



**Red Tractor**  
Farm Assurance

**ABM**  
Beef and Lamb Assurance

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## Quick Guide

This leaflet summarises the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Beef and Lamb Scheme including the rules and procedures, the standards and how to become assured.

## Beef and Lamb

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### IMPORTANT

The full Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Scheme Manual details all the information which farmers must read before signing an application form. Visit [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk) for more information

December 2010

# Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme – How to Join

Explained within this section is all of the information a new member would need about the process of becoming assured and all the information a current member would need to maintain assurance. The Standards manual contains more detailed information.

## What is the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme?

It is the largest farm assurance scheme in the UK operating in six sectors – combinable crops, fresh produce, pigs, poultry, dairy, beef and lamb. The sector schemes have developed over the years to address legislation, scientific evidence, good practice and consumer concerns. Consumers can be confident that products carrying the Red Tractor logo are British and have met the Red Tractor Standards throughout all stages of production, processing and packing.

## The RT Beef and Lamb Scheme

The Red Tractor Farm Assurance Beef and Lamb Scheme (RT Beef and Lamb) was formerly known as Assured British Meat (ABM). It operates in England with almost 20,000 members. The standards are owned by Assured Food Standards (AFS).

## Who offers the RT Beef and Lamb Scheme?

There are three companies (known as certification bodies [CB]) who are licensed to offer certification to the RT Beef and Lamb Scheme and are the routine point of contact for members. You are free to approach any CB (see back page). It does not matter which company you choose because:

- All CB's operate to the same rules, which AFS monitors closely to ensure they are consistent
- Markets and abattoirs recognise each CB equally

Each CB sets their fees but currently annual membership for RT Beef and Lamb (as a standalone scheme) costs in the region of £110 - £130 + VAT\*.

## Can I join other RT Farm Assurance Schemes at the same time?

Yes, all three CB's can also offer RT Farm Assurance for crops and sugar beet, poultry, pigs, fresh produce and dairy. You can also join the RT Livestock Transport Scheme (aimed at hauliers or farmers transporting third party livestock for hire or reward) and the RT Market and Collection Centre Scheme at the same time. CB's will normally offer a discount for additional scheme applications as one assessor will be able to assess them in one visit.

## How do I join?

1. Choose your CB and request a RT Beef and Lamb application pack. You can request an application pack from all three CB's.
2. You will receive an application pack containing: an application form and a RT Beef and Lamb Scheme manual.
3. After reviewing the standards and the scheme rules, complete and return your application form (any time of the year) with payment.

Each of your holdings needs to be assessed for them to be assured. Be sure to make your CB aware of your holdings on the application form so that the assessor allocates time to visit each holding.

\* prices correct at time of printing

## The Assessment

### Before:

The CB will allocate you to an assessor who will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to visit your farm. All assessors have practical experience and knowledge of livestock farming.

To prepare for the assessment, you should read the standards and either use the checklist in this guide or the online self assessment audit at [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk) to check you are ready.

Note: The website contains blank templates and downloadable versions of all the publications that you need for the assessment.

### During:

The assessor will talk to you about your farming business as you walk around the farm and look at the livestock and facilities together. Cattle and/or sheep must be on the farm at the time of the assessment.

The assessor will then check your paperwork. Visits generally last between 2 and 3 hours but will vary from farm to farm.

Some farmers don't pass all of the standards during the assessment. The assessor will highlight which areas do not meet the standards throughout the visit. These are called non-conformances. The non-conformances are summarised in a list – a copy of which is left with you at the end of the visit.

### After:

The assessor will send a copy of the assessment report and the list of any non-conformances to the certification manager at your CB.

If any non-conformances are raised you will need to provide the CB with your proposed corrective actions to address the issues raised. Evidence of corrective action may include photos, photocopies, a letter from a third party (e.g. your vet) or a reassessment. After your first assessment this evidence must be provided within 3 months or your application will be closed. See Rules 23-28 in the manual.

