



Adhere to Medicinal Withdrawal Periods

The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) would like to remind producers that it is an offence to present any animal for slaughter for the food chain which has been treated with a veterinary medicine if the withdrawal period for that product has not expired. The



same principle applies to any animal product, including milk, derived from such treated animals.

Farmers must therefore ensure that the Manufacturer's instructions for all veterinary medicines used on-farm, in particular withdrawal periods, are fully complied with before

a treated animal is presented for slaughter, or milk from a treated animal is supplied for human consumption.

A Veterinary Medicine Book is provided to all members of the FQAS to assist participants in recording all veterinary medicines that are administered with a specific section to record the withdrawal period. It is important to note

that producers also sign a Food Chain Information declaration on presenting animals for slaughter which states the animals are free from veterinary medicine residues.

DARD continues to monitor compliance with these requirements by sampling and testing animals and animal products at slaughter and on-farm.

Clarification on Registration for Home Mixing

It is a requirement of both FQAS and legislation that all home mixers of feedingstuffs must be registered with or approved by the relevant authority (DARD).

In February 2015 DARD issued new guidance on the requirement to be registered as a home mixer.

For On Farm mixers using complementary feed and mineral feedingstuffs the guidelines are as follows:

- These mixers are automatically registered with DARD under their herd number/business ID, AND;
- Will be automatically registered as an R13 livestock farmer and/or R11 on-farm mixer mixing complementary feed (if previously advised by DARD or as a result of a DARD inspection).
- Do not require records to show implementation of HACCP principles
- Will be using feed that is clearly labelled as complementary feed or mineral feedingstuff with instructions for proper use. Usually a 25kg bag.



For On Farm mixers using premixtures and propcorn

- Need to notify DARD by completing a RAP form and register as an R10.
- Require implementation of HACCP principles.
- For premixture users – Will be using a product with the word "premixture" clearly identified on the label along with instructions for use.



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Lifetime Assurance Update



In January 2015, Assured Food Standards (AFS) issued a consultation to the industry on the delivery of Lifetime Assurance in cattle. LMC submitted a detailed consultation response to AFS in March 2015. This was fully supported by the FQAS Industry Board. AFS have informed LMC that they will now appoint an independent person to review all the consultation responses to ensure an unbiased and balanced view. Once that process is complete, the RTA (Red Tractor Assurance) Beef and Lamb Sector Board and Red Tractor Assurance Board will consider the outcome of the consultation. Only then will any next steps be formally announced. This is due to be in August 2015.

The response submitted to AFS on behalf of the FQAS Industry Board stated that the Northern Ireland beef and sheepmeat industries will always endeavour to respond to the needs of its stakeholders provided that the need and associated rationale is clearly identified and consideration has been given to the full impact of any decision made. The industry in Northern Ireland has not yet been presented with clear evidence of a demand for Lifetime Assurance. Even if a demand existed there are real difficulties associated with its delivery. Changes to assurance should demonstrably add value to the existing scheme. The FQAS Industry Board does not wish to implement any change to the 90 day residency requirements at this time.

LMC will continue to keep stakeholders informed of any updates with regards to Lifetime Assurance.

FQAS Participation Continues to Grow

Currently there are 11,724 active participants of the FQAS (as of 31/03/15). Figure 1 shows the trend of scheme participation over the last twelve months. Prior to January 2013, scheme participation was around 9,500, with a slight decline of 2.2% from the previous year.

FQAS Participation Mar 14-Mar 15 (Rolling 12 month figures)

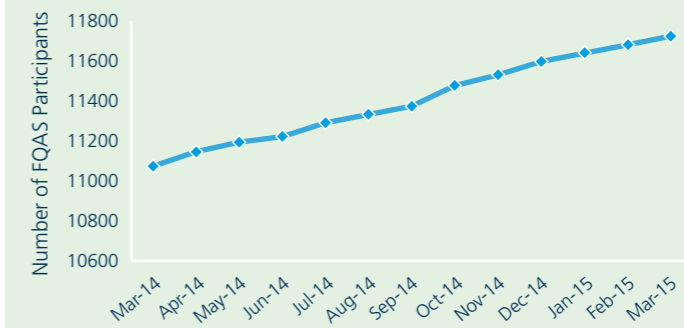


Figure 1

Since the "horsemeat" incident in January 2013, FQAS membership has increased significantly. Increased demand for FQAS cattle has been driven, in the main, by retailers looking to shorten their supply chain by sourcing UK origin cattle. Although the rate of increase has slowed, membership continues to grow. NIBL FQAS is considered as an equivalent scheme to the Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Assurance Scheme operating in Great Britain and as such Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb qualifies to carry the Red Tractor logo.

With a large percentage of our beef destined for major UK customers FQAS remains an important marketing tool to access this and other strategically important markets in the EU. Prior to "horsemeat", the penalty for non FQAS cattle from the processors was £30 per head for cattle, this subsequently increased to a maximum of £150 in 2013, therefore

discouraging supply of non-FQAS animals. Penalties of up to £150 per head for non-quality assured stock remain in place at the time of writing. The increased financial incentives for producing farm quality assured stock resulted in this renewed interest in the scheme from the whole supply chain. Over the 12 month period March 2014 to March 2015 (rolling 12 month figures) FQAS membership has increased by 5.9%.

