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**FARM ASSURANCE DELIVERS ON ANIMAL WELFARE**

Red Tractor Farm Assurance schemes have been operating for well over a decade and are designed to make sure that good standards of animal health and welfare are achieved on UK livestock farms. Now an independent report proves that they deliver.

The report, 'Does membership of Farm Assurance Schemes affect compliance with Animal Welfare Legislation and Codes', was commissioned by Defra and completed by researchers at the University of Warwick. It was based on five years worth of routine inspection data (covering 38,000 farm inspections) from Animal Health, the government inspection agency. These inspections rate the farmer's compliance with legislation and welfare codes, and the researchers made a detailed statistical analysis to discover whether assured farms had a better level of compliance. The results were extremely positive. The difference between assured farms and those not in the schemes was significant, and on average compliance was twice as good.

David Clarke, Chief Executive of the Red Tractor scheme welcomed the report as good news for livestock producers and good news for consumers.

He said: "This research provides independent scientific evidence that the industry's farm assurance schemes do exactly what they set out to do by improving the standards of compliance with animal welfare rules.

For consumers, the report shows that they really can rely upon the Red Tractor mark which appears on billions of packs of meat, poultry and dairy products every year. The Red Tractor is not only a signpost to high standards of farming and safe food, but it is now a proven indicator of good welfare compliance.

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**Notes to editors**

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- Defra published the report - Does membership of Farm Assurance Schemes affect compliance with Animal Welfare Legislation and Codes - on 24 November 2010
- The report looked at farms certified by one of 10 UK farm assurance schemes (each covering a particular livestock enterprise or region of the UK), or by one of five organic certification bodies.
- All the Red Tractor livestock schemes were included in the study.

- One objective of the report was to assess whether certified assured farms could be considered lower priority for official inspections. The conclusion was that they could. The Red Tractor scheme will continue to work with the government and the industry to make sure that this opportunity to avoid duplicate inspections is taken.
- The flag in the Red Tractor logo guarantees the origin of the food. So the Union Jack flag tells you that the product has been farmed, processed and packed in the UK.
- Red Tractor standards are maintained all the way from farm to pack. All Red Tractor farmers, processors and packers are regularly inspected by independent experts who conduct thousands of audits each year offering consumers total transparency and traceability.