BVA and BVPA response to Red Tractor 2021 standards review

Who we are

1) The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom. With over 18,000 members, our primary aim is to represent, support and champion ry profession. We therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health, animal welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.

2) The British Veterinary Poultry Association (BVPA) is an active non-territorial division of the British Veterinary Association. The objective of the BVPA is to further the knowledge of its members, who are drawn from academia, research, government, commerce and practice, by holding educational and technical meetings. The Association also offers objective science-based advice and comment on issues affecting its members and the poultry industry in general

3) to make sustainable and ethically informed choices about the food products they buy and the impact of these products on animal health and welfare.

4) The veterinary profession carries out an important and multifaceted role in the development, implementation and continuous review of farm assurance scheme standards. Veterinary professionals are involved across the farm assurance process, from establishing and evaluating the standards that farm assurance schemes require, to developing veterinary health plans with farmers to promote compliance, high standards of animal health and welfare, environmental sustainability, and facilitating cost-effective stockmanship and husbandry practices.

5) In addition, the veterinary profession has a key role to play in informing and educating the public with regard to the value and provenance of animal derived food. As such, BVA has a responsibility to assist members to understand different farm assurance schemes and to signpost the public, in a professional and ethically justifiable way, towards those that promote higher animal health and welfare. With this in mind, we have developed our #

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We strongly support this standard. However it is important to emphasise that there should be an allowance for metaphylaxis in order to safeguard the health and welfare of birds. For example, if there is a parent flock health issue that is affecting the chicks, not treating the chicks in this situation would compromise their welfare.

AH.10.5.b -Testing records with date of testing; result of testing are retained for at least 5 years and communicated to the hatchery; a positive test will be considered to be a field strain infection unless laboratory testing on the isolated Mycoplasma shows this is caused by a vaccine strain

BVPA members have concerns about the impact on small companies of having to destroy a Mycoplasma gallisepticum parent flock. Many affected flocks can go on to have healthy progeny when correctly managed. It was pointed out that Mycoplasma strains vary in pathogenicity and some Mycoplasma synoviae strains can be more pathogenic than Mycoplasma gallisepticum. If Mycoplasma free parent flocks are to be achieved then ideally the industry would work to ascertain the prevalence of Mycoplasma gallisepticum and Mycoplasma synoviae in the industry then work with veterinary colleagues to create an eradication programme.

Proposed changes to turkey standards

15) Below are BVPA comments on some of the specific standard changes that have been proposed for turkey and additional comments on some of the standards more widely:

We note that the standards stipulate temperate checks are carried out twice a week. However to be compliant with Summaries of Product Characteristics (SPCs) and conditions of use, temperature loggers and alarms are also required.

There is mention of adhering to meat withdrawal times, however there should also be mention of egg withdrawal times for breeding stock.

There is an assumption made that 50% of used water is for bathing, we would welcome clarification as to the evidence used to underpin this statement.