequently, to support this self-regulation approach, the industry asked Red Tractor to introduce a standard in 2024 which will help to demonstrate the responsible use of uninhibited urea fertiliser.

NFU Deputy President, Tom Bradshaw said 'We have informed Defra that the industry self-regulation approach to the use of uninhibited urea fertiliser under a new Red Tractor standard be enforced from 1 April 2024. The NFU and



industry partners fought hard for two years to achieve a robust and pragmatic industry-led approach, without this, the clear proposal from Defra was an outright ban on the use of uninhibited urea fertilisers.'

"...farming must demonstrate we can play our part in reducing emissions while maintaining competitiveness."

He added 'With the Government's Clean Air strategy targeting, among other things, a reduction in ammonia emissions, farming must demonstrate we can play our part in reducing emissions while maintaining competitiveness. Demonstrating responsible use of urea fertiliser will show government that we can act responsibly and hopefully open the door to other industry-led solutions.'

Businesses not complying with the new standard after 1 April 2024 will be required to undertake a **NEW BASIS module: Reducing Ammonia Emissions**. The module, which has been funded and developed in collaboration with AIC, AICC, CLA, NIAB, Red Tractor and the NFU, is designed to give farmers the knowledge and tools to reduce ammonia emissions from both manufactured fertilisers and organic materials in livestock housing, storage and when applied to land.

The online module includes a mixture of videos, audio and interactive learning and will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

 **CLICK HERE**
to read more from the NFU

RED TRACTOR STANDARDS

From the 1 April 2024 fertiliser containing urea must only be applied where the following requirements are met:

- Protected/inhibited fertilisers containing solid urea can be applied within any product use-by/best before dates.
- Protected/inhibited fertilisers containing liquid urea can be

applied with the prescribed rate of protector/inhibitor for the application, and within any product use-by/best before dates.

- In England, unprotected/uninhibited solid fertiliser containing urea can only be applied between 15 January and 31 March.
- In England, unprotected/uninhibited liquid fertiliser containing urea can be applied between 15 January and 31 March.
- In England, unprotected/uninhibited liquid fertiliser containing urea can be applied between 15 April and last application in autumn only if agronomic justification is provided by FACTS-qualified farm personnel or advice specific for the crop has been provided by a FACTS – Qualified Adviser and been followed (see EC 9.1).
- In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, fertiliser containing urea (solid and liquid) can be applied as per relevant legislation.

MEMBERS, RED TRACTOR AND CERTIFICATION BODIES — A THREE-WAY RELATIONSHIP

Red Tractor partners with Certification Bodies, often referred to as CBs, to manage our schemes and conduct assessments on our behalf. They manage your Red Tractor membership and are your day-to-day contact for all things Red Tractor related such as arranging assessments, getting assurance stickers, and changing your contact details.



Two companies operate in the crops sector, Intertek SAI Global and NSF and it is your choice which company you want to be assured through. Both work to the same standards and you can be confident that

they both offer the same level of service and that their assessors all have relevant training and experience - we have rules in place to cover that.

Through our compliance team, we monitor and supervise our certification bodies, and their assessors, to measure their performance. Members can contact Red Tractor at any time with feedback about their certification body or assessor. Either call 020 7630 3320 or email memberhelp@redtractor.org.uk.

Red Tractor also has a formal complaint process. Details can be found on the Red Tractor Assurance website [here](#).

The cost of crop contamination

We know that members would not intentionally let their grain become contaminated by things that could compromise food or animal feed safety. However, in addition to the mostly harmless objects like twigs and sticks, there are examples of more serious incidents of contaminants like toxic rodent bait blocks, electrical wire, pesticide residues and lead/copper shot in grain deliveries.

For flour millers, lead shot contamination can result in recalls of finished baked products which are very costly: we know that a recent recall cost the processor somewhere in the region of £700,000. In addition, recalls of this kind are potentially very damaging to the reputation of the food processor.

When lead shot is discharged, it can scatter and

disperse, leaving behind tiny lead fragments that can persist in the grain. With the milling process flattening the shot it is hard for metal detection systems to discover the problem. Once found, contaminated wheat and flour will be sent to an anaerobic digester, contributing to food waste.

Red Tractor standards do prohibit the use of shooting as a pest control option within grain stores. However, it is important to recognise that other activities, such as clay pigeon shooting over land will result in lead shot in the grain.



DID YOU KNOW?
A recent recall cost the processor somewhere in the region of £700,000.

We look forward to seeing as many members as possible on our stand.

Once again Red Tractor is part of the NRoSO knowledge trail, so by taking part in our quiz you can pick up a NRoSO point. Crops Chair Kit will be available for your questions at several times over the two-day event, come along to speak to him.

