

The newsletter of the Trade Assurance Scheme for Combinable Crops

Inside

- Changes to the TASCC codes
- A day in the life of a TASCC inspector
- Mutual recognition agreed between PDV and AIC
- How to ensure internal cleaning products pass TASCC inspections
- Update on Mycotoxins
- New TASCC lorry stickers proving popular



New figures reveal 92% of TASCC participants rate scheme as 'excellent or good' in improving food and feed safety

The latest TASCC feedback survey shows that 92% of participants rate the scheme as 'excellent or good' in improving food and feed safety.

Commenting on the results, Garry Rudd, TASCC Technical Manager, said: "The results are very encouraging and show that TASCC delivers real feed and food safety benefits to the customer and industry."

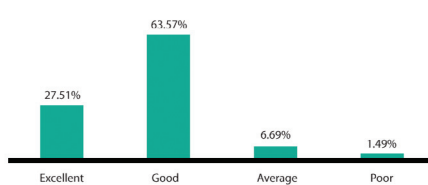
Nearly 70% of respondents agreed that the codes met both customer and legislative requirements; while 85% said the codes were 'excellent or good' in terms of being easy to understand.

The feedback form is presented to the TASCC participant at the end of the audit and is found to be a much better method of obtaining participant's views than postal surveys.

The information allows AIC to track acceptance of new codes while keeping in contact with participants. This year there were more than 260 responses to the questionnaire, which was originally introduced in August 2005.

The graphs can be found on the TASCC pages of the AIC website.

How well does TASCC succeed in improving food/feed safety?



Changes to TASCC codes

Following the annual TASCC review, the new TASCC codes come into force on 1st July 2009. There have been a number of important changes.

The scheme manual now includes information on the ordering and use of TASCC passport stickers and "P" or Production stickers. "Production only" or "P" stickers can only be used by farmers up to the 30th September, or four weeks after harvest, whichever is the later.

Haulage: F1 – sub-contractors will be subject to more rigorous inspections by TASCC participants following any incident in which animal feed is potentially contaminated by a sub-contracted haulier transporting meat and bone meal in vehicles which also carried feed. In addition, 30% of all sub-contractors used will have to be audited by the inspection body.

Storage: E4 – this section now states the frequency of temperature checks of crops can be based on using a risk assessment. **E7.1** – Requirement and guidance in relation to drying equipment and fuel used.

Merchants: E1 – guidance on suppliers and sub contractors.

E4 – new section relating to the use of Cargo Superintendent subcontractors used for imports and exports.

Finally, the testing section will include:

Appendix 2 – A list of approved providers in the Proficiency (Ring) Testing scheme which provides an independent check that the testing facility is achieving a consistent level of results that are in line with others performing the same analysis.

Work has also been carried out on a new AIC International Trading Module which will be introduced later this year. It is envisaged that this voluntary module would aid the import and export of combinable crops and bolt on to the existing AIC schemes.

If you would like to review the codes they can be viewed on the AIC website at:

<http://www.agindustries.org.uk/content.output/94/94/Trade%20Assurance/Trade%20Assurance%20Schemes/TASCC.msp>

The revised codes will be published in June.



Northern Ireland stores training

AIC, along with audit body, Integra, carried out a training day in December for six new TASCC auditors based in Northern Ireland.

The training day was held at the Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification (NIFCC) offices in Lisburn. The group went through the new codes and carried out exercises relating to traceability. Courses similar to this one are held once a year but auditors are briefed regularly if there are any changes to the codes or legislation.

New TASCC lorry stickers proving popular



In response to requests from TASCC participants, lorry stickers are now available for hauliers to show their vehicles are part of the scheme.

However, the sticker should not be seen as a sign of conformity and that is still the function of the TASCC certificate. Also, there is no obligation upon TASCC participants to display a sticker.

AIC will supply up to nine stickers free of charge but additional ones are 75 pence each including postage and packing.

