

## Lifetime Assurance Update

Following the outcome of Red Tractor Assurance's (RTA) consultation on Lifetime Assurance, the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) who manages the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) on behalf of the NI industry is yet to be convinced that the proposals will add value to assurance of beef in Northern Ireland.

A large proportion of beef produced in Northern Ireland is marketed under the Red Tractor logo in Great Britain. Any changes to existing standards that may impact on our ability to supply this market must be carefully considered. LMC continues to communicate the very serious concerns that are held by supply chain partners in Northern Ireland about the introduction of Lifetime Assurance in the beef sector and have met with Red



Tractor representatives on various occasions over the last number of months. There is very little in the consultation summary report that alters the fact that Lifetime Assurance has the potential to add a significant burden to a supply chain that is already under pressure. Our existing Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) is extremely robust and has delivered assurances

for consumers about food safety, animal welfare and care for the environment for almost 25 years.

There is limited detail in the consultation summary report about how this proposal will be implemented and the associated practicalities with this move. A move to Lifetime Assurance, whilst aspirational could ultimately cost the NI beef industry approximately £1 million to

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maintain current assurance levels with no guarantee that this will be returned from the market.

The FQAS Industry Board, chaired by LMC, continue to discuss the issue of Lifetime Assurance and there is unanimous opposition to the proposals on the basis that the proposals could add significant cost to the supply chain without adding significant value.

## Transporter Authorisation – Reminder



FQAS members who wish to transport livestock over 65km in connection with an economic activity, are required to be independently assessed for competence by the National Proficiency Training Council (NTPC), this assessment is specific to the role of

the transporter, journey length and the species being transported. A certificate will be awarded on completion of the assessment which must be made available to inspectors when requested.

Following receipt of this certificate, the transporter must apply to DARD for their Transporter Authorisation - WIT1/ WIT2 (depending on the length of journey). The two DARD offices that deal with these applications for Transporter

Authorisation are: Dungannon (*for Counties Tyrone, Fermanagh, Armagh, Down*) and Mallusk (*for Counties Antrim & Londonderry*).

It is permissible to apply to these DARD offices for your Transporter Authorisation by posting/faxing/emailing the relevant WIT form. The WIT form can be downloaded from the DARD website:

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare/welfare-of-animals-during-transport.htm>

Your Certificate of Competence must be included also to obtain this authorisation.

The authorisation will last for 5 years unless revoked or suspended and may have conditions imposed upon it at any time within this period if there are any infringements of any requirement of the EU regulation or the relevant welfare of animals during transport legislation.

## FQAS Farmer of the Year

The very popular Farming Life & Danske Bank Awards were held in the Ramada Hotel, Belfast in October. Once again, LMC were delighted to sponsor the "FQAS Farmer of the Year" Award.

This is the fourth year in succession that LMC have sponsored this award, and feel that it presents an excellent opportunity to recognise farming excellence and adherence to the FQAS Product Standard & Rules, throughout FQAS membership. FQAS Farmer of the Year 2015 was awarded to Victor Patterson from Ballygawley who joined the scheme in 1992 and has since maintained a high level of compliance with the FQAS Standard & Rules and has demonstrated how he stands out from his competitors. He is a keen supporter of FQAS and has highlighted the merits of being a member of FQAS.

Jonathan Tuft from Lisburn was awarded "Highly Commended" in this category and deserves special mention for his dedication to FQAS.

LMC wish to congratulate all beef and lamb producers who were nominated for this award and wish to thank Farming Life and Danske Bank for the opportunity to be involved in this successful showcase event.



L-R - LMC Industry Development Manager Colin Smith, FQAS Farmer of the Year Victor Patterson and Rodney Brown from Danske Bank

## Veterinary Medicine Records – Recording of "Groups Treated"

All FQAS participants will be aware that in line with legislation, Standard 2.14 requires "complete records must be kept of the purchase, use and disposal (if applicable) of all veterinary medicines. All treatments including vaccinations, worming, anaesthetic, antibiotics and anti-parasite control must be recorded for all animals/groups of animals"

Within the FQAS Veterinary Medicine Record (VMR) usage section there is a column for recording "Individual Animal ID" if one single animal is treated or "Group Treated" if there are a number of animals treated with the same veterinary medicine.

The FQAS Standard Setting Committee would recommend that where a group of animals are treated more information should be recorded in this column to more clearly identify animals that have been treated/administered with veterinary medicines to ensure that withdrawal periods are adhered to and animals are not sent for slaughter before the withdrawal period has expired.