Your report, alongside your corrective actions, is then reviewed by your CB's Technical Team.

### When can I sell my stock as assured?

When the CB is satisfied that you are meeting the standards you will be issued with:

- A membership number
- A certificate indicating whether membership is for beef, lamb or both
- Stickers that contain your membership number and your certificate expiry date.

At this point you can sell your stock as 'assured'. Your assurance status will be updated on the industry's web based member checker.

### How do markets or abattoirs know that I am assured?

Buyers (farmers, markets, abattoirs) check the assurance status of farmers on our online checker using membership numbers from stickers, declaration forms etc. The member checker displays the assurance status of all members, including a list of suspended members. This checker avoids buyers mistakenly accepting stock from non-assured farmers.

## Maintaining Assurance

### **Do I have to renew my membership?**

Yes, membership is for one year.

You will be invited to renew your assurance before the certificate expiry date. Providing you have a full assurance status; paid the renewal fee; signed a declaration agreeing to maintain the scheme standards and you have not been prosecuted, you will receive a continuation certificate and stickers valid for a further 12 months.

Failure to renew within one month of the renewal date will mean your membership is terminated and you can no longer sell stock as assured. To become re-assured you would need to reapply as a new member.

### **How often will I be assessed?**

Once you are a certified member you will receive a routine assessment at least once every 18 months to ensure your farm is assessed in different seasons. If you are also certified to another RT Scheme that requires annual audits, [e.g. crops] then you may be assessed annually. Some members will be subject to spot checks which are generally picked at random or because a complaint or breach of legislation has come to the CB's attention. Unreasonable delay of assessments is not acceptable and may result in your certificate being suspended.

### **Is the follow up assessment different to my first/initial assessment?**

Yes but only in terms of the length of time you have to rectify non-conformances as the visit follows the same format. Non-conformances raised in a 'routine' assessment must be normally rectified within 28 days of the visit, to maintain your assurance unless they are major non-conformances against a 'key' standard when the certificate may be suspended immediately. Failure to rectify the non-conformances within 28 days will result in your certificate being suspended.

### **What does it mean if a certificate is suspended?**

It means that livestock cannot be sold as farm assured. Suspensions occur as a result of not rectifying non-conformances within 28 days or as a result of a major non-conformance against a 'key' standard. You should speak to your CB about what evidence or action they require in order to get your certificate reinstated.

### **What does it mean if a certificate has been withdrawn?**

This also means that livestock cannot be sold as assured. This happens when a certificate has been suspended for at least three months and no action has been taken by the farmer. The CB withdraws the certificate and if the farmer wishes to be a member again at a later date, then a new application is required.

### **Are there any other rules I should be aware of?**

Yes. You must notify your CB of any prosecutions brought or likely to be brought against you in relation to any issues covered in the standards. Any information will be treated on a case-by-case basis. The CB holds the right to refuse/terminate membership and withdraw certificates if the Scheme is brought into disrepute by a member.

The RT Beef and Lamb Scheme Manual contain all the detailed rules and procedures including confidentiality and data protection clauses, use of trademarks, logos and disclaimers.

## Top Ten Non-Conformances

Below are the top ten most common non-conformances which were found during farm assessments between April and November 2010:

- Medicine records for purchased and administered medicines must be completed and retained for 5 years (AM.7), reason for treatment must also be recorded
- Businesses must have a valid transporter authorisation appropriate for journeys undertaken (LT.11)
- Producers must have copies of the documents and codes of practices as required by the Scheme (DP.1)
- A written livestock health plan must be established, implemented and reviewed (AH.3)
- Farm biosecurity measures must be planned and implemented (AM.11)
- Farms using organic waste and manures must have a written Manure Management Plan (EC.12)
- Pesticide and crop protection records must be kept (EC.8)
- Housing must be safe and maintained to avoid injury and distress (HF.1)
- Handling facilities must be maintained to prevent injury to livestock (HF.9)
- Feed must be identifiable and stored in a way to prevent contamination (FW.12)