Further details: garry.rudd@agindustries.org.uk

A day in the life of a TASCC inspector

Mandy Lucas is the Managing Director of Integra Food Secure Ltd, and has been carrying out TASCC audits for six years. She has also been involved in reviewing the 2009/10 TASCC codes.

I start the day with a family-run business operating one tractor unit and tipping trailer. The inspection starts in the kitchen with a stack of folders and the confirmation fax. A participant that has prepared for the inspection; a good start to the day!

The TASCC folder has been received and put to good use, holding all the application forms, renewals, TASCC CoPs and reference documents. So much time is saved by them all being in one place.

Invoices are in numerical order and are easily available for the past nine months. I check through and select loads at random while my host finds the supporting paperwork. We then look for cleaning records. I am lucky as this participant has been a member of TASCC for many years and while I have not visited before, they are familiar with our process and know exactly what we need next.

After completing the paperwork inspection I set off for my second inspection of the day.

And, no, I haven't forgotten the trailer, I will find that waiting for me in the yard of my next host. They have got together to arrange the inspection and ensure their vehicles are available but off the road for as short a period as possible. Two inspections and a clean sheet so far. A good feeling for all concerned.

After the second inspection I head to a new scheme participant wanting to add crops and feed materials to the range of commodities carried. They have yet to carry any feed materials and know very little about the scheme.

However, they have visited the AIC website and collated a recording method using all the templates. My role here is very different, explaining the reasons for requirements and how the scheme rules are applied in practice.

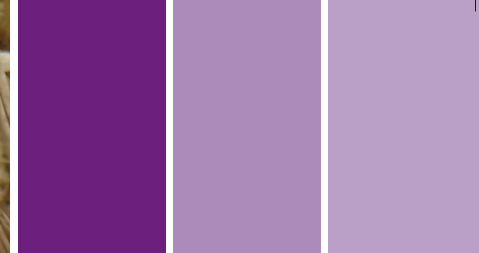
There is very little to inspect at this stage, other than their readiness to comply. Four trailers were bought as new over the past five years. There is no evidence that they have been used to carry materials on the exclusion list.

However another trailer was purchased second hand and while they know the

previous operator only carried coal, there is no evidence. It is likely that this trailer will not be admitted to the scheme, unless further evidence can be found.

But with four trailers, it is still a viable project so the application can be progressed. As usual, the need for TASCC is now an urgent one, so we finish all the paperwork and ensure the envelope hits the post before last collection. Hopefully they can get their corrective action in place quickly and become approved before the end of the week.





Mutual recognition agreed between PDV and AIC

The mutual recognition schemes agreed between AIC and The Product Board Animal Feed (PDV) in the Netherlands will help achieve free movement of goods and eradicate duplicate audits.

PDV's scheme, GMP+ (Good Manufacturing Practice + HACCP), is focused on the safety of feed products and services for the whole feed chain. Ten thousand feed companies in about 65 countries worldwide have their products and services certified in accordance with the GMP+ scheme.

John Kelley, AIC's Chief Operating Officer, said: "This mutual recognition between PDV and AIC will be a welcome development for participants from both schemes in the UK and the rest of Europe. AIC fully support the free movement of goods and the eradication of duplicate audits and this initiative ticks both these boxes."

Johan Den Hartog, Managing Director of PDV said: "I am very happy with this mutual recognition, because it proves that both schemes are based on the same principles of feed safety assurance and the approach of certification. Harmonisation of feed safety assurance is important to create a level playing field regarding this issue, which will contribute to feed safety assurance at a high level."



TASCC exclusion and sensitive lists

There is concern within the industry from end users that some hauliers are carrying aggregates or stone which contain bitumen (tar chips and tarmac planings).

Bituminous products are found on the TASCC Exclusion list (Appendix 1) as they are not responsive to normal detergent cleaning and

because of the carcinogenic properties of bitumen, these can be detrimental to food and feed safety. Therefore they must not be carried by a TASCC haulier.

A haulier can risk the exclusion of a trailer from the TASCC scheme if the wrong material is carried. If you are in doubt,

you must obtain a data sheet and contact either Garry Rudd at AIC on 01733 385274 or Martin Jowett at PAI on 01423 878878.

