

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### **Building consumer confidence and growing the market for British Pigmear**

Assuring food safety throughout every part of the food chain is a vital priority for the meat industry and, more importantly, for its many millions of consumers. Couple this with increasing consumer awareness of animal welfare issues, and the demand for traceability of food, and the need for meaningful farm assurance is self evident. Assured British Pigs is one link in an integrated assurance chain which has the objective of providing effective assurance to internationally recognised standards throughout the whole pigmeat production chain from animal feed manufacture to meat processing and distribution.

British pigmeat is world class. It is produced on farms that are well managed by highly professional, well-qualified and caring stockmen. Certification to the Assured British Pigs Standard allows producers to demonstrate that their standards of husbandry and welfare meet nationally agreed levels of best commercial practice, and give an assurance to the consumer that the product is safe. The Scheme is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service to the European Product Certification Standard EN45011, which further demonstrates its independence and integrity.

Participation in Assured British Pigs is one of the qualifications required for pigmeat to be sold with the MLC's Quality Standard Mark and the Scheme is also a qualifying Scheme for Assured Food Standards' British Farm Standard (Red Tractor) Logo. When the Red Tractor is used on pigmeat products, it will appear alongside the Quality Standard Mark and it assures consumers that the products have been produced to stringent standards that are independently inspected



This revision of the standards reflects changes in legislation, the development of animal feed assurance, and clarifies some key requirements of the Scheme. Your participation in this Scheme will help to build lasting consumer confidence in British pigmeat and thereby help to secure a future for British pig farming.

## SCHEME OPERATING PROCEDURES

- 1. INTRODUCTION:** This manual provides information for participants in the Assured British Pigs Scheme (ABPigs). It summarises the procedures for application, inspection, certification, complaints and appeals. The assessment and certification of the standards is licensed to accredited Certification Bodies through which registration with the Scheme will be managed. Assured British Pigs undertakes to ensure that the Scheme and standards are administered effectively and efficiently through this licence. Each Certification Body will have its own rules with which participants will have to comply
- 2.** The second part of the manual contains the technical standards. Participants must conform to these standards at all times to be entitled to certification. This is a Product Certification Scheme accredited to the international standard EN45011 by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service. The Scheme Standard(s) and Operating Procedures are additional to any statutory requirements and nothing in them shall be deemed as providing exemption from current legislation.
- 3.** The aim of the ABPigs Scheme is to provide pig producers with a mechanism to assure their customers that their production methods meet and record appropriate standards. The Scheme integrates with other assurance Schemes across the meat supply chain, providing assurance at every link in the chain.
- 4.** Any British Pig producer can apply to participate in the ABPigs Scheme. Participants can only gain certification if the standards are met. This is assessed by a combination of reports from private veterinary surgeons and independent inspections.
- 5.** Participants must renew registration with the Scheme annually. The standards may change over time, for example in response to changes in legislation. Participants will be informed of any changes and the timeframe for their implementation, and must ensure full compliance with any changes to the standards to retain assured status.
- 6.** The owner of the business must sign the Certification Body's application and subsequent renewal forms. Alternatively, a senior representative who is authorised to sign on behalf of the business may do so. In signing the forms, participants agree to comply with the ABPigs Scheme standards and the Scheme operating procedures and the Certification Body's operating procedures.
- 7. APPLICATION:** Read the standards and other information carefully before completing the application form. Send the form to one of the licensed Certification Bodies together with the cheque for the correct fee. All new applicants must have available for inspection a map or plan showing the unit layout. The map must be sufficiently detailed to show all pen dimensions and/or