Templates can be found on the Scheme website [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk)

## Bring Benefits To Your Business

The following are some of the benefits of being farm assured:

### Wider Market Access

- Preferential prices – EBLEX\* analysis concluded that on average, assured finished cattle and lambs receive preferential prices in English auction markets
- Increased market opportunities - being assured expands the number of outlets in which your animals can be marketed

### Expanding Market for Red Tractor Food

- Demand for assured products is growing as food service and public procurement contracts specify Red Tractor assurance


- Small and medium sized abattoirs supplying this market now embracing assurance

### Legal Compliance


- Adherence to legislation - the assurance assessment will check that you are adhering to legal requirements including many aspects of cross compliance
- Due diligence - being assured aids compliance with the Food Safety Act
- Reduced inspections - for some Local Authority inspections, assured farmers are considered lower risk.

\* taken from Farm Assurance Price Analysis Update 2009, EBLEX March 2010


# Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Farm Standards

Outlined below are the standards\* that you must meet to become assured. The standards are based on legislation and good agricultural and commercial practice and for that reason you are probably meeting most of them anyway. The  indicates those that need a record or publication to be available for the assessor to see. You can use this outline of the standards to do a quick self assessment.


## Traceability

- Cattle and sheep must be identifiable (tagged) and traceable (movement records, passports etc) inline with legislation. 
- Stock must be purchased from another farm assured farm – however the current derogation permits cattle sourced from non-assured farms to be kept on an assured farm for the last 90 days, and sheep 60 days prior to slaughter- (this can be split between farms).
- Any markets and collection centres that livestock pass through during the last 90 days (cattle), 60 days (sheep) must be assured for the livestock to retain their assurance status.

## Staff Competency


- Farm workers must be competent and trained/experienced. A record of their experience/qualifications must be maintained. 
- Pesticide spray operators must have the required certificate of competence/grandfather rights as required by legislation.




## Animal Health and Welfare

- Stock must be handled in a way that does not compromise their welfare, incl. no electric goads; dogs must be kept under control.
- Stock must be checked regularly, particularly when near to giving birth.
- Stock must be under the routine care of a Vet.
- Ill or injured animals must receive treatment without undue delay. If the animal has to be culled, it must be done so humanely.
- There must be facilities to segregate/isolate ill or injured animals.
- An animal health plan must be produced and reviewed at least annually. 



## Veterinary medicines

- Only competent persons should administer veterinary medicines/carry out veterinary procedures. Medicine withdrawal periods must





be abided by. Procedures must be in place to deal with a needle breaking in an animal. 

- Medicines must be authorised/under direction of a vet; permitted by legislation (i.e. no growth promoting hormonal products); within use by date; stored appropriately (i.e. cool, dry place) and kept in a locked store. 
- Unused (and past use by date) medicines, sharps and empty medicine bottles must be disposed of safely. 
- Records of medicine purchases and administration must be maintained and kept for 5 years. Reason for treatment must be recorded. 

## Biosecurity

- Farm dogs and cats must be wormed regularly. 
- A biosecurity policy must be produced and implemented. 
- A suitable disinfectant (i.e. suitable to kill relevant diseases) must be available on the farm.

## Feed and Water

- Stock must receive a diet that maintains health and vigour. Newborns must receive adequate colostrum.
- Feeds (feed materials, additives and medicines) must be permitted by the scheme, UK and EU law. Diets must not contain animal products/by-products (with the exception of fish oils/milk products as permitted by law).
- Purchased compounds/blended feeds must be sourced from assured compounders/merchants. 
- All other purchased feed materials must be sourced from an assured supplier; other assured farms; or with a warranty declaration if from non crop-assured farms. 
- Feed purchase records (e.g. delivery records) must be kept for 2 years (or 5 years if feed contains medicines). 
- If home-mixing (not including forage-only mixes) records and samples must be kept. Records and samples for home mixed compounds/meals or blends must be taken for every batch mixed.   
TMR records only need taking when the mix changes. If home-mixing pre-mixtures/additives/medicated feeds, local authority

## Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Farm Standards (continued)

approval is required. Records are not required for forage-only mixes.

