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**LMC launch online NIBL FQAS application**

PROSPECTIVE Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) participants can now join the Scheme online at [www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com).

In a bid to simplify the process for those interested in joining the Scheme, the Commission has launched an online application form. To join interested producers should fill in their farm business details and make payment online, or via telephone.

NIBL FQAS is one of the longest established farm quality assurance schemes, not only in the UK but probably worldwide, and it is one of the strongest tools that the beef and sheep meat industries can have for marketing their products in both domestic and international markets. Farmers can voluntarily opt to be a member of the Scheme, and subject to them adhering to the required standards, they can use the NIBL FQAS status to market their products. NIBL FQAS is highly valued by producers and processors and as such both jointly fund the Scheme.

To make an online application to join NIBL FQAS interested producers should visit [www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com) and on the home page select ‘Join FQAS’. After completing the application form a membership fee of £75 + VAT will be requested. This can be paid via LMC’s website or by calling the office on 028 9263 3000.

Once received the application form will be processed by the third party Certification Body - Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification (NIFCC). Following this an inspector will make contact with the producer to organise a farm inspection. This is normally within one month of the application being received. After the inspection takes place there may be non-conformances to rectify. Once these non-conformances are rectified, the farm will become approved. On meeting the requirements of the NIBL FQAS standards the producer will receive official certification.

Membership is for one year and must be renewed annually if individual producers wish to continue to sell product as assured. Whilst producers are certified they will receive a routine assessment at least once every 18 months. Additionally, five percent of producers will be selected for a spot check.

Commenting on the launch of the online application form, LMC farm quality assurance manager Gillian Davis said, “Launching the online NIBL FQAS application form was a natural progression for LMC. This move has enabled interested producers to make an application instantaneously at a time convenient to them.”

For over 30 years NIBL FQAS has been an integral part of the agri-food industry and delivered quantifiable benefits.

Gillian added, “NIBL FQAS standards are independently verified by a UKAS accredited third party certification body, as such this provides an independent guarantee that producers comply with best practice standards for husbandry, welfare, nutrition and environment. In doing so the Scheme also helps to assist producers with better record keeping and traceability of inputs.

“The NIBL FQAS boasts cost benefits when presenting FQA cattle/sheep for slaughter and has widened the marketplace for approved producers both in domestic and international markets. With recognised equivalence to Red Tractor, beef and lamb produced in Northern Ireland can gain unfettered access to the GB market.

“NIBL FQAS has a dedicated farm liaison officer who is available to assist scheme participants with any pre/post inspection or general scheme queries. The farm liaison officer also attends livestock marts around Northern Ireland each month to assist NIBL FQAS producers. The farm liaison officer can be contacted on 028 9263 3024.”

**ENDS**

**Photo caption**

**001 – LMC farm quality assurance manager, Gillian Davis**

**Notes to Editor**

The Livestock and Meat Commission may take photographs and videos at announcements and events to publicise its work. Photographs, interviews, videos or other recordings may be issued to media organisations for publicity purposes or used in promotional material, including in publications, newspapers, magazines, other print media, on television, radio and electronic media (including social media and the internet). Photographs and videos will also be stored on LMC’s internal records management system. LMC will keep the photographs and recordings for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which they have been obtained. LMC’s Privacy Policy is available on our website.

For more information contact LMC on: 028 9263 3000

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