



Assured Produce

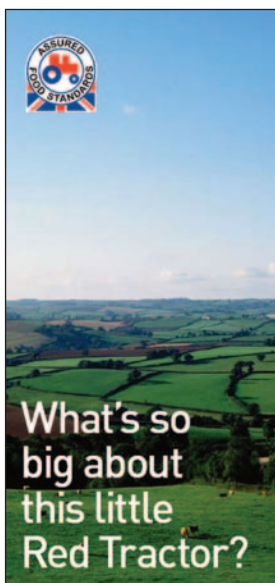
Newsletter

What Red Tractor means to you

AFS has produced an information leaflet to update farmers about Red Tractor, which products can carry it and how AFS promotes the logo to consumers.

Underpinning the credibility of the logo is an extensive traceability programme throughout all sectors. Products labelled with the Red Tractor are traced back through their packaging and processing system to ensure they are only sourced from eligible assured farms. The Union Flag in the Red Tractor logo provides an independently verified consumer guarantee that the product has come from UK farms.

"Recent surveys found that many farmers are still



confused about how the Red Tractor can be used so we felt it was time to go back to basics to explain the principles," said Julia Mooney, AFS Head of Marketing. "It is important that members of assurance schemes realise that it is ONLY their products which can carry the logo and that they benefit from the work we are doing with retail, catering and brand partners to explain and highlight the logo prominently to consumers."

A copy of the leaflet is enclosed with this newsletter for all scheme members. For further copies please contact AFS on 020 7630 3320 or

email enquiries@redtractor.org.uk

Communication

The Assured Produce Scheme has a diversity of stakeholders and effective communication between them all is vital if the scheme is to remain fit for purpose. The Chairman has recently attended some grower meetings which have been very informative and have highlighted points that AP needs to investigate to see if standards can be simplified to reduce the burden on producers. The discussion also highlighted the complexity of assurance and how the scheme fits alongside the national accreditation body UKAS. Another route by which AP hopes to improve communication is by increasing the representation of all stakeholders on the Assured Produce Board and the Technical Advisory Committee and requiring these people to communicate directly with their 'constituencies'. AP will announce the names of these representatives shortly. Effective communication is important to us all and the Chairman/Board members would like to emphasise they are listening, but communication must be a two way process resulting in all stakeholders working and moving forward together.

From the Chairman

Food has seldom been out of the news during the last few months. Though the focus of this attention has been on the major commodity crops, any heightened awareness of the production of food must be beneficial. The production, processing and sale of safe quality fruit and vegetables remains vitally important and the adherence to the Assured Produce Standards and the marketing through the Red Tractor logo are part of that. The Red Tractor logo is now being used increasingly by the food service industry as well as the retailers. This provides new and exciting opportunities for producers to tie their markets into British produce.

Many producers have said to me that following and understanding the Standards has made them stand

back and take a fresh look at their business to see what they could do better to improve it and make it more profitable. Many have improved their business and now the Standards have become a way of life and are embedded in their business rather than being a chore to be done in a rush once a year. An efficient business approach is vital for everyone, but particularly during the current time of financial uncertainty.

The Assured Produce Board is very aware of the need to keep Standards fit for purpose and will listen to constructive suggestions to improve and simplify them. We are in the business of reducing the burden of audits wherever possible. Through the latest revision of Standards, that are effective from

Mark Tatchell



1 October 2008, a large number of standards were removed, though through the GlobalGAP benchmarking process a number of new standards were added. Additionally, there are now only five critical failure points (CFP) of major food safety concern that non-compliance on the day of inspection will result in immediate suspension. The Assured Produce Scheme has now come into line with all other schemes accredited with UKAS so that all standards have to be signed off each year, but if any non-compliance against those that are not CFPs are rectified in 28 days, no suspension results. This should make the audit more relaxing.

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A R E D T R A C T O R S C H E M E



Bringing consistency to standards

Farm assurance schemes in the different production sectors have been working together in Assured Food Standards for the past eight years. Every sector still has its own set of standards and each has its own way of dealing with things. Often these inconsistencies are just small differences in the way standards are written, but in some cases they are more significant.

Any differences are inconvenient and inefficient for mixed enterprise farms that are trying to meet the

standards in more than one sector. And the use of the same Red Tractor Logo on a wide range of food packs in the shops can be confusing if the standards supporting the logo are inconsistent.

