



Red Tractor Assurance

21st January 2015

Dear Consultee

Delivery of Lifetime Assured Beef

Having been involved in the livestock business all my life and a part of the farm assurance business since it began, I think you should know that in the early days I was a reluctant supporter. I was concerned that “assurance” was another expensive and unwelcome imposition on farmers.

I changed my mind completely when it became very clear to me many years ago that unless a system was developed in which farmers played a central role to independently verify our systems of food production then others would soon introduce something more draconian. Farmers could have been faced with lots of inspections and different standards which I dreaded. I became independent chairman of the Beef and Lamb sector board just over five years ago, a position which I take very seriously in view of its strategic importance.

Red Tractor Assurance (RTA) was put in place to provide consumers with confidence that the food they buy for their families has been produced to a given high standard. It is the largest and most comprehensive food assurance scheme in the UK covering £12 billion worth of product. Introduced in response to damaging food scares, Red Tractor covers the entire farm produced food chain and everyone involved in it including producers, markets, transporters, processors and retailers all of whom are involved in its standard setting processes.

RTA is seen as an essential part of the means to secure the future of British beef production against the competition we face from other countries. The delivery of lifetime assured beef has been agreed as the way forward by the Sector Board after a lengthy and protracted debate. It is a vitally important piece of the sustainable marketing jigsaw. The Board is convinced that the plans set out in the consultation provide the most effective, practical way of delivering it.

The attached documents provide you with outline and detail of what is being proposed. Quite clearly we want your support in this development and it would be helpful to have your carefully considered thoughts and opinion.

Kindly note we shall be holding farmer meetings at strategic points around the country as well as with various trade association internal committees with the object of involving everyone concerned in the process. The key objective is to complete the consultation by 27th March 2015, but if nearer the time organisations feel they need more time then please get in touch.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely,

John Thorley OBE, FRAgS
Chairman, Beef and Lamb Sector Board,
Red Tractor Assurance