



**FOR ALL RED  
TRACTOR UPDATES!**

[rtfcomms@redtractor.org.uk](mailto:rtfcomms@redtractor.org.uk)  
[membermatters@redtractor.org.uk](mailto:membermatters@redtractor.org.uk)

- ✓ add these to your address book
- ✓ regularly check all inbox folders

# CROPS TECHNICAL BRIEFING

News, updates and advice from your Red Tractor assurance team

**JUNE 2024**

## Dear Members

I am delighted to be introducing another update for crops members with news and advice from the Red Tractor team.

I want to acknowledge the incredibly challenging season growers have already faced, with the anticipated smaller UK harvest bringing the issue of imports to the forefront for many farmers.

We are currently exploring an alternative entry-level animal feed enterprise for Combinable Crops and Sugarbeet Scheme members. This new standard aims to meet legal minimum requirements and offer more options for farmers focusing solely on grain for the animal feed market. We have made considerable



progress in drafting the standard and have engaged in consultations with industry stakeholders.

However, we recognise that our feed assurance scheme partners at AIC and their merchant members need to carefully consider the proposals.

Additionally, I am eagerly awaiting the publication of AHDB's independent review of the farm and trade assurance processes, which will shed more light on the impact of imports on the UK market.

Better communication with you is crucial, and my team and I are committed to being more transparent about our efforts on your behalf. Delivering on audit efficiency and demonstrating the value Red Tractor

certification brings to your business are our top priorities. I want to reiterate that Red Tractor will not introduce a 'green' module unless explicitly requested collectively by the industry. Nonetheless, other organisations are making strides in carbon footprinting and related initiatives, some of which offer direct financial benefits to participating farmers. This raises an important question about Red Tractor's role in improving the efficiency of new environment-related audits for farmers, and we will take our cues on this from the industry.

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

## Kit Papworth

Red Tractor Crops Sector Chair



## Say hello to Kit at Cereals

We look forward to seeing as many members as possible on our stand (no. 238). Red Tractor is part of the NRoSO knowledge trail, so by taking part in our quiz you can pick up a NRoSO point.



## Access to biofuels market, protected

Arable farmers continue to enjoy access to the domestic and European biofuels market, thanks to Red Tractor's successful application to the European Commission (EC) to be recognised under the Renewable Energy Directive (RED).

Despite the challenges posed by Brexit and subsequent changes to the EU's RED, two years of Red Tractor's collaboration with the EC have now paid off.

This positive outcome means a significant benefit for Red Tractor cereals farmers - you avoid additional audit requests.

Kit acknowledges the significance of the EC's decision. "It's a victory for all UK arable farmers, potentially boosting grain prices for all crops growers. This achievement is a testament to the skill and dedication of the Red Tractor technical team in delivering tangible results for UK agriculture."

James Mills, NFU Combinable Crops Vice Chair, echoes this sentiment, emphasizing the crucial role played by Red Tractor and industry stakeholders in ensuring continued access to the EU biofuels market. "Without this collective effort, arable farmers in England and Wales could have faced significant challenges. Thanks to the team's persistent work, we've overcome these hurdles and secured access to this vital multimillion-pound market."

**"It's a victory for all UK arable farmers, potentially boosting grain prices for all crops growers."**

### Key facts – to supply biofuels supply chain

- Grain must be Red Tractor certified
- If Red Tractor were not recognised, farmers would have to have an additional audit to certify their grain which:
  - would be very technical and biomass specific
  - can only be done by a few specialised organisations.
  - would be extremely expensive (>£1,000)
  - would only provide access to the biofuels market.

If the UK schemes lost their recognition, much more RED certified grain could be imported by biofuel plants.

### About the Mass Balance

The Mass Balance is only in our standards because RED insists on it so by completing it you qualify to sell into the biofuels market. As we approach the new harvest season, you should be ready to complete your mass balance records.

It is a simple calculation, a balance sheet outlining all grain in and all grain out since last harvest. This is the only chain of custody system currently permitted under the RED.

**Click here** to watch Kit explain more about the mass balance.

It is important for you to know that Red Tractor does not collect mass balance calculation data. Your assessor will simply ask to see it to make sure the record of what was stored on site and what left the site matches.