As a result AFS is in the middle of an exercise to 'harmonise' the standards across the different product sectors. AFS certainly understands that many of the standards for crops production will not be applicable to, for example, dairy farms, but where two or more sector standards cover the

same or similar issues AFS will try to ensure that in future they do in a consistent way.

AFS plans to achieve this without major changes to the requirements in any sector. Inevitably there will be some alterations to the words and the arrangement of standards for the sake of consistency across the sectors. The timetable is to produce drafts for consultation by the end of 2008 and to implement the new standards in the second half of 2009.



GLOBALGAP re-benchmarking confirmed

It has always been a principal objective of AP to try to minimise the audit burden for producer members. The scheme was first benchmarked in 2002 to facilitate a single audit visit for members wanting to obtain both AP and GlobalGAP certification.

The AP standards were re-benchmarked in 2005 and again at the end of 2007. The re-benchmarking process was again very protracted but it has been confirmed that the AP standards effective from 1st October 2008 have successfully benchmarked against the GlobalGAP (EurepGAP) IFA version 3.0 September 2007 General Regulations and Control Points and Compliance Criteria for the scope Crops: "Fruit and Vegetables".

Any producer certified to the new AP standards (October 2008) will therefore be able to ask their certification body for a certificate confirming GlobalGAP equivalence if this is required by their buyers.

It should be noted that the AP scheme standards still go further than GlobalGAP in providing crop specific protocols that provide up to date technical information on best crop production practice, highlighting integrated pest, disease and crop management systems and providing advice on ways to minimise residues. You should have received copies of the latest crop specific protocols from your certification body.

Impact of rule changes effective from 1 October 2008

Assured Produce rules have had to be amended to fall into line with the UKAS EN45011 accreditation requirement that all non conformances have to be signed off before certification can be granted. All other farm assurance schemes already operate under this system. In previous years there was a tolerance that allowed growers to leave some non conformances open. Unfortunately, AP is no longer able to permit this tolerance and all CFPs and 'must' standards will have to be complied with when the new standards come into force on 1st October 2008. Effectively there will now be 3 grades of standards which will be as follows:-

- Critical Failure points (CFP) - 5 standards related to food safety where non conformance will lead to immediate suspension (in the past there were over 50 CFPs which could have resulted in immediate suspension)
- 'Must' standards where growers will be allowed 28 days to rectify any non compliances
- Recommendations or 'should' standards which are examples of best practice and may be introduced to draw attention to

the best practice. These recommendations may be upgraded at some point in the future, after consultation, to full standards. These points are outside the scope of certification because they are only recommendations, and whilst the inspector will record any non conformances against them this will be for members information only. Growers will not have to close out the non conformances against these points in order to obtain a certificate.

Whilst the change that all non conformances against CFPs and 'must' standards will have to be signed off before certification can be granted is significant, the reduction of CFPs from over 50 to only 5 will mean that the threat of immediate suspension is reduced for all growers. The five CFP standards where compliance is essential in terms of ensuring food safety relate to:-

- illegal pesticide use (8.2.4, 9.2.1);
- the breaking of harvest intervals or utilisation intervals (8.9.4, 9.2.4) and
- the use of sewage water for irrigation (7.3.3) i.e. standards.



Your questions answered

How do things work with multi-ingredient products – do they need to contain only Red Tractor certified ingredients to carry the logo?

Multi-ingredient products such as fruit pies etc must contain at least 95% Red Tractor certified ingredients to be labelled as Red Tractor products. We permit up to 5% non-Red Tractor ingredients to allow for minor ingredients such as seasoning, herbs and spices, for example.

Some of the ingredients of a product containing mainly fruit/vegetables are not available from assured sources, but we would still like to highlight the fact that the main ingredient is Red Tractor assured. How can the processor do this?

We will allow processors to use the logo to highlight that the main ingredient is produced to Red Tractor

standards, for example the apple in an apple pie or the potato in a potato salad. A few conditions apply:

There must be a note on the label to make it clear that the logo refers to the assured ingredient and not the entire product. This could be one simple word next to the logo naming the ingredient. Design criteria are available from AFS.

The named ingredients must comprise at least 65% of the food.

The named ingredients must meet the normal assurance criteria.

All of the named ingredients must be assured. (For example all the apple ingredients of the apple pie must be from assured sources. It is not acceptable for some of the apples to be assured – enough to meet the 65% criterion – but topped up with other apples ingredients from non-assured sources).

