

LMC Launch Online Payments

LMC are pleased to announce the launch of an online payments system for the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme. Members of the FQAS can now pay their membership fee online at www.lmcni.com whether the payment is an annual membership renewal or initial registration fee.



Previously all FQAS members had to pay their annual renewal/initial registration by cheque however members can now pay online with a valid credit/debit card. This new more flexible payment method will benefit FQAS members and means that payment can be made anytime and will save members the price of postage. Paying your membership fee online is quick and easy, available 24 hours a day, and secure

through our own website. Once the online payment is processed, a receipted invoice will be sent to the member as confirmation of payment.

It is important to remember that card details cannot be taken over the phone. In order to pay using credit/debit card, FQAS members must pay through the website. The new online payment process should

be quick and easy and all major credit/debit cards are accepted (with the exception of Maestro).

We are constantly looking for ways to make the scheme more cost efficient for farmers and the introduction of online payments received unanimous support from the FQAS Industry Board. Cheques are still accepted if that is the preferred

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method of payment but it is important that there is the option to pay online. It is important that LMC provides an up to date service and this is another step to modernise our approach.

Need help or assistance with FQAS?

LMC's Farm Liaison Officer Terry White will be at the following Livestock Marts in July and August to assist producers who are members of FQAS or are thinking of becoming a member of FQAS with non-conformances, pre-inspection queries etc...

July 2013		
Livestock Mart	Day	Date
Saintfield	Wednesday	03/07/2013
Enniskillen	Thursday	04/07/2013
Omagh	Wednesday	10/07/2013
Markethill	Tuesday	23/07/2013
Ballymena	Friday	26/07/2013
Kilrea	Wednesday	31/07/2013

August 2013		
Livestock Mart	Day	Date
Saintfield	Wednesday	07/08/2013
Enniskillen	Thursday	08/08/2013
Omagh	Wednesday	14/08/2013
Markethill	Tuesday	20/08/2013
Kilrea	Wednesday	28/08/2013
Ballymena	Thursday	29/08/2013

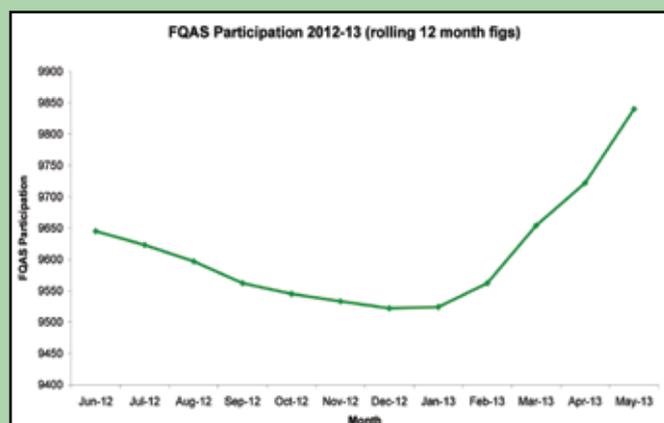
Terry is also contactable Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm on the FQAS helpline (028) 9263 3024

Renewed Interest In FQAS

Over the last few years FQAS membership has seen a slight decline year on year of approximately 2.4%. Since the recent horsemeat incident which broke in January 2013, FQAS membership has increased significantly and membership for the period June 2012 – May 2013 (rolling 12 month figures) has increased by 1.8%. Currently there are 9840 active members of the FQAS.

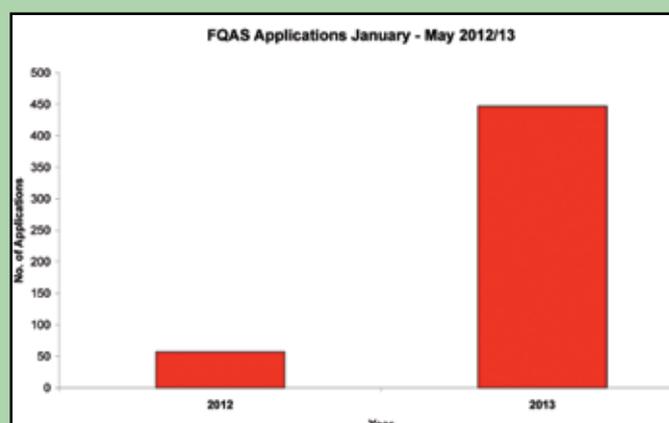
Figure 1 shows the trend of scheme participation over the last twelve months, where the significant increase in membership is evident from January 2013 onwards.