- the layout of outdoor paddocks. This map or plan must be kept up to date and be made available to the inspector during all independent inspection visits.
8. Requests for initial inspection must be received within 6 months from the date of the application or ABPigs will consider that the application has lapsed. Application fees cannot be refunded in these circumstances.
  9. **COMPLEX AND MULTIPLE UNITS:** A separate registration will normally be required for every holding where pigs are kept, although where small separate nursery or finishing sites are located close to the main unit, a single registration may suffice for up to a maximum of three locations. Any additional sites must be notified to the Certification Bodies.
  10. **FEES & REFUNDS:** The application fee is indicated in the current schedule of fees, available from the Certification Bodies.
  11. **VETERINARY REPORTS:** The Scheme requires a quarterly report from a private veterinary surgeon. The veterinary surgeon must be currently registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS) and registered with the Scheme. Vets are expected to be members of the Pig Veterinary Society or similar professional body that promotes clinical excellence. If a vet is not already on the ABP register ABPigs will forward the necessary information. However, the Certification Bodies cannot accept reports from a vet until they have registered with the Scheme. See Appendix 4 for details.
  12. **INSPECTION FEES:** Please note that participants are responsible for any veterinary fees for quarterly inspections. The Scheme registration fee covers the cost of the annual independent inspection and ZAP monitoring.
  13. **PRE-ASSESSMENT:** On receipt of an application the Certification Body will send a VAT receipt. Once participants are ready for an independent inspection they should contact The Certification Body. Before doing so, ABPigs strongly advise that participants study the standards carefully and assess their own operation against the requirements. Participants may wish to get the help of a veterinary surgeon, who will be responsible for making the quarterly reports required by the Scheme. In any event, veterinary input will be needed to ensure compliance with section 4.8 (Veterinary Health Plan). Please remember participants must conform with every standard relevant to the business before a certificate may be issued by the Certification Body.
  14. Please note that pre-assessment, either by a vet or by self-assessment will not influence the certification decision, which will be based entirely on the inspector's report.
  15. The purpose of the inspection is to check that participants meet all of the requirements of the standard. Certification Bodies will make a detailed examination of the production facilities, operational procedures and practices together with relevant records, including copies of the quarterly vet reports. Certification Bodies will also expect to verify that participants hold copies of the booklets and codes of practice required by the Scheme standards. Inspection of livestock is integral to the Scheme, and Certification Bodies cannot normally

- inspect empty units. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that everything is available for inspection and that key members of staff are present. If the inspector cannot complete the inspection in full the application cannot be progressed. Participants may have to pay an additional fee for the inspector to return to complete the work.
16. If the inspector finds that participants do not conform to any of the requirements of the standard he will point them out as the inspection progresses. By the end of the inspection any/all non-conformances will be recorded on a non-conformance report and a copy left with the participant. The inspector will also note the corrective action that the participant proposes to take. The inspector is not allowed to advise on, or suggest, the corrective action that needs to be taken.
  17. **CERTIFICATION:** The Certification Body reviews all inspection reports and uses the information to decide whether the participant meets the certification requirements. There may be criteria which cannot be judged on farm which the Certification Body will judge directly (e.g. use of approved feed sources). If successful, The Certification Body will write to the participant and provide a Certificate of conformity.
  18. If non-conformances were recorded, a certificate will not be issued until these have been put right. The Certification Body will write to the participant indicating the areas of improvement and the evidence that is needed for rectification. The Certification Body must have such evidence before a certificate can be issued. Evidence required will be at the discretion of the Scheme and may be:
    - Documentary evidence
    - A report from the private vet
    - A full re-inspection
  19. Certificates are not transferable and remain the property of the Certification Body. Participants must only use Assured British Pigs certificates, marks or logos strictly in relation to the scope of the certification. Participants must not make any claim that certification applies to business locations or activities that are not included in the scope of the certificate.
  20. **MATERIAL CHANGES:** In order to keep the Certification Bodies fully informed of any material changes, participants must complete the producer self-declaration that forms part of the quarterly report, the remainder to be completed by the vet. Participants must inform the Certification Body in writing whenever any new/additional buildings are to be used which were not inspected at the last annual independent inspection.
  21. **SURVEILLANCE:** All certified farms will be re-inspected annually by an independent inspector. ABPigs and the Certifying Body also reserve the right to spot check any certified farm at any reasonable time.
  22. In addition participants must submit a quarterly farm inspection report from a private veterinary surgeon registered with the Scheme. The vet must have access to a copy of the previous quarterly report(s) and any non-conformance report from the last independent inspection. Quarters are

defined as Jan/Feb/Mar; Apr/May/June; July/Aug/Sept; Oct/Nov/Dec. These reports must be filled out in the standard Scheme report format: a copy to be kept on farm and a copy sent to the Scheme Certifiers office.

