

## FQAS Participation Continues to Rise

Prior to the horsemeat incident which hit the headlines in January 2013, FQAS membership was on a slight decline of approximately 2% year on year. The aftermath of the horsemeat incident proved to be a very busy time within FQAS with applications and overall membership increasing dramatically. FQAS participation figures at 31 March 2013 were 9,654. By 31 March 2016 FQAS participation had increased by 2,701 participants. Currently there are 12,355 active participants of the FQAS.

In the last twelve months 727 applications have been received. There has been a lot of renewed interest from producers, especially dairy producers who have also recently joined the Red Tractor Assurance Dairy Scheme and those finishing cattle through the factories due to the financial penalty for non-FQAS

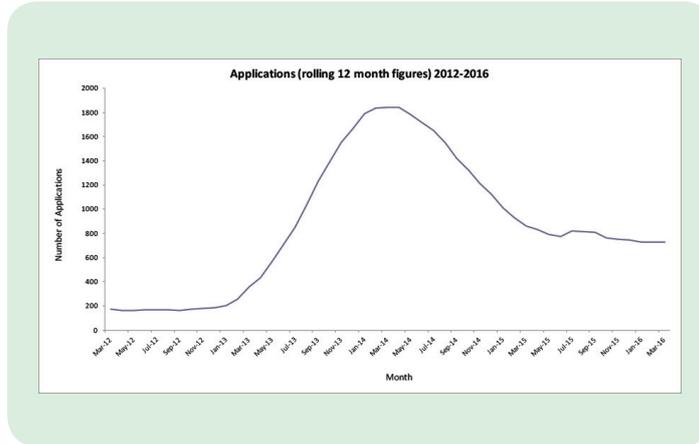


Figure 1

stock. Figure 1 shows the peak of applications in the months following the horsemeat incident. Applications are still being received on a daily basis and are still at a higher level than they were prior to the horsemeat incident. Whilst FQAS applications continue to be received and membership overall continues to increase, in the last number of months the scheme has also witnessed a number of withdrawals due to a number of businesses

amalgamating in response to DAERA's increased focus on associated herds.

Compliance within the scheme overall has seen a general improvement in the last number of years. In March 2013 approximately 81.1% of farms had non-conformances at inspection compared to March 2016 where the figure is now 73.1%. This equates to 26.9% of farms that had no non-conformances which is extremely encouraging and shows that FQAS is continuing to raise standards on farm.

The percentage of price reported prime cattle which are farm quality assured at time of slaughter is currently 99.6% (figure 2). This has increased steadily over the last number of years. When FQAS was launched in 1992, a mere 17.5% of price reported prime cattle

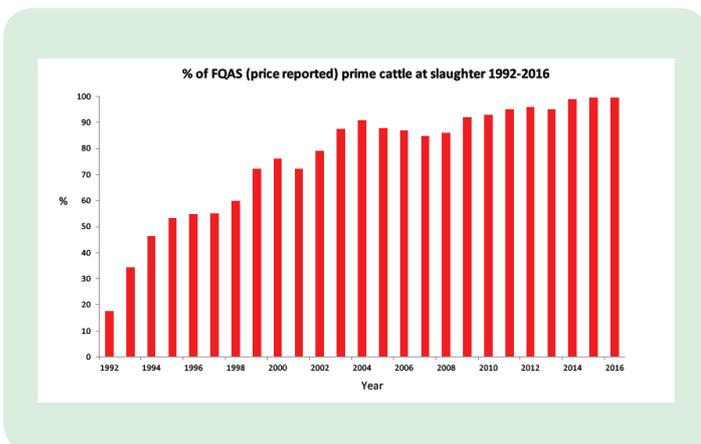


Figure 2

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were farm quality assured at slaughter.

Farm standards are reviewed on an ongoing basis and amendments are made where necessary with approval from the FQAS Standard Setting Committee which consists of a wide range of industry representatives with a wealth of knowledge and experience. A formal FQAS standards review takes place every three years.

As FQAS moves into celebrating 25 years in 2017, LMC would hope to see the scheme continuing to grow and compliance on farm continuing to improve.

# APHIS Online as a Herd Register and FQAS Inspections

FQAS participants may be aware that from 1 January 2016 it is now possible under Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 on Cattle Traceability, that herdkeepers have the option to avail of a derogation which permits the use of APHIS Online to maintain herd records. If herdkeepers choose to maintain an online herd register via APHIS Online they should ensure that they have read and understood the DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) Guidance on "Online Herd Registers for Cattle". The information below outlines how the new option to keep an online herd register will be catered for as part of FQAS and how inspectors will monitor compliance with DAERA's legislative requirements for online registers.

1. Before the FQAS inspection begins, the inspector will ask you which type of herd register you are keeping, for example, an online herd register (APHIS Online) or an on-farm herd register e.g. written herd book, DAERA approved software package, electronic spreadsheet etc.
2. If you are keeping an on-farm herd register the inspection will continue as normal. If you are keeping an online herd register you will need to give the inspector access to your current herd list in either electronic format (by viewing on a screen) or printed format. If you are aware that you will not be able to access APHIS Online during the inspection,

for example if an agent maintains the online herd register on your behalf, you should print a copy the day before the inspection.