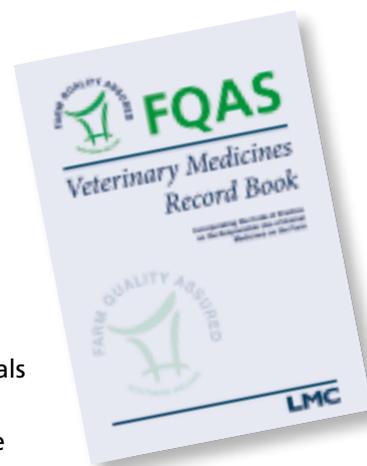
For example treated groups of animals could be more clearly identified by recording additional information such as:

- 75 heifers in Shed A
- 14 store cattle in Pen 1

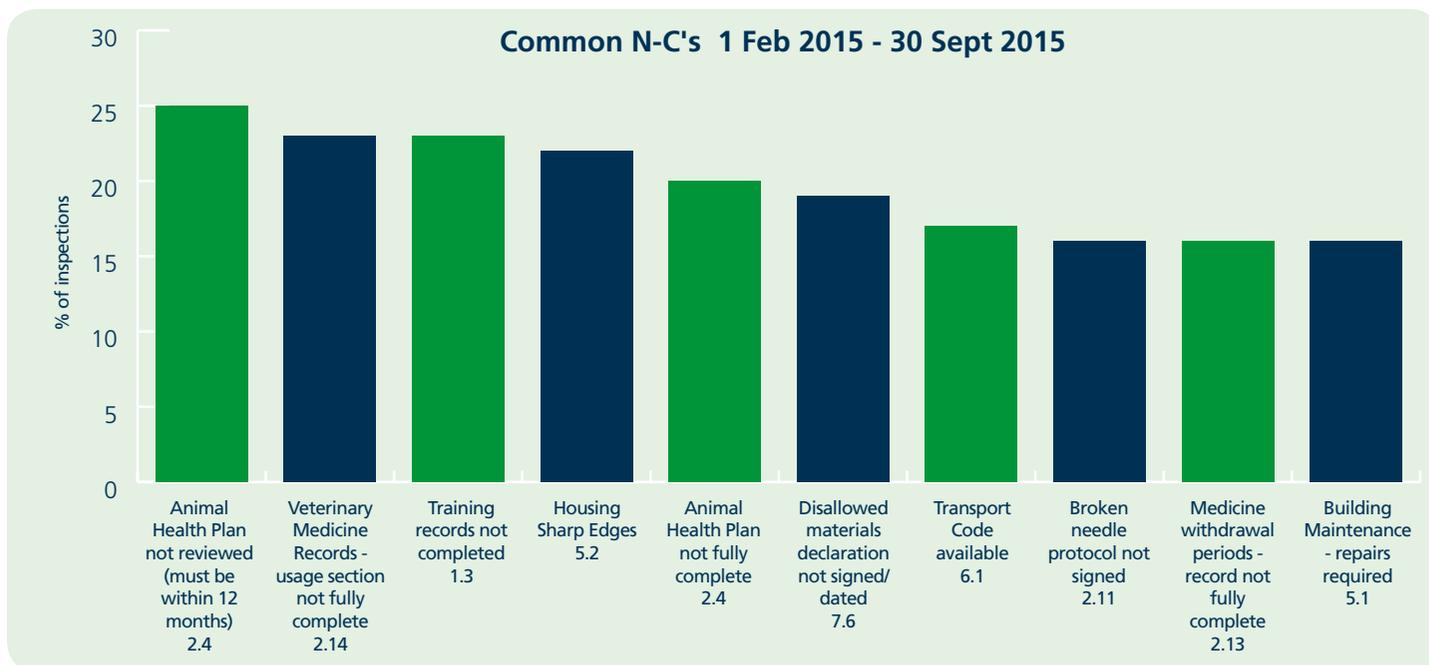
It is not being suggested that individual animal ID's are recorded for each group treated.

A non-conformance will not be raised against this issue however it would be a recommendation to clearly indicate which group of animals had been treated.

For further information please contact the FQAS helpline: **(028) 92633024.**



# Common Non-Conformances Update



**Figure 1**

NIBL FQAS is owned by the Livestock & Meat Commission (LMC) on behalf of the beef and sheep meat industries. LMC contracts Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification (NIFCC) to inspect against the NIBL FQAS Standard and determine whether certification will be granted. Non-conformances may be raised if a producer does not fully adhere to a specific code contained in the Standard. These non-conformances must be rectified within the timescale provided for the farm to either become assured or retain its Farm Quality Assured status.

