

Celebrating 20 years of FQAS

2012 is the 20 year anniversary of the official launch of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS). FQAS is one of the longest established quality assurance schemes and is one of the important strategic tools that the beef and sheep meat industries have for marketing the quality, safety and traceability of their products.

To mark this anniversary the FQAS Industry Board has set up a sub-committee to champion a programme of activity for 2012 to celebrate 20 years of the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme. A number of promotional activities are being planned for members, customers and consumers of FQAS beef and lamb throughout the anniversary year. The programme was officially launched at the Balmoral Show. Many visitors to the LMC stand were provided with woolly hats and car stickers to celebrate 20 years of FQAS.

FQAS activities are planned for with farmers, processors, butchers and consumers through provision of promotional material to celebrate the anniversary of FQAS and through activities, raise the profile of the FQAS logo and what it means within the industry and



From left Gill Gallagher (UFU), Ian Stevenson (LMC), Gillian Davis (LMC), John Sheridan (UFU), Cherrie Kenny (LMC) and Phelim O'Neill (NIMEA).

with consumers.

In order to start the celebrations, all producer members of FQAS will be receiving a plaque to mark their participation within FQAS. This plaque will hopefully continue to raise awareness of the FQAS logo and is in recognition of members who are part of the scheme. The plaque is weatherproof and is suitable for a shed door, gate or meal store and we would encourage all members of the scheme to fix their plaques somewhere prominent to celebrate your membership of the scheme.

Butchers who are currently involved in FQAS will be receiving banners for their shop windows in recognition of the 20 year anniversary.

LMC are working alongside the Farming Life and Northern Bank awards in order to

celebrate the 20 years of FQAS. There will be a new award this year for "FQAS Farmer of the year" within the Farming Awards Category (Details of how to nominate yourself or a third party are outlined further on in this newsletter). These awards are due to take place in November 2012.

Alongside this promotional activity, LMC's freelance cookery demonstrators will once again be undertaking retail sampling in

The table below shows the activities planned for the 20 year anniversary

Date	Activity
May 2012	Launch of 20 year FQAS celebrations at Balmoral Show
June/July 2012	FQAS producer members receive recognition plaque to celebrate 20 years of FQAS
June/July 2012	Butcher members receive celebratory banners for shop windows
Autumn 2012	Retail Sampling of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured Beef and Lamb in major retailers
November 2012	"Farming Life and Northern Bank Awards"

CONTENTS

Page 1

- Celebrating 20 years of FQAS

Page 2

- Balmoral Show
- Butchers Event
- FQAS Performance Update

Page 3

- New look website
- New award for 2012 - Nominations of "FQAS Farmer of the Year"

Page 4

- FQAS recognised by Soil Association Food for Life Catering Mark
- Derogation to Code of Good Agricultural Practice

the major retailers to promote Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb to consumers of all ages.



Balmoral Show

LMC hosted a stand at the Balmoral Show, held at the Kings Hall, Belfast from 16th-18th May 2012. Many producers, processors and consumers visited the stand and were provided with information on LMC's 4 key areas of work: Industry Development, Promotion, Farm Quality Assurance and Market Information. LMC provided visitors to the stand with hot beef rolls on Wednesday using Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef. LMC also hosted the Tesco/ Foyle Producer Group best steak competition on Thursday where eight farmers cooked steaks of their different breeds to choose the "champion" steak and on Friday one of LMC's cookery demonstrators cooked various recipes using Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb.



From Left: Terry White (LMC and FQAS Member), Gillian Davis (LMC), Nigel and Shirley Hamill (Long standing members of FQAS who visited the LMC stand at Balmoral Show on Thursday 17th May) and Sandra Murray (LMC).

Butchers Event

In August LMC's Farm Quality Assurance Manager will be involved in a Butchers Conference, to be held at Dunbia. EBLEX Master Butcher, Dick Van Leeuwen will be presenting a series of seam butchery techniques rather than traditional butchery methods that can add value to each primal and show examples of new innovative cuts. A presentation will be given by LMC on the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme.



FQAS Performance Update

Over the 12 month period April 2011 to April 2012, membership numbers in the scheme have shown a slight decline of 2.7%. Currently there are 9669 active members of the FQAS.

Figure 1 shows the trend of scheme participation over the last 10 years. In the last 10 years the total membership figure has declined by 16.7%. The current renewal rate within the scheme currently sits at 97.8% based on the amount of renewals due and the renewals received.

The percentage of price reported prime cattle which are farm quality assured at time of slaughter is currently 95% (**Figure 2**), this has continued to get stronger over the last number of years. In 1992 when the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme began, approximately 17.5% of the price reported prime cattle kill were farm quality assured. Current figures at the end of the financial year indicate that 85% of price reported cows and bulls are farm quality assured at time of slaughter.

