

FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN QUALITY SCHEMES AND BRANDING

Q1 Should AHDB invest levy payers money to promote the quality and standards of its sector products?

BPC cannot comment

Q2 *Does there need to be a rationalisation of existing quality marks?*

This has in effect occurred with the two main poultry sector quality schemes. The Assured Chicken Production scheme was the first to carry the Assured Food Standards (AFS) Red Tractor Logo (RTL) and the RTL has achieved high levels of recognition with chicken buyers compared with any other quality mark on chicken. The Quality British Turkey scheme has also joined with AFS, aligning its standards and accreditations to carry the RTL after seven years operating under its own single scheme logo. The RTL is widely accepted by the retailers. BPC would not wish to see an alternative generic quality mark established for AHDB products which would undermine the standing and potential power of Assured Foods Standards and the RTL.

Q3 *Should AHDB invest levy funds to promote uptake within the industry, police the proper use of a mark and build consumer awareness about the quality and standards of all sector products? (The cost of this is estimated to be about £0.5M pa to AHDB and would be apportioned back to AHDB sector organisations).*

This suggests that AHDB is establishing a new generic quality mark to cover all AHDB products, and the funding is required to administer a new mark from scratch. BPC would not welcome such an approach as mentioned in Q2. Instead, we favour AHDB sectors aligning their quality schemes with AFS and carrying the RTL. In doing this it is essential that the independence and integrity of AFS remain intact. It is also essential that the interests of non-AHDB sectors already within the RTL scheme are not subverted, diminished, or adversely constrained by AHDB investing in the RTL scheme.

Q4 *If levy payer money was to be invested, should AHDB*

Create a new scheme?

It would be better economics and sounder marketing to invest in and further strengthen the existing AFS generic approach and the RTL, than to establish a rival logo from scratch.

Adopt the Red Tractor Logo (RTL) scheme as it is now?

Integrate existing standards in the beef and sheep sectors into the RTL scheme?

BPC cannot comment

Q5 *In your sector, which products or market segments do you believe would best benefit from the promotion of quality characteristics (either general quality characteristics common to your sector and other sectors or one's specific to your sector)? Would you support levy payers' money being invested in this promotion?*

BPC would wish the possibility to promote British chicken and British turkey carrying the RTL logo to be preserved even if a generic all-sector promotional campaign were to be funded by AHDB levy payers

Q6 *If in your view, no products in your sector would benefit from promoting such a scheme (beyond a baseline investment outlined in Question 3) would you accept other AHDB sectors working together at a sector level on such a scheme through AHDB?*

BPC cannot comment.

Q7 *Do you support levy funded investment even though this will mean that EU guidelines for promotion would need to be observed by all parties participating in the scheme throughout the supply chain even where private funds were invested?*

While BPC can see the merits of AHDB aligning its sector quality schemes and standards to the AFS RTL, and benefit in greater generic promotion of the RTL, we are concerned that such investment of AHDB levy-payers' funds in the RTL scheme would mean that all parties participating in the scheme and using the RTL logo would have to observe the EU guidelines for promotion throughout the supply chain. This would include promotion of the Assured Chicken Production and Quality British Turkey schemes.

This would mean that the origin of British chicken and British turkey carrying the RTL could only be a secondary message to the quality message in any promotion, even promotion privately funded wholly by the chicken and turkey industry, or by individual companies, using the RTL. This would be a change in the status of the "contract" between RTL member companies and AFS. The two non-AHDB poultry schemes would lose the present right to overtly promote the Britishness of their products.

However, in practice this loss may have little real impact on the effectiveness of any future poultry promotions, and such sector promotions should benefit from the greater synergy and the considerable generic promotional momentum of a co-ordinated, AHDB-resourced AFS RTL scheme.