

Strategic Recommendation	AHDB Response	
1. On-farm audits must be reduced, simplified and delivered more consistently	<p>We support this recommendation. Assurance needs to be as straight forward, with minimal duplication and as efficient as possible. There are two detailed recommendations for AHDB – one of which is probably the most critical of all:</p> <p>1.1. Clarity about purpose. PRIORITY FOR AHDB</p> <p>Ensuring clarity of the purpose of a particular assurance scheme is key if there is to be alignment and commitment. Should a scheme be a basic feed and food safety scheme, or a brand linked to origin or environmental/animal welfare standards, or something else. This is made more complex because different sectors potentially have different views.</p> <p>We plan (with NFUs) to draft a discussion paper - based on the FAR findings and the submission we made to the independent commissioners - articulating the different models for purpose and scope. We expect to contribute to this debate through the Red Tractor (RT) Ownership Body (OB) as one of the owners of RT.</p>	
2. There must be a transformational step forward in embracing technology and managing data to deliver more effective farm assurance with greater added value for all	<p>PRIORITY FOR AHDB</p> <p>We are supportive of the general direction of this recommendation, as data is a major area of opportunity for the industry. However, for it to work effectively and to ‘collect it once, use many times’, we have to solve levy payer control/ownership of data; not undermine value, create trust, resolve governance standards and put in place technical standards to make things easy (e.g. data dictionary, standardised API’s etc.). None of these points are exclusive to assurance. Therefore, we plan to include the work on these recommendations in our work on farm data.</p> <p>We expect that work with partners on data governance will provide a potential solution to some of these recommendations and we will work with assurance providers to explore how our work might fit.</p>	

3. Farm assurance schemes need to reset and/or restate their decision-making structures to establish farmers as the driving voice in standards development	<p>It is crucial that assurance works for all parties in the supply chain. In some sector assurance schemes, many farmers need to feel more ownership of standards. Therefore, we are broadly supportive of all the detailed points under this strategic recommendation.</p>
4. A new industry-led initiative must set out the future environmental ambitions for farm assurance, establishing this as an area of competitive advantage for UK farming	<p>PRIORITY FOR AHDB</p> <p>We are very aware that the Greener Farms Commitment (GFC) controversy was driven by the desire for higher environmental standards, but without the buy-in of farmers. The balance between paying farmers for higher environmental standards versus regulation or mandating by the supply chain is 'in play' at present. Those standards may cover a smaller or wider range of indicators from GHG position, air, water, biodiversity etc.</p> <p>The attempted introduction of GFC by RT along with a plethora of other approaches and environmental schemes that are currently being developed, trialled and promoted, plus Government interest demonstrate the topic of Environment Standards, will not go away (but might impact on different sectors over different timescales). What should be included within farm assurance and what should be outside, might vary from scheme to scheme and depend on the purpose and role of that particular scheme.</p> <p>Therefore, there is a need for AHDB's levy payers to have input into that debate and that they are adequately rewarded for any changes. AHDB agree that these recommendations need to be undertaken and will contribute through our ongoing work on baselining and look to support the development of wider standards (outside of farm assurance) with the clear philosophy that AHDB's levy payers must have the potential to benefit from those standards. We will work with industry colleagues on the recommendations.</p> <p>This work is an integral part of our baselining pilot roll-out development work and the recommendations will be taken on forward through that activity and in partnership with others, such as the NFU. What should be included within Farm Assurance will depend on the role and purpose of that particular scheme.</p>
5. The inclusion of regulatory requirements within farm assurance standards and audits should be conditional on government and regulators agreeing a form of 'earned recognition'	<p>Streamlining regulatory burden is a potentially positive action and we broadly agree with the recommendations. However, implementation must be done with care and with the support of farmers.</p>

<p>6. There must be greater coordination in the way in which farm assurance operates across the UK nations</p>	<p>We agree with the principle and broad recommendations.</p> <p>Recommendation 6.1. Consider a new approach for combinable crops.</p> <p>AHDB will quickly undertake the work proposed in the recommendation to compare and contrast the schemes and wider standards. The AHDB sees it as crucial that all parts of the Cereal Sector agree on a way forward. We will help inform and facilitate that process in an appropriate and logical way.</p>
<p>7. Farm assurance schemes must better position the UK farming industry in world food markets and in competition with imported food</p>	<p>We support the recommendations.</p> <p>Where the recommendations refer to AHDB, we will carry out and publish standards comparisons work where the sector councils decide to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef & Lamb funded a suite of reports in 2024 • Pork and Dairy will consider proposals in their June council meetings • Cereals and Oilseeds Sector Council has agreed to carry out work. <p>We will share those with Government and work with them and the farming unions, supported by AHDB's Exports team.</p>
<p>8. All farm assurance schemes must review, and, where necessary, improve their methods of communication with the farming industry</p>	<p>We support this strategic recommendation.</p> <p>8.6 The ownership of Red Tractor. PRIORITY FOR AHDB</p>

	<p>We agree the owners of RT should show greater and more active leadership, to help shape its future direction and organisational culture. We are committed to working with our fellow owners to deliver this through the OB.</p>
<p>9. The RT scheme must complete the implementation of recommendations in the Campbell Tickell report</p>	<p>We agree with the strategic recommendation</p> <p>Recommendation 9.2 A formal assessment of changes to Red Tractor.</p> <p>We will work with the farming unions to deliver this.</p>