- Feed must be stored in clean conditions to prevent contamination.

### Vermin control

- A vermin control system must be in place.

### Housing and handling

- Housing (and flooring) construction must be safe, hygienic and maintained to avoid injury and disease (i.e. no sharp edges/electrical wires in reach of stock). Housing must be effectively ventilated and able to keep stock clean. Housing lighting must allow adequate inspection of stock.
- Stock should be grouped according to size, age, production status (except dam/offspring groupings). Fractious/horned cattle must not be mixed with others if there is a danger of bullying/injury.
- Units must have well maintained handling facilities. Sheep dipping facilities must be securely covered.
- Clean, well lit calving/lambing facilities must be available.
- Calves must not be muzzled/tethered (except for group housed calves for a max. of 1 hour whilst feeding).

### Fallen stock



- Carcasses must be removed from housing/fields promptly, stored appropriately and disposed of in line with legislation.

### Livestock transport




- Movement documents required by legislation must accompany livestock.
- Loading of animals must be done so with minimum stress and risk of injury. Ramp angles must be in line with legislation. Lighting must be available (fixed or portable).
- Vehicles must be of sound construction; fitted with a roof and partitions (where applicable); have adequate head room; non-slip flooring; free from projections; have facilities allowing inspection of animals on all decks; provide adequate ventilation.
- Animals must not be too tightly or loosely stocked. Legal stocking densities must be met.
- Unfit animals must not be transported unless under the direction of a vet.
- Written emergency contingency plans are required for journeys over 8 hours. For journeys shorter than this members must carry a mobile phone.

- Persons/businesses/vehicles must hold the relevant licenses, certificate of competence, transporter authorisation's according to journey distance/time.
- For stock to retain their assured status, they must be transported by the assured member or by an assured haulier.
- Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected in line with legislation.

### Environment protection and contamination control

- Pesticides must be stored in a secure, lockable store. Fertilisers must be stored in such a way as to reduce the risk of theft.
- Contamination from potential pollutants (pesticides, fertiliser, manures, slurry, effluent, fuel oil, waste (e.g. empty containers), baits, disinfectants etc) must be avoided, through correct storage/application to land, in line with legislation.
- Records of pesticide use must be kept (if carried out by the member or a contractor). 
- A written manure management plan is required for farms using organic waste and manures. A waste management plan/disposal record is required for the disposal of empty containers etc. 

### Documents and Procedures

- Copies of the following documents must be kept:
  - RT Beef and Lamb Scheme Manual. 
  - Protecting our Water, Soil and Air (Code of Good Agricultural Practice)
  - Codes of Recommendations for the welfare of livestock – cattle and sheep.
  - Industry code of practice for on-farm feeding.
- An emergency plan (i.e. telephone numbers, actions to be taken in the event of an emergency) must be printed and accessible by staff. 
- If applicable registration with regulatory authorities to dispose of sheep dip is required.
- A record of complaints (e.g. dirty stock) must be kept. 

If you require more information about a specific standard then refer to the RT Beef and Lamb Scheme Manual which provides further guidance and examples of records. Visit [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk) where you will find blank templates and downloadable versions of publications if you have not already got them.

## Contact Details

For more information about the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Beef and Lamb scheme, contact:

### Red Tractor Farm Assurance Beef and Lamb Scheme

PO Box 5273, Milton Keynes MK6 1HL

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web: [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk)



The following Certification Bodies are licensed to offer certification to the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Beef and Lamb Scheme. Contact them for an application pack.

#### NSF-CMi Certification Ltd

Hanborough Business Park  
Long Hanborough, Oxford OX29 8SJ

Tel: 01993 885610 Fax: 01993 885611

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