Figure 1



Since January 2013 approx 940 application packs have been requested from producers considering joining the FQAS with 447 applications received from January – May 2013. There has been a lot of renewed interest from producers, especially dairy producers and those finishing cattle through the factories due to the increased penalty for non-FQAS stock. Comparing these figures to the same period last year the number of applications was 57, therefore a 684% increase in applications to join the scheme (Figure 2).

Figure 2



The percentage of price reported prime cattle which are farm quality assured at time of slaughter is currently 98.5%. This figure has increased steadily over the last number of years.

FQAS Message Reaches 96% Of Consumers

In February 2013 LMC launched a media campaign “Look for the Logo” highlighting Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef. This was a great success and provided consumers with key information about FQAS.

A survey commissioned by the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) and conducted by Millward Brown Ulster has shown that a staggering 84% of respondents had seen the recent LMC advertising campaign designed to highlight the benefits of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured Beef.

The campaign was designed to deliver the positive messages about FQAS beef via intense activity across a range of media with the primary target audience being shoppers and housekeepers. The use of a range of media allowed the FQAS message to reach 96% of the population at a time when they needed reassurance in the supply chain. The TV advertisement was used effectively to convey messages about our safe traceable beef and this was supported by radio advertising which delivered captivating messages about the nutritional benefits and versatility of beef.

LMC produced an advertising campaign in the midst of the horsemeat scandal to reassure consumers of the benefits of Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and to restore confidence in beef produced locally. The survey results indicated that the top three reasons given for buying FQAS beef were provenance, quality and the fact that the beef was traceable from farm to fork.



Two thirds of the respondents also indicated that the advertising would make them feel more positive about buying beef and would encourage them only to buy beef with the FQAS logo on it.

LMC is currently in the process of developing a follow up campaign to build on the impact of the original advertising. We now also have the opportunity to incorporate lamb promotion into a new campaign. The results of this recent survey are extremely encouraging but the industry constantly faces challenges from detractors of red meat and therefore it is important to keep pushing the positive messages about the wholesome nutritious FQAS beef and lamb produced here in Northern Ireland.

Balmoral Show Success

LMC would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who visited the LMC stand and the LMC Cookery Demonstrations in the Food NI marquee at this year's extremely successful Balmoral Show. The new venue at Balmoral Park appeared to be a huge success with the LMC Stand very busy for all three days.

The show provided LMC with a valuable opportunity to engage with both our producer and processor stakeholders to discuss the current beef and lamb trade, the importance of the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance Scheme and LMC's ongoing promotional and industry development work. It also allowed LMC to engage with consumers and promote the benefits of purchasing NI beef and lamb. Our cookery demonstrations and complimentary farm quality assured beef and lamb rolls were a great success over the course of the three days and stimulated very positive feedback to LMC staff.

The theme of the LMC stand this year was 'Look for the Logo' and followed on from our successful media campaign promoting the benefits of NI Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb. Farm Quality Assurance is a requirement of doing business with many of the major retailers and the food service sector. The increasing importance of Farm Quality Assured status has resulted in the processors increasing penalties for non assured cattle to as much as £150 per head in recent times.

The growing importance of FQAS membership in the marketplace stimulated a lot of queries from NI beef and sheep producers about the scheme, the inspection process and the benefits of becoming Farm Quality Assured. This increased interest resulted in numerous requests for application packs being received over the three days of the show.



Animal Welfare Codes – Reminder

In February 2013 all FQAS members were issued via post, a copy of the revised DARD Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock (Cattle and Sheep) 2012.

It is a requirement of FQAS that these codes are signed and dated to indicate that they have been read and understood. These Welfare Codes have recently been reviewed and updated by DARD, due to the introduction of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011.

The stock of these codes which were printed by FQAS is now exhausted and any member who requires these codes for inspection must request a copy from local Divisional Veterinary Office's (DVO's) or can be obtained through the DARD/LMC website (links below)

http://www.dardni.gov.uk/beef_cattle_code_of_practice.pdf

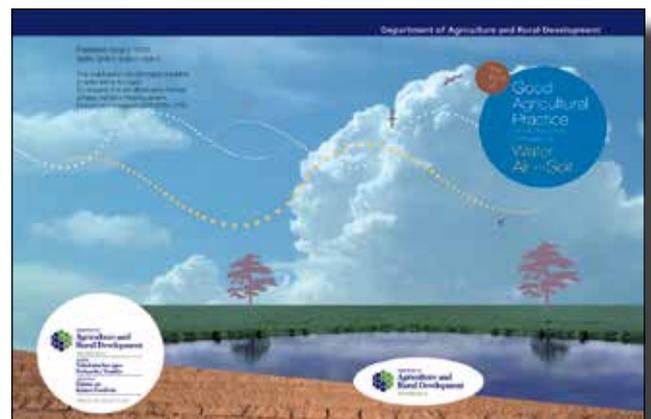
http://www.dardni.gov.uk/sheep_code_of_practice.pdf