● **Conversations with Kit** Tues 13th June – 11am & 2pm & Weds 14th June – 1pm



Automatically eligible for biofuels market through Red Tractor

Red Tractor has delivered certification for the EU (European Union) Renewable Energy Directive (RED) for the past 10 years – this is done as part of your annual assessment. The first version of the EU's directive was built into the Red Tractor scheme because the alternative, a dedicated RED audit through a specialised certification body, would have meant additional burden and an expense for farmers. This recognition, in turn, provides us with approval under the UK version of this legislation; the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO). RED II, a revised version of the Directive, was introduced last year, which led to a requirement for the Crops and Sugar Beet scheme to introduce a standard requiring a mass balance for crop stores.

We know that many members feel this is an un-justified standard, but this is something that was introduced into the Directive to prevent double counting, which had been uncovered in the biofuels supply chain under the previous Directive. We have provided simple advice on our template online.

Red Tractor has continued its work to maintain approval against RED II and this has led to a clarification from the Commission around the timescales for document retention. Whilst there was already a requirement that members keep documents relating to land use change for five years, the Commission has clarified that this requirement covers any documents relevant to RED. Therefore, traceability records, store records, risk assessments and crop management records now also need to be kept for five years. This will be reflected in Appendix E1.3 from July this year.

HOW DO I BENEFIT?

Completing this as part of your Red Tractor assessment is a streamlined approach, which focuses on the elements of assurance required by the food and feed markets. Compliance brings significant value to your Red Tractor membership. It means that you are automatically eligible, under both EU and UK law, to supply into the biofuels market, giving you the freedom to supply your crops into different markets if, and when, it suits you.

- Further background information on what RED means for your business can be found [here](#)

PDF GRAIN PASSPORTS AND STICKERS

Stickers are distributed by your certification body, not Red Tractor. To request new stickers, contact either NSF or Intertek SAI Global.

BUT... did you know that you do not need to apply stickers onto the

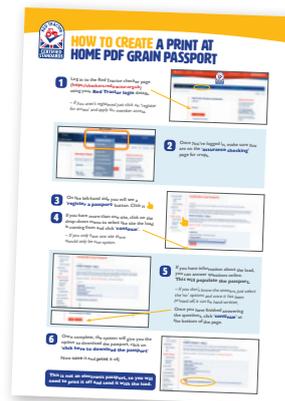
passport accompanying your grain? Instead, you can use our online system which allows you to create, download and print a grain passport at home, populated with real-time assurance details. The area of the passport where the

stickers would normally be applied is populated with your up-to-date assurance details and grain buyers can be confident that your load is assured as the system validates all the assurance details at the point of download. 

Cecilia Pryce who oversees compliance at Openfield said 'A Red Tractor PDF passport, that is filled in correctly SHOULD benefit both the grower and wider industry. The ability to prepopulate with farm details provides a clearly legible document and moreover it removes the 'sticker' issues that have haunted many growers and

end receivers over the years.' Martin Williams, a crops farmer from Hereford added 'The background faster accreditation check by using this system is a welcome improvement from the sticker system.'

CLICK HERE to see how to register to use this service.



BASIS/NROSO UPDATE



BASIS Registration has taken over the role of administering the National Register of Sprayer Operators (NROSO) on behalf of the Voluntary Initiative (VI). Despite all efforts to ensure a smooth transition, some issues with administering the register have been reported.

This will not have a negative effect on your assurance status - Red Tractor's certification bodies are aware of the current situation and

have adopted a pragmatic approach, allowing more time for members when non-conformances are raised against standards related to NROSO membership.

NROSO is an important part of Red Tractor assurance, it allows members and us to demonstrate to food processors, retailers, and consumers that plant protection products are being used professionally. Together

with the National Sprayer Testing Scheme and integrated pest management planning, it is a vital part of the work overseen by the VI.

Red Tractor is actively engaged with all parties to resolve this admin issue, which we know adds to members' stress and already heavy workloads. To contact BASIS about your NROSO account you can call 01335 210849 or email nroso@basis-reg.co.uk.

NEW – KNOW YOUR STORES

The Red Tractor crops and sugar beet standards specify two types of grain stores. Temporary that can be used from harvest up to 31st October and long-term that can be used all year. A store's status of either temporary or long-term is determined by its construction, which determines the length of time grain can be stored in it.

Long-term stores are designed to provide optimal conditions for preserving grain quality and preventing spoilage by featuring temperature and humidity control systems, as well as ventilation systems for proper airflow. They are typically constructed using more durable materials such as concrete or steel to ensure structural integrity and protection

against pests and environmental factors.

You can find in depth guidance covering many frequently asked questions about grain stores on the Red Tractor Assurance website. www.redtractorassurance.org.uk



Long-term grain store

CLICK HERE for our **NEW** guidance on knowing your stores.