Non-conformances have been assessed for an eight month period from 1 February 2015 – 30 September 2015. Within this period, NIFCC conducted 5,427 inspections. The top ten most common non-conformances are detailed in figure 1.

In the previous update of common non-conformances raised during inspections (Winter 2014 FQAS Newsletter), the most common non-conformance was availability of cattle/sheep welfare codes. The incidence of this non-conformance has decreased greatly as FQAS participants seem to now have access to these codes either in paper copy or online. In this reporting period, review of Animal Health Plan on an annual basis has become the most common non-conformance. This was a new requirement introduced from 1 October 2014. Previously all FQAS participants were required to have an Animal Health Plan however there was no specific requirement to ensure it was reviewed every twelve months. A well-considered Animal Health Plan can help to identify any herd/flock health issues, encourage preventative action, reduce

risk of animal diseases and potentially reduce veterinary bills.

There continues to be non-conformances related to correct recording of veterinary medicines in the Veterinary Medicine Record (VMR) book. It is of upmost importance that all veterinary medicines are recorded in both the purchase and usage sections of the VMR. This information is key for the producer to know which animals have been treated and withdrawal periods associated with these to prevent issues with residues. Keeping a VMR is a legal requirement and all FQAS participants are encouraged to ensure these are kept up to date. VMR's could be checked during a cross compliance inspection with a penalty applied if the records are not present.

Other non-conformances that have been raised in the last eight months such as: training records not completed, disallowed

materials declaration not signed and broken needle protocol not signed are all due to FQAS participants not signing the correct section of the revised FQAS Standard and are easily rectified and preventable.

It is important for producers to continue to be aware of the non-conformances raised for building maintenance and housing to prevent any issues with animal welfare.

Producers wishing to get assistance with non-conformance rectification or preparation prior to an inspection can call the Farm Liaison Officer on the FQAS Helpline number on 028 9263 3024. The Helpline is open Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm. To obtain copies of FQAS Standard & Rules, VMR books, feed record books or application packs, contact the above number or visit the website:

<https://www.lmcni.com/farm-quality-assurance/documentation/>

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To opt out of receiving the FQAS Newsletter, please contact 028 92633024 or email FQAS@lmcni.com

# LMC Beef and Lamb Watch

In August 2013 LMC appointed research company Millward Brown Ulster to visit a variety of retail stores in Northern Ireland in order to gain a better insight into the origins of beef and lamb that is stocked across these stores. On a monthly basis a Millward Brown Ulster Mystery Shopper visits ten separate stores and records from the product labels where the meat has come from. During the course of the month the ten stores are visited twice allowing for a weekday and weekend mystery shop. The current retail stores visited are: Tesco, Sainsbury's, ASDA, Lidl, SuperValu, Marks & Spencer and Eurospar. These stores are selected across a range of geographical locations.

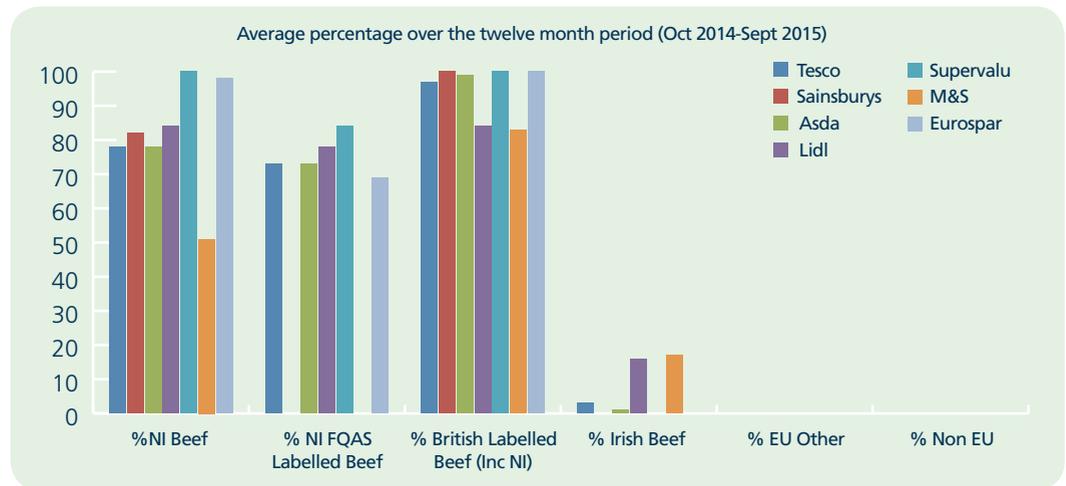
For each beef and lamb product the following classifications are recorded:

