

# Why quality is important

The Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork logo is a guarantee and assurance that the pork is of high quality and from pigs that have been reared and slaughtered to high standards of animal welfare.

## ABATTOIR



## PROCESSOR



## RETAILER



BPEX devotes much of its time to understanding the needs of consumers, and research conducted in 2009 shows that:

- 80% of people surveyed felt that all food products should be clearly labelled with the Country of Origin
- 83% agreed that it was important to have the Country of Origin clearly marked to help shoppers identify which products were produced to higher standards of animal welfare
- 74% agreed that the higher standard of animal welfare on UK farms was something that we should be proud of as a nation

Source: YouGov survey conducted on behalf of BPEX, summer 2009.

Promotion of the Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme is supported by consumer and trade campaigns, including advertising and PR. Through these campaigns, awareness of the scheme and its standards to which Red Tractor Quality Assured pork and pork products comply, provides retailers with the opportunity to develop their own in-store marketing activity.

## Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme

The Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme is an integrated scheme for pig meat covering the whole chain from feed supply, farm, livestock haulier and abattoir to processing plant. All of which must comply with strict operating and quality standards.

All pork, bacon and ham that carries the Red Tractor Quality Assured mark comes from farmers and processors committed to high standards of animal welfare, quality control and traceability.

Every link in the supply chain is subject to regular independent auditing, recognised to international standard (EN45011).

A number of organisations work together to deliver the integrated Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme. These both operate similar standards.

### FARM ELEMENT

For pig farmers there are two organisations who currently offer membership to the Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme. These both operate similar standards.

- Red Tractor Pig Farm Assurance  
Further information can be found at [www.redtractor.org.uk/site/REDT/Templates/GeneralStandards.aspx?pageid=23&cc=GB](http://www.redtractor.org.uk/site/REDT/Templates/GeneralStandards.aspx?pageid=23&cc=GB)
- Genesis Quality Assurance  
Further information can be found at [www.genesisqa.com/standards.asp](http://www.genesisqa.com/standards.asp)

### TRANSPORT

For pig hauliers there is one organisation who currently offers membership to the Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme.

- Assured British Meat Transport Scheme  
Further information can be found at [www.abm.org.uk/abm/tra\\_section.aspx?id=000HK277ZX.0EIUE209EU80](http://www.abm.org.uk/abm/tra_section.aspx?id=000HK277ZX.0EIUE209EU80)

### PROCESSING

For pork processors there are four organisations who currently offer membership to the Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme.



For fresh pork it is provided by:

- British Quality Assured Pigs (BQAP)  
For further information go to [www.bpex.org.uk/PracticalAdvice/ProducerKt/documents/BQAP\\_3\\_March\\_2006.pdf](http://www.bpex.org.uk/PracticalAdvice/ProducerKt/documents/BQAP_3_March_2006.pdf)

For pork products there are specific quality standards for product specification, quality and ingredients. This is provided by the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA)

- BMPA Sausage Charter Mark scheme
- BMPA Ham Charter Mark scheme
- BMPA Bacon Charter Mark scheme

For further information go to [www.bmpa.uk.com](http://www.bmpa.uk.com)

An integral part of the schemes operated by BMPA is the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

This trade association represents the whole range of retailers, from large multiples and department stores through to independents, selling a wide selection of products through centre of town, out of town, rural and virtual stores. For further information go to their website [www.brc.org.uk/defaultnew.asp](http://www.brc.org.uk/defaultnew.asp)

For pork and pork products to carry the Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork logo they must have passed through each assured stage within the production chain, as outlined above.

For further information on the Red Tractor Assurance schemes visit [www.myredtractor.org.uk](http://www.myredtractor.org.uk)

For more information about the voluntary code for the clearer labelling of pork, which includes production definitions, breed definitions and labelling guidance of pig meat, visit [www.porkprovenance.co.uk](http://www.porkprovenance.co.uk)

# THE RETAILER'S GUIDE TO Assuring Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork through the Supply Chain



## Assuring Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork through the Supply Chain

Assuring food quality and safety throughout the supply chain is an absolute priority for the meat industry.

This leaflet explains what it means to be part of the Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork scheme. This scheme delivers integrated and independently audited assurance from farm to fork. This covers all aspects of production from on farm husbandry, transportation and welfare through to processing, traceability and provenance.

These standards have been developed to ensure high standards are maintained for:

- animal welfare, food safety and hygiene
- slaughter practice and production of pig meat in abattoirs
- cutting and further processing plants

Independent auditing to recognised international standards (EN45011) ensures compliance with the standards and integrity of all pork and pig meat products that carry the Red Tractor logo.



All those involved in the production of Red Tractor Quality Assured Pork are committed to providing the end consumer with a product that not only meets or exceeds their expectations in terms of eating quality, but also satisfies the important criteria of animal welfare, food safety, provenance and trust in its source, production and processing methods.

## ABATTOIR

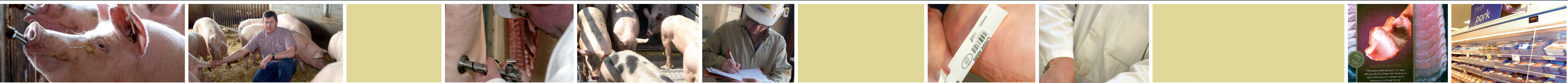


## ON THE FARM





# ASSURING PORK QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE SUPPLY CHAIN



## ON THE FARM

To meet the Red Tractor Farm Assurance standards, farmers are required to care for their pigs by following the Five Freedoms Welfare propositions. This means that farmers must ensure that:

- All pigs have ready access to fresh water and receive a daily diet that is nutritionally beneficial and maintains health and vigour. There must be sufficient space to allow all pigs to feed at the same time

Animal feed for pigs must be obtained from sources that have been assessed as being competent and meeting strict criteria and must have been stored and transported in ways which ensure that it is free from contamination.