There were 863 applications to join the scheme from March 14 to March 15 with a renewal rate for existing participants of 99%.

The percentage of price reported prime cattle which are farm quality assured at time of slaughter is currently 99.6% (Figure 2). In 1992 when the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme began, approximately 17.5% of the price reported prime cattle kill were farm quality assured. Current

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figures at the end of the financial year indicate that 95.4% of price reported cows and bulls are farm quality assured at time of slaughter.

FQAS price reported prime cattle kill (1992-2015)



Figure 2

Welfare of Animals During Transport – Reminder

Legislation requires that an animal must be fit for an intended journey before the journey starts and must remain sufficiently fit throughout the journey. This means the animal should be healthy enough to tolerate the entire journey (including loading, unloading and any journey breaks) with no or very little adverse effect on it; the journey should not cause the animal any suffering or injury.

Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals During Transport are detailed in the FQAS Standard pages 76-84 and all FQAS participants would be advised to read these.

Essential Points to Remember

1. If you transport animals it is your responsibility to ensure that they are fit for transport, even though other competent and responsible people (e.g. the animal's owner) may be involved in assessing the fitness of an animal for transport.
2. Assessment of fitness is an ongoing procedure that should be repeated throughout a journey, and

not something that should only be undertaken before the start of it. The condition of an animal can change rapidly during a journey, and an animal that was initially fit at the outset, may – for several reasons – become unfit later in the journey. Transporters/herd or flock keepers should take the opportunities presented by rest, toilet and other breaks in the journey to re-check their animals.

3. Whenever the fitness of an animal or group of animals is in doubt, or disputed, transporters/herd or flock keepers are advised strongly before undertaking transport to obtain the professional opinion of a veterinary surgeon and consider and follow any advice given. The transporter/herd or flock keeper may wish to obtain a written opinion from the veterinarian.
4. Where animals that are slightly ill or injured are judged to be sufficiently fit for transport, it will often be necessary to provide better transport conditions during the journey.

FQAS Butcher's Update

From 1st November 2014 LMC reintroduced butchers' audits. This is an audit of butchers shops selected at random from the list of FQAS licence holders, to check that these food businesses are adhering to the relevant FQAS Butchers Standard. An independent company has been conducting these audits on behalf of the LMC to undertake traceability checks on these businesses to ensure the FQAS logo is being used correctly and that the beef and lamb which the butcher is presenting for sale as farm quality assured is such.

The FQAS Butchers Licencing scheme will continue to operate this year with some additional checks in place to ensure the correct traceability



LMC's FQAS Manager with Stephen Taylor (Stephen Taylor & Sons)

for verification of FQAS beef and lamb.

LMC continues to further enhance the FQAS butcher's scheme to provide assurances to consumers about the quality and traceability of the beef and lamb

which they purchase that is marketed as FQAS. Our website www.beefandlambni.com has a section on FQAS butchers and directs consumers to their nearest licensed butcher. LMC are continuing to run an advertising

campaign on TV and radio highlighting the benefits of FQAS beef and lamb. In November, following a campaign survey the recognition of FQAS beef and lamb products was 82% and 80% respectively.

FQAS Farmer of the Year 2015



LMC have once again teamed up with the Farming Life and Danske Bank Awards to sponsor "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:

- By calling Farming Life on 028 3839 5504 or 028 3839 5564
- By e-mailing julie.forde@jpress.co.uk or karen.fitzmaurice@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 October 2015.

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
- Entrants should include additional information to highlight how they have modified/improved their working practices to fulfil FQAS standards

How would you like a trip to Birmingham's NEC to see the Livestock Event?



Look out for your free ticket invitation enclosed with this FQAS Newsletter.

Don't forget to book your return flight to Birmingham International, only a short walk away from the event. Be one of the leading farmers to see live robotic feeding of beef cattle, a world first at an event. Speak to over 250 trade stands with products for beef and sheep farmers and watch the judging of the Charolais, British Blue, Aberdeen Angus and South Devons in their national shows.

For more information go to www.livestockevent.co.uk



Stay Brucellosis Free – Report Cattle Abortions

Brucellosis is considered one of the world's most important zoonotic diseases, with significant impacts on human and animal health. The recent history of the brucellosis programme in Northern Ireland gives welcome indications that the disease may be eradicated here.

Key Messages

Any new cases of infection could cause

a serious reversal to the good progress that has been made, so important points to remember are:

- **Report abortions**
Reporting of all bovine abortions or any suspicion of brucellosis is crucial, as early detection will enable rapid eradication. Herd keepers who are aware of an abortion having occurred and veterinary surgeons are responsible for reporting the occurrence to the local DVO.

Reporting of a bovine abortion does not mean that the dam's herd is restricted. Only animals that have aborted, delivered a stillbirth, or had a calf that has died within 24 hours of birth, will be blood sampled and tested for brucellosis.

- **Biosecurity matters!**
A good biosecurity routine is always essential, not just when there is a disease outbreak, as it can improve overall herd

health, welfare and productivity.

Every farmer should ask about the disease status, past and present, of herds that they are buying from, whether from here or from elsewhere.

- **Test on time**
It is vital that we continue to stay free of this highly infectious disease, and we also want to gain and maintain European confidence that NI is free from brucellosis.