Figure 1

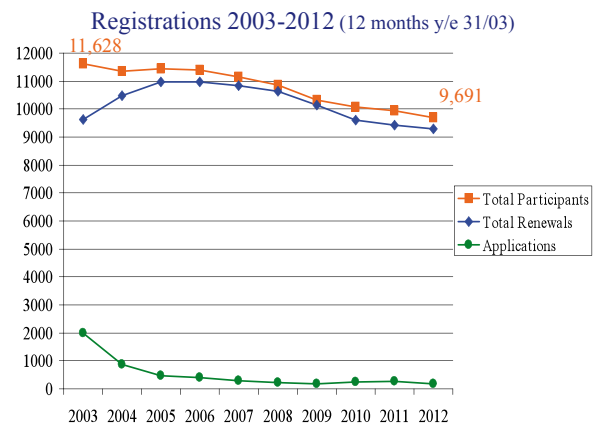
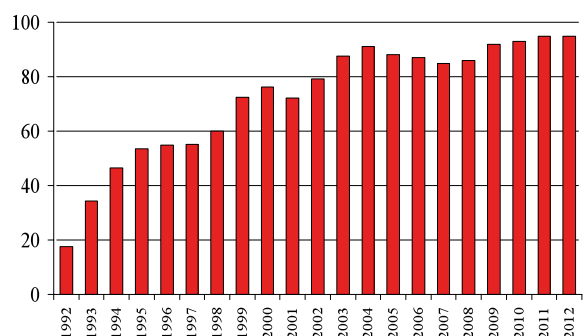


Figure 2

% of FQA price reported NI prime cattle at slaughter 1992-2012



*Figures for graphs taken at 31/03/12 – at end of financial year

New Look Website – www.lmcni.com

The new LMC website is now live. The website focuses on the 4 main areas of work conducted by LMC – Industry Development, Market Information, Promotion and Farm Quality Assurance. The new LMC website has been designed to make it easier to navigate and access important information.

Farm Quality Assurance

The FQAS section will look different than many are used to, but hopefully members and potential members of the scheme will find it easier to navigate and more useful. All scheme documentation can now be obtained from the website, e.g.:

- Product Standard (April 2010)
- Addendum to Standard 2011
- Rules of Scheme
- Inspection checklist
- Feed Record template
- Veterinary Medicine Record template
- Animal Health Plan template



Click to link to Farm Quality Assurance Pages

Click here to get details on how to join FQAS

New Award for 2012 - Nominations for Farming Life "FQAS Farmer of the Year"

As part of the 20 year FQAS celebrations LMC have teamed up with the Farming Life and Northern Bank Awards to sponsor a new award within the "Farming Awards" category. This award will be for "FQAS Farmer of the Year".

To enter this award category simply complete the entry form paying attention to the criteria set out below. FQAS farmers can enter themselves or the award can be nominated by third parties. The various ways to obtain entry forms for the awards are as follows:

- Download from Farming Life website - <http://www.farminglife.com/>
- By calling Julie Bailie on (028) 38 395504
- Through Farming Life Newspaper
- By e-mailing julie.bailie@jpress.co.uk

The awards will offer farmers and the businesses operating in the industry a great opportunity to showcase their achievements and increase their profile. The awards will be promoted extensively through Farming Life and will culminate in a gala dinner and awards ceremony in November 2012.

FQAS Criteria

- Entrants should demonstrate evidence of compliance with the FQAS Standard
- Entrants should highlight how being a member of FQAS has been of advantage to their business.
- Entrants should illustrate how they stand out from their competitors

FQAS recognised by Soil Association Food for Life Catering Mark

The Food for Life Catering Mark is a Soil Association award scheme which supports caterers who deliver fresh food which is free from undesirable additives and better animal welfare standards. Caterers who have gained the catering mark use unprocessed, seasonal produce and a growing proportion of local and organic ingredients, high welfare meat and sustainable fish.

The main principles of the Catering Mark are: fresh food you can trust, sourcing of environmentally sustainable and ethical food, championing local food producers and making healthy eating easier. The Catering Mark award scheme works on a certain set of standards in order to be classified as a bronze, silver or gold certification.

All meat on the menu at these approved catering establishments whether they are hospitals, restaurants, nurseries, schools and universities must be from farms which satisfy UK welfare standards. As of January 2012, the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) has recently been added to the list of accredited welfare assurance schemes where meat can be sourced from to qualify for holding the Catering Mark. Red Tractor (AFS), Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and Farm Assured Welsh Livestock (FAWL) are also approved welfare schemes for the Catering Mark.

The Northern Ireland Assembly has become the first organisation in the country to achieve the prestigious bronze Food for Life Catering Mark for all of the meals served in Parliament Buildings.



Derogation to Code of Good Agricultural Practice

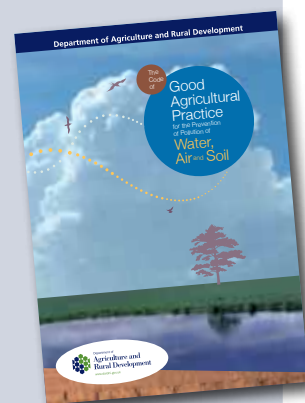
As all members of FQAS are aware it is a requirement, that all producers must adopt a positive attitude towards the countryside by complying with current environmental legislation and codes of practice. The Code of Good Agricultural Practice (CoGAP) for the prevention of pollution of water, air and soil must be followed. Within the April 2010 FQAS Standard it states that "all relevant farm staff must have access to a copy of the code".

This code published by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is currently out of print and is in the process of being reviewed and updated.

All members of FQAS should be aware that with effect from week commencing 19th March 2012, a derogation has been put in place for all members of the scheme who are or have been unable to obtain a copy of the CoGAP. Therefore during farm inspections, if a copy of the CoGAP is not available, this will not be raised as a non-conformance until the updated version becomes available.

It is vital, however that all FQAS members continue to adopt a positive attitude to the countryside and comply with current environmental legislation and codes of practice. The August 2008 version of CoGAP is still available on the DARD website and producers should use the current version to access helpful information on good management practices to avoid pollution of water, air and soil.

As soon as the updated version becomes available from DARD or the local Divisional Veterinary Offices, all members of FQAS will be expected to have access to a copy of the revised code. Failure to do this will result in a non-conformance being raised during inspection.



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