3. If you cannot produce a current herd list from APHIS Online for inspection, then a non-conformance will be raised (this is consistent with the current procedure for on-farm herd registers if no herd records can be produced on the day of inspection).
4. As stated in the DAERA Guidance on "Online Herd Registers for Cattle" if FQAS participants choose to use APHIS Online as their herd register all **Births, Deaths and Movements must be recorded electronically** and be up to date. The inspector will ask to see evidence of the last movement. If an online herd register is used (APHIS online), the inspector will ask to see evidence of the latest electronic movement. If you have only recently started keeping an online register and the last movement is recorded in an on-farm herd register the inspector will ask to see MC2 documents and an up to date on farm register as per normal inspection procedure.

For further information regarding FQAS inspections call FQAS Helpline (028) 92633024. DAERA Guidance on "Online Herd Registers for Cattle" can be obtained via <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk>



## Update on the Use of Rodenticides

FQAS participants may be aware that from 1 April 2016, rodenticide products can only be purchased by:

- Farmers who have completed an approved training course and obtained a certificate
- Members of an approved farm assurance scheme (this will be an interim measure until the end of December 2017)

In December 2015 the CRRU (Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide use) published how the validation is expected to work on the ground. At present there is a form that can be used to verify assurance scheme

membership. The assurance scheme member must sign this form with name, address and membership number and they can nominate a purchaser/collector on their behalf. A guidance document is available at:

<http://www.thinkwildlife.org/rodenticide-stewardship-point-of-sale-controls-announced/>



## LMC Launch New TV Advertisement Promoting FQAS Beef and Lamb

LMC launched an exciting new TV advertisement in June 2016 with the tagline 'Flavour Your Life'. The new creative seeks to showcase FQAS beef and lamb as versatile, quick and easy to cook and a nutritious meal solution that all of the family can enjoy. Prior to making the ad, LMC's research showed that housekeepers and parents wanted a meal solution that children will eat and enjoy whilst fitting in with a busy and active family life. Lamb especially is perceived to be particularly challenging to incorporate into weekly meal plans and is sometimes overlooked because of preconceptions that it is too fatty or too expensive.

The new ad helps to communicate that in fact beef and lamb can be used as part of a quick and simple meal solution that children and families can enjoy. The ad highlights how beef and lamb satisfies the needs of active individuals and families.

The ad runs frequently throughout the months of June, July and August and then runs less frequently in to the New Year. This is complemented by outdoor and online activity with artwork strategically placed outside retail outlets across Northern Ireland. Ads will also be placed on social media to target this ever growing market. This activity of course contributes to Northern Ireland's Year of Food and Drink and helps celebrate everything that is good about our local FQAS beef and lamb.



## Livestock Event 2016 - Free to Attend!



This years Livestock Event will be held at the NEC, Birmingham on 6 & 7 July.

Visitors can log on to [www.livestockevent.co.uk](http://www.livestockevent.co.uk) to pre-register for a FREE ticket.

There will be over 350 trade stands and the following live demonstrations and seminars providing you with sound practical advice to take home and implement next day on the farm.

**Beef Arena:** exploring measuring and monitoring, handling and EID kit

**Forage Field:** making more from grazed forages; minimising ensiled losses

**Foot trimming:** knife or grinder to deliver quality not quantity

**Livestock Learning:** with topical tips from award winning beef and sheep producers

**Machinery demonstrations:** making more informed decisions on mixer wagons, loaders, cubicle bedders and straw choppers.

## FQAS teams up with the Farm Safety Partnership Affiliate Scheme



LMC have recently had a successful application to become an affiliate member of the Farm Safety Partnership. Becoming a Farm Safety Partnership Affiliate shows that LMC clearly supports the aims of the

Farm Safety Partnership in Northern Ireland, which exists to reduce accidents on farms and protect farming lives.

Many of the codes in the FQAS standard have important farm safety elements to them

including requirements to have access to suitable well maintained animal handling facilities, stockpersons being competent to perform common veterinary operations and procedures (such as disbudding and castration), safe storage of animal manures etc. Through follow-up to monitoring of non-conformances arising at inspections and in our

other direct engagements with scheme members we will be happy to look at opportunities where we could feature farm safety issues more prominently through correspondence, newsletters and our farm liaison service.

LMC is committed through the affiliate scheme to promoting safety on farm and protecting farmers and farm families.

## Butchers Update

The FQAS Butchers Licencing Scheme has been in operation for a number of years with the number of licenced butchers increasing dramatically following the horsemeat incident in 2013. LMC have made a number of small changes to the Butchers Licencing Scheme over the last few years to strengthen the scheme and ensure it is robust and fit for purpose. This has included introducing

butchers inspections for licence holders and asking for evidence of FQAS traceability to prove that the butcher is selling FQAS beef and lamb in their shops. In the aftermath of the horsemeat incident the number of FQAS licenced butchers had increased to 148. In 2015/16, there were 65 local butchers licenced to use the FQAS logo on farm quality assured beef and lamb. The drop in licenced butchers was mainly down to butchers not supplying the correct information to verify the FQAS claims within their

shops. LMC is also aware that currency fluctuations may result in an increased amount of beef and lamb being imported or being sourced from the Republic of Ireland where we do not operate equivalence of farm assurance schemes and therefore is ineligible to carry the FQAS logo. In response to this LMC was tasked by the FQAS Industry Board to meet with butchers across NI to discuss the current FQAS Butchers Licencing Scheme and to seek feedback as to whether butchers see value in this



continuing. LMC met with various butcher groups from across NI and are in the process of reviewing the feedback with the intention to provide recommendations to the FQAS Industry Board regarding the future of the Butchers Licencing Scheme.

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