Working with partners

Assured Produce has recognized the importance of broadening the customer base and has developed strong links with the food service and food procurement sectors both of which will have seats on the re-structured AP Board.

AP will be working much more closely with these sectors in the future with the aim of encouraging the sourcing of more assured fruit and vegetables and the greater use of the Red Tractor logo on fresh produce.

Why Horticulture Matters

Have you seen the NFU Leaflet and poster produced as part of its 'Why Horticulture Matters' campaign? The campaign aims to show consumers the enormous diversity of British horticulture and was launched in July to highlight to everybody all the reasons why it is important that the UK has a thriving horticultural industry. The campaign focuses on the contribution horticulture makes to the health and well being of the nation, and the health of the countryside and urban environments.

One of the headline themes on which NFU is promoting the campaign is to eat '5-a-day The British Way' people are being encouraged to give in to the temptation of British fruit and vegetables with a modern and rather fruity image of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden surrounded by British produce www.whyfarmingmatters.co.uk/x391.xml. NFU has joined up with the NHS to show how, by using seasonal fruit and vegetables, it is possible to eat healthily whilst supporting British growers. How growers can help:

- There are 2 main pieces of information accompanying the campaign that help communicate the key messages:
 - The 'Why Horticulture Matters' report is aimed at opinion formers (MPs, MEPs, retailers). To see a copy visit www.whyfarmingmatters.co.uk/x375.xml.
 - The 'Why Horticulture Matters' consumer leaflet is aimed at consumers and is full of fun information, recipes and a seasonality chart. To see a copy visit www.whyfarmingmatters.co.uk/x382.xml
- This is an NFU members' campaign, aimed at opinion formers, customers and consumers who impact directly on your business but your support and help is needed to communicate the campaign messages. Please get a copy of the report to give to your MP next time you meet them. And get copies of the leaflet for consumers in your village, town, grocers, local store, local schools, and when



visiting your farm and nurseries.

To get hold of leaflets, or copies of the report, please contact tracy.dell@nfu.org.uk detailing your name, a delivery address, and approximately how many leaflets or reports you require. These will then be sent out in the post.

Red Tractor – working for farmers to boost the reputation of UK food and drink

The Red Tractor logo now appears on over £7.5 billion worth of food every year. Recognised and trusted by millions of shoppers, the clear and simple on-pack logo tells consumers the food has come from assured farms.

The Union Jack in the logo makes it easy for shoppers to understand the origin of the food and when they see the flag they are guaranteed that the food has come from farms in the UK. Your farm

assurance inspection ensures that you meet the strict standards necessary to be Red Tractor assured.

Assured Food Standards (AFS) works on your behalf, with major food producers, retailers and food service businesses to encourage increased use of the logo and raise consumer awareness.

- Premium branded manufacturers are also realising the benefits of Red Tractor. Wells & Young's now carries the logo on all bottles and casks of Young's Bitter. With Shreddies, Nestlé Cereal Partners UK is continuing to expand the range of its flagship products committed to using only whole grain from assured farms. Other premium consumer brands, including Silver Spoon, Allinsons, McCain and Dairy Crest (see left) are all continuing to expand their Red Tractor portfolios.
- Retailers continue to add new product ranges and promote the logo to their customers. Sainsbury's ran a successful online promotion highlighting Red Tractor food, while Tesco and Budgens will be promoting the logo in their customer magazines during British Food Fortnight (20 Sept – 5 Oct). Aldi recently



featured the logo in TV advertising for their new range of 100% British sausages.

- Support from leading food sector companies such as Brakes' Prime Meats and Pauleys' Fresh Produce has been increasingly important. Their commitment to supplying customers such as Orchid Pub Group, John Lewis in-store restaurants and ISS with assured pork, chicken, beef, lamb, milk, fresh produce and ale, means an increasing number of menus are now featuring the Red Tractor logo.

Visit our new website to find out more about the benefits Red Tractor can bring to your business.
www.redtractor.org.uk



Look out for...

The Red Tractor and Brakes promotion in your local pub this British Food Fortnight – you could even win a weekend away!



Tips on "How to enjoy a Red Tractor Christmas", in James Martin's Christmas Feast Magazine, on shelf in November



Sponsors this newsletter as part of our continuing support to UK farmers and growers – and our commitment to Red Tractor assured food standards.

useful contacts



Assured Produce

For any queries relating to Assured Produce standards contact:
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