**This is an EU requirement as part of its aim to prevent double counting or fraud. Growers outside the UK supplying the biofuels market also need to demonstrate that they have completed a mass balance.**

Our standards require:

- An individual mass balance calculation must be in place for all grain and sugarbeet grown.
- Any carry-over from the previous harvest is included in the mass balance.
- The estimated figures for each crop on each site must be recorded when harvest has finished.

**Click here** for a mass balance template document.

### TOP TIP

**Record grain leaving the store to maintain a real-time up-to-date mass balance figure.**



# BALANCING SOIL SENSITIVE FARMING PRACTICES WITH FOOD SAFETY, SPECIFICALLY AROUND MYCOTOXIN RISKS

Most growers understand the real and pressing need to farm in a manner that is sensitive to the environment and promote soil health, and this has been reflected in the recently published Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) offer.



Many are familiar with the discourse around the conflict that this can create in incentivising environmental good over food production. However, crop husbandry practices that can reduce the risk of mycotoxins, i.e. ploughing and stewardship schemes that reward the growing of grass margins, is a growing risk area and can increase the risk of crops being contaminated.

This is most widely understood

**"... oat processors are concerned that there is insufficient information to guide growers..."**

around the risk of ergot sclerotia with various workstreams in the industry investigating offsetting this mycotoxin risk. Less publicised is the mycotoxin T2/HT2 in oats. Combined with incoming European legislation in July 2024, lowering maximum tolerable limits of T2/HT2; oat processors are concerned that there is insufficient information to guide growers on how to mitigate against the development of the trichothecenes that can impact human and animal health.

If you are a oat grower with concerns about the risk you should speak to your oat miller customer for advice.

## Red Tractor key role in retaining access to urea for English farmers

Industry partners fought hard for two years to achieve a robust and pragmatic industry-led approach and asked Red Tractor to help. Defra had been clear that without this self-regulatory approach the industry faced an outright ban on the use of solid uninhibited urea fertilisers.

This is now in place regulating the use of uninhibited urea fertiliser in England with assessors looking for compliance with a new Red Tractor standard.

Growers are reminded that uninhibited liquid and solid urea can only be used between 15 January and 31 March.

After 1 April, unprotected / uninhibited liquid urea can only be

used with agronomic justification from a FACTS qualified advisor\* until last application in the autumn, in accordance with RB209. Any solid urea applied after 1 April must be inhibited/protected only.

**Assessors will only look at urea applications made since 1 April 2024**

With a high level of compliance from farmers and growers, this self-regulated option not only promises cost-effectiveness but also aligns with Defra's emissions reduction objectives.

In terms of compliance, businesses found non-compliant with the standard covering the use of urea from 1 April 2024 will be required to undertake a new BASIS module: Reducing Ammonia Emissions.

This module, developed in collaboration with AIC, AICC, CLA, NIAB, Red Tractor, and the NFU, aims to equip farmers with the knowledge and tools to curtail ammonia emissions stemming from manufactured fertilisers. Featuring a blend of instructional material, including videos, audio, and interactive learning components, completion of the module should take approximately 45 minutes.

\*FACTS qualified adviser being a member of the FACTS Professional Register – up to date with the CPD element of their FACTS certification.



## Maximum markets for minimum audit: latest success stories on adding value to your business

Red Tractor is extremely proud to have **more than 650 licensees**, from processors to wholesalers, traders to food service operators - the absolute best food businesses who play a crucial role in promoting British agriculture. Our mission is to increase our presence in stores, on packaging, and on menus, guiding millions of consumers to support members like you.

### Red Tractor helps to grow the British oat drink market

In March, a milestone was achieved as the Wessex Oat Company, a brand created by drinks business Framptons, became Red Tractor-licensed for their oat drinks.

This means the oats in their drinks range, sourced through Robin

Appel Ltd, are proudly British and now carry the Red Tractor logo. Framptons, a licensee for dairy-based products for several years, recognises the Red Tractor British assured credentials of the oats in their products. This is significant for



the UK oat sector, where > 80% of oat drinks are currently imported.

Now UK oat growers have new market opportunities.

## Silver lining for Red Tractor sugar beet growers



British Sugar is continuing to recognise the value of Red Tractor, by displaying the Red Tractor logo on three new designs of bags of Silver Spoon.

They recently unveiled new packaging for their granulated, caster and icing sugars – all of which have already hit the shelves.

British Sugar is the sole processor of the UK's beet sugar crop and works in partnership with more than 2,300 Red Tractor assured growers.

## PDF 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.

**Click here** to see how to register to use this service.