23. It is not acceptable for a certified producer to delay surveillance visits. Any undue delay in allowing access to the independent inspector may result in suspension or withdrawal of the certificate. Failure to submit quarterly farm inspection reports may also have the same effect.
24. If at any time the unit is destocked, the Certification Body must be informed in writing. Quarterly veterinary reports will not be required during de-stocked periods.
25. **REVOCAATION:** Producers whose registration with the Scheme is suspended for any reason and do not take the requisite corrective action will have their case reviewed by the Certification Bodies Certification Committee. Businesses/premises which have their assurance revoked in line with this process will be barred from future application for registration with the Scheme for a period of 6 months.
26. **RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION:** Existing participants will be required to renew registration 12 months after the initial application and every 12 months thereafter. Membership renewals will be conditional upon receipt of the appropriate fee on or before the renewal date.
27. If participants have not renewed their registration through a Certifying Body by the expiry date the certificate will become invalid.
28. Should participation become invalid, the certificate is withdrawn, participants must not sell pigs as farm assured and abattoirs and marketing groups will be informed.
29. **APPEALS:** If participants wish to appeal against a decision on certification they must write to the Certification Body giving reasons why it is believed the decision is wrong.
30. If it does not resolve the issue, an independent tribunal appointed by the Certifying Body will consider the appeal.
31. **COMPLAINTS:** If participants have a complaint about the application, inspection or certification processes it should be sent in writing to the Certification Body. All complaints will be properly investigated and the necessary action taken.
32. Participants (whether an Applicant or Approved Producer) must inform ABPIgs and the Certification Body if they are subject to any legal action concerning animal welfare, food safety or environmental issues or if they have been successfully prosecuted during the last 12 months. For example, they must advise of any positive residue test results. Failure to do so may lead to suspension or withdrawal of the certificate.

33. **DATA PROTECTION:** ABPigs will treat all information about Scheme participants in confidence, but will respond to queries from third parties (for example abattoirs or marketing groups) who wish to confirm the certification status of any farm. The list of Approved Producers may be published from time to time.
34. Given an ABPig's registration number and surname, or trading name and address, ABPigs will confirm current certification status, registration number, expiry date and scope of certification to any abattoir or marketing group. If there are any criteria which qualify the certificate this may also be passed on.
35. More specific information, for example details of individual inspection reports, will be made available only to marketing groups and abattoirs with which ABPigs have been made aware that producers trade, unless participants have informed ABPigs in writing that this should not be the case. If participants exercise their right to confidentiality of the additional information, marketing groups and abattoirs with whom ABPigs have been made aware that participants trade will merely be informed of this fact. In addition, if participants exercise this right, it must be in respect of all marketing groups and abattoirs.
36. ABPigs will notify third parties such as abattoirs and marketing groups whenever a producer's certification has been suspended or withdrawn, or the participant has left the Scheme.
37. ABPigs has integrated the British Pig Executive's ZAP Salmonella scheme into the requirements of ABPigs standards. ZAP results will be reported by BPEX to participating abattoirs, to the relevant veterinarian and to the Certification Body but will not be distributed for any other purpose otherwise than in relation to the ZAP scheme.
38. **LEAVING THE SCHEME:** Anyone leaving or suspended from the Scheme must cease forthwith to make any claims, whether explicit or implied, that they are certified under the Scheme. This applies both to those choosing not to renew participation and those suspended or whose participation has been withdrawn. Their certificate is withdrawn and must be returned to the Certification Body.
39. **FALSE & MISLEADING STATEMENTS:** Any false or misleading statement on the application form, during inspection, or in any other communication may lead to suspension or withdrawal of certification and even exclusion from future participation in the Scheme.
40. **LIABILITY:** Neither Assured British Pigs nor its Certification Bodies will be liable for any losses that arise from, including without limitation, any industrial action or the failure of any machine, data processing system, transmission link or any other events outside our reasonable control.
41. Neither Assured British Pigs nor its Certification Bodies will be liable for any potential or estimated loss of earnings by applicants or approved producers in regard to any provision of the Scheme Standard(s) or Operating Procedures.