TASCC haulage pilot aims to improve cost effectiveness

A new cost-effective approach to delivering TASCC assurance is currently being investigated by PAI/Integra.

The industry accepts that one of the main costs is having a TASCC haulage vehicle idle at the time of the assessment. PAI/Integra has therefore conducted a pilot where the auditor inspects the vehicle while it is waiting to be loaded or unloaded at a mill or any other delivery or collection point.

Inspections have been well received by drivers and haulage companies.

The next stage in the pilot programme is to collate all office documentation to cover the TASCC administrative requirements.

For further information contact Martin Jowett on 01423 878878.

Revised Salmonella codes due out in summer

The consultation period for the revised Salmonella codes closed on the 30th January 2009.

Following on from comments Defra has received, it is likely that the new codes will be issued as one document in late summer. Until then, TASCC participants must still refer to the latest Salmonella code of practice (see link below). AIC will keep you fully informed of any further developments.

For more information visit:
www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/zoonoses/salmonella-cop.htm



How to ensure internal cleaning products pass TASCC inspections

A common non-conformance in TASCC inspections is the lack of evidence that chemicals used for internal cleaning are suitable under TASCC requirements. Quoting the Defra approved list is not acceptable.

This information is most likely to be detailed on the chemical container label so it is important not to decant any product into another container. Alternatively, it will be in the product information sheet. It is worth remembering that these details are rarely found in the datasheet provided to satisfy COSHH requirements.

There are three questions the inspector is looking for answers to:

- 1) Does the product have cleaning properties?
- 2) Does the product have disinfecting properties?
- 3) Does the manufacturer recommend the product for use on food contact surfaces?

Below are some examples of descriptions used on products with the words or phrases that inspectors specifically look for underlined:

- Antibacterial, deep cleaning, for food, beverage and agricultural vehicles.
- For infection control in the food industry. Can be used... for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Broad spectrum biocidal cleaner and sanitiser for use on aluminium and stainless steel. Powerful detergent and caustic sanitiser. Suitable for use in food processing.
- Hard surface sanitising detergent. Non staining and non tainting for cleaning and sanitising of all surfaces and equipment in canteens, public houses...food premises.
- Combined detergent sanitiser, suitable for use on food contact surfaces.
- Effective food safe residual sanitiser, ideal for cleaning food vehicles. Kills bacteria.

How to order your TASCC passport stickers

There has been confusion from some participants over ordering Grain passport stickers.

New TASCC Storage scheme participants are entitled to 500 stickers free of charge on completion and return of action points and payment after the initial audit. The participant must make contact with AIC so that the stickers can be ordered and dispatched.



Existing participants have to purchase new stickers for each new scheme year. Please note that stickers are not automatically sent after the TASCC audit.

TASCC participants must also be aware that due to the increased amounts of surplus grain from last year, TASCC stickers from a TASCC store must relate to the movement year not the crop year.

Please contact Garry Rudd for further information on 01733 385274 or email garry.rudd@agindustries.org.uk. To order more stickers, contact Nick Palik at AIC on 01733 385250 or email nick.palik@agindustries.org.uk

Update on Mycotoxins

Since 1st February 2009 there has been a general requirement from flour mills for all loads to have a DON (Deoxynivalenol) test result which is applicable to the load in question.

As a result there has been considerable testing of lots on-farm prior to intake. But problems continue to arise and anomalies in both sampling and testing remain with considerable cost consequences.

Over the next few months work is continuing to address these issues in time for harvest '09, although it is clear from work being done both in the EU and globally, that accurate sampling for mycotoxins, because of the lack of even distribution throughout a bulk, remains problematic.

It is also important to note that HGCA funded work continues on updating the risk assessment, particularly in relation to weather data and the industry is looking to work towards much more detailed and local weather information to help pinpoint those geographic areas most at risk.

Coupled with the reporting of post-harvest test information on a postcode basis this should provide a more comprehensive early season picture than has previously been possible.

For further information contact:

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