<http://www.lmcni.com/fqas/documentation/>



Code of Good Agricultural Practice - Update

FQAS have recently been informed that the revised Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the pollution of water, air and soil will not be available for publication until mid 2014; therefore the derogation which is currently in place for FQAS will remain until further notice.



FQAS Industry Board – Who Represents You In FQAS?

The Northern Ireland Beef & Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) is owned by the Livestock & Meat Commission for Northern Ireland on behalf of the Beef and Sheep meat industry.

The FQAS Industry Board was established by the LMC Board to advise LMC on effective and efficient management of the scheme. The FQAS Industry Board is responsible for engaging stakeholders in FQAS decision making processes, advising LMC on FQAS commercial matters, appointing a Standard Setting Committee to set, review and amend appropriate standards for FQAS, assisting LMC to monitor performance of the certification contract, advising LMC on the maintenance of FQAS participation in the Red Tractor Scheme, ensuring that effective relationships are maintained with other assurance schemes in GB, Rol and farther afield and maintaining the integrity of FQAS.

The FQAS Industry Board is made up from representatives from key stakeholders in the red meat industry. Nominated members of the FQAS Industry Board are noted below:

NAME	REPRESENTATION
Ian Stevenson (Chairman)	LMC (Chief Executive)
Colin Smith	LMC (Industry Development Manager)
Gillian Davis (Secretary)	LMC (Farm Quality Assurance Manager)
Barclay Bell	UFU Deputy President
Gill Gallagher	UFU Beef & Lamb and Hill Farming Policy Officer
Robert Davidson	UFU-Chairman Beef and Lamb Committee
John Sheridan	UFU-Chairman Hill Farming Committee
Sean Fitzpatrick	Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA)
Ray Elkin	National Beef Association (NBA) – NI Branch
Edward Adamson	National Sheep Association (NSA) – Regional Manager NI
Phelim O'Neill	Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association (NIMEA) (Chief Executive)
Liam McCarthy	NIMEA - ABP
Frank Foster	NIMEA - Linden Foods
David Chesnutt	NIMEA - Dumbia
Terry Acheson	NIMEA - Foyle Meats
Francis Dillon	NIMEA - WD Meats
John Sands	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)

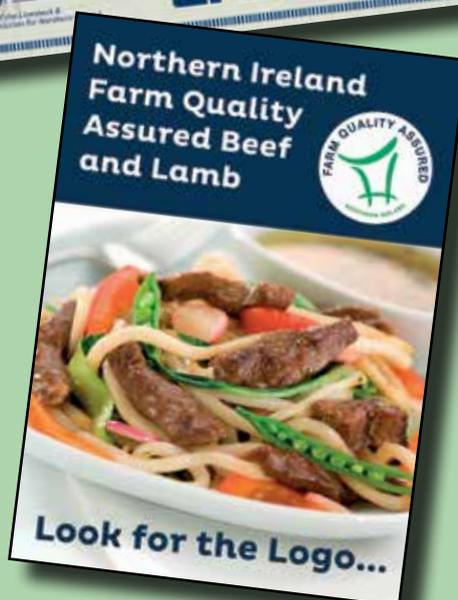
The FQAS Industry Board meets twice per year. Additional meetings take place as and when required. A wide range of industry representation is key to ensure that all aspects of the scheme are agreed in line with best practice and stakeholder requirements. The FQAS Industry Board and Standard Setting Committee is chaired by the LMC Chief Executive and the secretariat is provided by the LMC FQAS Manager.

FQAS and Butchers

As of May 2013, there are 126 local butchers who are licenced to use the FQAS logo on Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb in their shops. LMC recently provided these butchers with a “Certificate of Approval” and some promotional “Look for the logo” leaflets that they can give to consumers which provides information about the importance of FQAS, nutritional benefits of eating beef and an easy to follow recipe for them to try.

Consumers who wish to see a full list of FQAS approved butchers should visit the LMC website. Any butcher wishing to join the scheme, please contact LMC on 028 9263 3000.

The next time you visit your local butcher why not ask if the business has a Certificate of Approval?



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