



CRIB SHEET

New Cattle & Sheep Quality Assurance Standards

1 April 2022

Further to the recent changes in our standards we have detailed below information to help you deal with any questions that you may receive.

KEY POINTS

The QMS Cattle and Sheep standards underpin the Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI brands and are there to provide assurance to consumers that all meat that they purchase is from animals who have been respectively raised to high welfare standards.

The standards are fully reviewed every 2 years by the QMS standards setting body which is comprised of key people from the sector including farmers, processors, National Farmers Union Scotland, Food Standards Scotland and representatives from auction marts and vets.

- The summary sheet that we issued with the standards detailed 48 changes to the standards, of these 4 are new standards, 2 are changes from what were recommendations in the existing standards to a full standard in the new standards and the rest are small changes in wording to explain better what the standard means. The difference between a recommendation and a full standard is as follows: - A recommendation is an area where we share good practice and gives an indication of where the future direction of standards could go and encourages members to prepare for this potential change of direction. A full standard requires compliance to robustly protect the integrity of the scheme

The 2 recommendations that have changed to a standard are: -

3.4. Annual livestock Health and Welfare review must be undertaken by nominated vet or vet practice.

8.1 Cleaning and disinfecting facilities must be available for use on-farm.

The 4 new standards are as follows:-

4.4 When using Highest Priority Critically Important Antibiotics (HP-CIA) (i.e. those belonging to Category B 'Restrict', as defined by the European Medicines Agency), it must only be as a last resort, under veterinary direction.

10.4 Fixed fuel tanks must be bunded and spillages prevented from entering watercourses.

10.5 Manure management plan must be kept and followed when applying manures and/or slurries to land.

10.15 If manufactured fertilisers and organic manures are applied to land: They must be applied in a manner that minimises the risk of contamination and pollution. Manufactured fertiliser equipment must be checked at least annually to ensure accurate application. Any applications must be in ways which prevent the pollution of waterways, air, soil and wildlife habitats.

The main questions we are receiving are around standard 3.4. Annual livestock Health and Welfare review must be undertaken by nominated vet or vet practice.

What is the impact?

- Health planning has long been considered a useful way of proactively managing livestock health and welfare, equipping farmers to avoid disease pitfalls and optimise productivity. Veterinary input helps to ensure such plans are robust, effective, and strategic, and supports farmers with current best practice in areas such as antibiotic stewardship. In line with other UK assurance schemes, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) introduced a requirement for veterinary review of health plans in 2020 but offered a two-year dispensation to allow time for affected farmers to incorporate this into their practice.
- In line with other UK assurance schemes, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) introduced a requirement for annual veterinary visits to member holdings in 2020. This visit can take place for clinical reasons, and is not necessarily specific to the health plan, so if the vet attends for any reason during the year this would satisfy the standard. A dispensation was offered to allow time for affected members to incorporate this into their practice, with the requirement being implemented from 1st April 2022.

The vet does not have to visit specifically to carry out the health plan. If the vet visits anyway, it can be carried out then.

Other questions we are often asked

Why are legal requirements in our standards?

Legal requirements are included within our standards to ensure QMS is covering off legal due diligence. There is no recourse on these legally if there is an issue, and this can be a good way to ensure that your business is prepared should it receive a SEPA or SGRPID unannounced inspection.

What is the difference between a standard and a recommendation?

- A standard requires compliance to robustly protect the integrity of the scheme
- A recommendation is an indication of the future direction of standards and guiding members to prepare for this potential change of direction

QMS Road Shows

QMS is always here to listen and work with you to make the process and change easier to manage. Following two years of Covid-19 restrictions, QMS is planning a comprehensive programme of face-to-face engagement following the busy lambing and calving period. This will include specific farmers meetings, and attendance at summer agricultural shows. This is a great opportunity for us to engage and support our members.

Contact Us

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kathryn Kerr Head of Brands Integrity at QMS. Kkerr@qmscotland.co.uk