



All Change in Farm Assurance

Assured Dairy Farms has just completed a major harmonisation project which will deliver a more robust approach to the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme. From 1st April 2010, the scheme's farmers will have to adhere to standards that are for the first time aligned across all farming sectors. A summary of how this will affect the dairy sector is outlined below and enclosed is a full explanation and a complete set of standards.

Who will be carrying out the Farm Assessment?

Assured Dairy Farms has advised all first purchasers that, due to the harmonisation of the auditing procedure, all assessments must be carried out by a third party (ie. an independent auditor). Therefore, from April 1st, the Meadow Foods farm team will unfortunately no longer be able to audit our own supplying farmers, which would have been our preferred option.

We have no choice other than to use one of six companies (known as Certification Bodies - CBs) who are licensed to provide farm assessments. Meadow Foods has contracted CMI to carry out the assessments from 1st April 2010. Meadow Foods has selected a small number of auditors from CMI to work closely with us to ensure that that these assessments are carried out effectively and efficiently.



What changes are there to the Dairy Standards?

There are a few changes to the actual Standards and a full copy of these is enclosed. Producers are urged to carefully read the Standards document and to take time to ensure that the Standards are understood. If there are still queries about the changes after reading the information, then please do not hesitate to contact us to clarify.



What other operational changes are there from April 1st?

- Rectification Period - for most non-conformances this will be reduced to **28 days** from the day of assessment, rather than 60 days.
- Certificates - to ensure consistency with other sectors (e.g. beef) in future you will be issued with an annual certificate.
- Assessment Frequency - an assessment will be carried out at least every 18 months.
- Assuring Beef from the Dairy Herd - these will be integrated and extended to cover all cattle for milk production and beef. In England this will be the Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Standards, whilst in the devolved regions this will be the relevant Scheme - QMS or FAWL.



Production Forecasts & Accuracy Bonus

To enable us to market your milk and our products as effectively as possible, it is crucial that we get accurate production forecasts from all our supplying dairy farms and match volumes with customer demand.

The more cost-efficient our business can be, the greater the return to our suppliers. Therefore, from this April, production forecasts will be requested on a three-monthly basis.

You will already have received your production forecast form for April-June and hopefully have already returned it to us in order to secure a 0.1ppl from April 2010.

You can also secure an additional bonus based on the

accuracy of your forecast. The accuracy bonus will be 0.1ppl if your actual monthly production is within 10% either way of the forecast litres for the equivalent month.

If you have not yet returned your forecast forms, please give this your urgent attention. Either return the forms to the address marked on them or contact Pauline in the office on **01244 629 416**.



New Vehicles



Over recent months we have been reviewing our haulage fleet in conjunction with our hauliers, S.J. Bargh and Wm. Armstrong, to ensure ongoing efficiency and service for both suppliers and customers. The result of this review has been to authorise the purchase of a number of new collection vehicles.

The new trucks, some of which are already operational, are 32 ton, eight-wheeled, rigid chassis vehicles and, thanks to the lightweight build, are capable of carrying up to 20,000 litres.

Due to new, innovative design techniques where the milk collection system is incorporated between the second and third axles the overall length is no longer than the present six-wheel rigid vehicles, and with automatic rear wheel steering axles there has been no compromise on farm manoeuvrability.

In fact because the rear steering axles assist the turning circles and the weight is spread over four axles, these new trucks will be far more yard friendly – great news for our supplying farmers.

Laura Teasdale

Unfortunately, Laura will be leaving Meadow Foods at the end of March, to start a new job with a dairy supply business, in Cumbria. Laura joined our business as farm auditor in 2008 when Meadow Foods purchased West Lakes Dairy Park.

Her role has been mainly within farm assurance, making a difficult job easier with her practical and farmer-friendly approach. We are sure Laura will be greatly missed by both our farmers and the Meadow farm team, and we wish her all the best and every success in the future.

Contact Details

Jim Bebb – Head of Milk Procurement

Tel: 07919 118026

E-mail: j.bebb@meadowfoods.co.uk

Area of responsibility: Nationwide

Nick Wood – Field Liaison

Tel: 07979 244514

E-mail: n.wood@meadowfoods.co.uk

Area of responsibility: Cumbria, Dumfriesshire, Northumberland, Lancashire, Yorkshire

Debbie Thomas – Farm Liaison

Tel: 07973 835333

E-mail: d.thomas@meadowfoods.co.uk

Area of responsibility: Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, North Wales, Powys

Meadow Foods Limited

Marlston Cum Lache, Chester, Cheshire CH4 9JS

Tel: 01244 680071

Fax: 01244 680075

e-mail: j.bebb@meadowfoods.co.uk