- Was the product NI Beef or lamb?
- Did the product carry the NIFQAS logo?
- Was the product British Beef or lamb (inc NI)?
- Was it Irish Beef or Lamb?
- Was it from another EU country? or was it non EU?

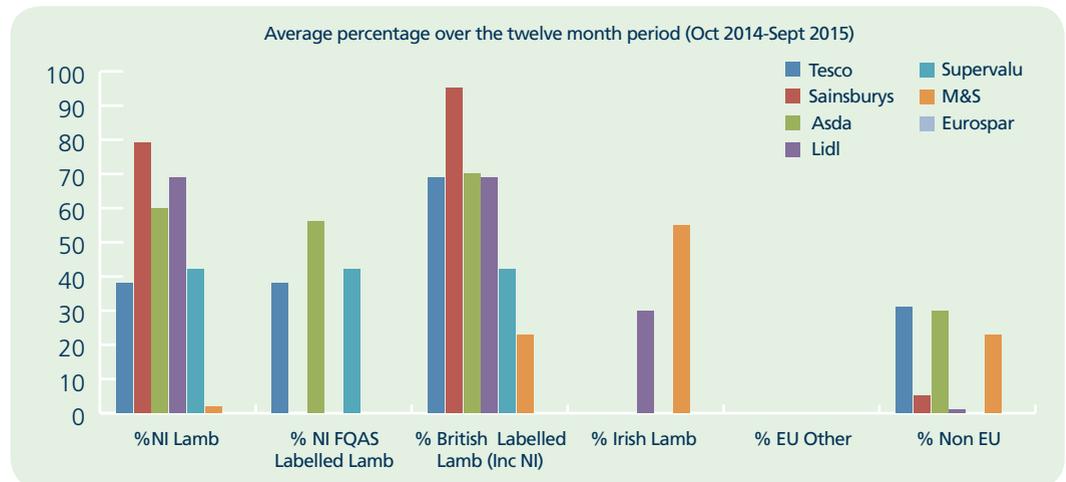
The most recent mystery shop took place in September 2015.

Figures 1 and 2 show the percentage of beef and lamb on sale in these retailers with the corresponding origin and labelling information.

M&S and Sainsbury's do not display the FQAS logo on retail packs however FQAS remains a pre-requisite specification for these retailers. In *Figure 1* it is evident that the majority of retailers stock British Beef which includes beef



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

\* In July 2015, Aug 2015 & Sept 2015 no lamb was stocked in the SuperValu stores checked which has reduced the average percentage. When lamb has been stocked in store it has been 100% NI.

\* No lamb products were recorded at the particular Eurospar stores chosen to be mystery shopped.

from Northern Ireland, with retailers such as Tesco, Asda, Lidl, SuperValu and Eurospar all using the FQAS logo. Over the twelve month period reviewed there was no beef highlighted with a country of origin of EU/Non-EU in the retail stores which is encouraging. With regards to lamb, *Figure 2* shows that Sainsbury's continues to sell an average 95% of British lamb (including NI). There is still a significant percentage of lamb from outside the EU being sold in supermarkets. This continues to be a major discussion point with the retailers.

The 2014 advertising campaign from the Livestock and Meat Commission increased the recognition of the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance (NIFQA) quality mark amongst NI consumers to over 80% for NIFQA lamb and 82% for NIFQA beef, ensuring that more outlets stocked these products and more people bought these products more often.

LMC are keeping up the promotional activity for NIFQA beef and lamb, with more TV, Radio, Outdoor Press, Website and Digital activity planned.

The maintenance of an extremely strong retail presence for NIFQA beef and a vastly improved presence of NIFQA lamb in store has been a result of our existing efforts of the advertising campaign, the launch of [beefandlambni.com](http://beefandlambni.com) and over 300 cookery demonstrations of NIFQA beef and lamb carried out on an annual basis in secondary schools across Northern Ireland.

The LMC beef and lamb watch figures are updated regularly and can be viewed at [www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com)