- Pigs do not suffer discomfort and are provided with an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area

The pigs must have sufficient space, good quality housing and be kept in a thermally comfortable environment.

- Pigs are free from pain, injury and disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment

Staff responsible for the caring of pigs are trained to recognise signs of injury, pain and disease and walk through each unit regularly to check all pigs for signs of distress. Veterinary surgeon visits are required every three months to inspect all areas of the farm and check upon the health of the stock. The vet is required to produce, quarterly, a Veterinary Health Plan, which sets out best veterinary practice for minimisation of illness or distress on the particular unit at that point in time and producers are encouraged to follow this advice.

- Pigs have the freedom to express normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and the company of other pigs and ensuring that they are kept in stable groups

- Pigs have freedom from fear and distress by providing conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering

The use of electric goads and sticks for handling stock are not permitted and pigs must be provided with access to materials such as straw, wood and sawdust to facilitate investigation and manipulation activities.

## ABATTOIR

As well as the skilled operatives employed by the abattoir, all abattoirs operate under the supervision and guidance of the government inspectors. Together, these professionals ensure that the animals are well treated and that their meat is thoroughly checked for food safety, hygiene and quality before it leaves the abattoir.

Independent classification and grading of pig carcass is offered to the majority of Red Tractor Assured abattoirs by Meat and Livestock Commercial Services Ltd (MLCSL), or alternatively they use their own staff.

On arrival at the abattoir pigs are checked by the on-site vet to ensure that they are healthy, have been well cared for and are in good condition. The vet is employed by the FSA Operations directorate (formerly the Meat Hygiene Service), the government competent authority, and is independent of the abattoir. Once unloaded, the pigs are rested in pens with access to water. This resting period, called lairage, ensures that the animals are relaxed and calm prior to slaughter, which in turn helps to optimise meat eating quality.

The pigs are stunned to render them unconscious immediately before slaughter, either using gas or electric tongs to the back of the head. All abattoir operatives, including those responsible for slaughtering, are well trained and highly skilled, to ensure that the slaughter process is undertaken in an effective and humane manner.

Immediately after slaughter the internal organs are removed and checked, along with the carcass itself, by the FSA, to

ensure that the meat is fit for human consumption. The FSA has a statutory duty to provide services to approved meat premises on demand 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is responsible for the protection of public health as well as animal health and welfare in the United Kingdom through the proportionate enforcement of meat hygiene legislation.

Once the inspectors are happy that the meat is fit for human consumption, a 'Health Mark' is applied to the carcass showing that there has been a thorough pre- and post-mortem inspection. The Health Mark is oval in shape and provides information as to the country where the abattoir is situated and its approval number. This allows for carcass traceability from the butcher or wholesaler back to the abattoir, should it be required.

To ensure meat specifications are met, carcass classification is a key requirement. The classifier (or grader), such as MLCSL, is independent of the abattoir who inspects the carcass to determine the ratio of fat to lean meat. A tag is generated which contains the grade, along with the weight of the carcass, batch code, kill number and sex of the animal, all of which is then contained in a unique bar code.

The carcasses are placed into chilled storage at 3°C ready for further processing. Before any meat leaves the abattoir the information along with details of who has purchased the meat is input into a database to aid traceability.

## PROCESSOR

The processor, often located on the same site as the abattoir, is responsible for converting the carcass into joints and cuts that meet the retailers' specifications.

The pork is kept in chilled storage until required. Red Tractor Quality Assured meat is clearly identified and it is stored and butchered separately from other carcasses (i.e. meat that is not Quality Assured). The highly skilled butchers take care to ensure that all the meat is produced to the correct specification required by the customer.

Processors are able to buy Red Tractor Quality Assured pork from many abattoirs and are using this as a means of promoting their business to customers. By buying meat produced to these standards their customers know that the meat has been independently checked and satisfies high standards of animal welfare, food safety and hygiene. Adding assurance standards into the business is nowadays seen as an essential investment that will strengthen relationships with customers.

## RETAILER

Retailers that specify Red Tractor Quality Assured pork can be assured that independently audited standards have been adhered to along the supply chain. By purchasing Red Tractor Quality Assured pork the need for the buyers to undertake any form of costly supply chain auditing is removed, as they are already assured that the meat comes from animals which have been cared for and kept healthy and slaughtered in an approved and careful way.

Many buyers understand that Red Tractor Quality Assured pork is a quality product which offers consumers a wide range of assurances, as well as delivering excellent taste and consistency. Furthermore, a shelf with Red Tractor Quality Assured pork on it will offer reassurance to customers that the establishment chooses its products with discretion and puts quality at the forefront of its operations.

## TRANSPORTATION

Guidelines covering the transportation of pigs from farm to abattoir ensure that traceability is maintained and the pigs are transported in a safe and welfare-friendly way. Drivers must be experienced in the handling and well-being of pigs and have appropriate knowledge and ability to look after pigs during the journey. Vehicles have to provide effective protection from the weather and have non-slip flooring with sufficient lighting. They must also be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each load.

