

## **Assured Food Standards**

**Managing and promoting assurance for the food industry**



**Appointment of a new Chair**

**Information for candidates**

**[www.redtractor.org.uk](http://www.redtractor.org.uk)**

## **Background:**

Assured Food Standards (AFS) is an independent body owned<sup>1</sup> by the UK food chain charged with managing and promoting assurance on behalf of the food industry. AFS develops standards, particularly for primary production, and promotes their use through the food chain and to consumers using the Red Tractor mark. AFS was constituted in its current form in 2003 in response to the recommendations of the Curry Commission Report on the future of Food and Farming.

The technical standards embrace food safety, animal welfare, elements of environmental protection and the traceability of the product through the food chain. Regular independent inspections ensure conformance. All stakeholders participate in the development of the standards and the scheme provides a basis for buyer “due diligence” without the need for duplicating schemes and inspections. The commodity sectors covered by the standards are Produce, Cereal Crops, Beef & Lamb, Dairy, Poultry and Pigs and the standards cover 65 to 95% of UK agricultural production depending on the sector.

Launched in 2000, the Red Tractor logo is used to differentiate quality assured product and to communicate the values of responsible food production to consumers and give them confidence in the origin of their food. The Red Tractor logo is intended to provide a single, cross sector “kitemark”, complementing and underpinning retailer and manufacturer brands but avoiding the confusion from multiple logos and claims.

The logo is used extensively in food retail and use has now extended to major brands and food service. There are now 485 licensees using the logo in respect of food with an annual retail sales value of over £8 billion.

AFS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee. Its principal sources of income to fund its activities are member royalties and licence fees and these amount to c. £1.3m pa. In January of this year the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (a statutory levy body) agreed in principle to provide financial support for Red Tractor marketing and communications activities. It is expected that this income (£500k pa) will be received from October 2009 onwards subject to State Aids approval.

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<sup>1</sup> British Retail Consortium; Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board; Dairy UK; National Farmers Union and Ulster Farmers Union with Food and Drink Federation having observer status.

## **Requirement for a new Chair**

The existing Chair, Mr Colin Smith, will have completed the two three year terms of office, which is the maximum permitted under the company's Articles of Association, in November 2009 and will be standing down at that time.

The Ownership Body of AFS, which represents the organisation's key food industry stakeholders, is now seeking to appoint a Chair to succeed Mr Smith. It is intended that the new Chair will be appointed to the Board of AFS around the end of September 2009 and become Chair on 1st December 2009.

## **Job Specification**

The Chair will be independent and non-executive. However, because of the nature of the organisation, close and consistent engagement with the substance of the company's activities will be essential.

The principle elements of the Chair's role will be as follows:

### **1. Chair the Ownership Body and Board:**

- Ensure open and balanced discussion of issues and enable all Ownership Body and Board members to make a full contribution to decisions about the organisation's affairs.
- Ensure that the Ownership Body and the Board and its Committees are properly serviced by the Executive and provided with the necessary information and data on which to base their decisions.
- Ensure proper standards of corporate governance, including risk management and proper financial control.

In addition to the Ownership Body and the Board, it is expected that the Chair will also attend meetings of board committees, e.g. Standards, Marketing & Communications, Audit, Remuneration, and Nominations.

2. Lead the development of strategy and policy consistent with the objectives set by the Ownership Body and ensure that these are properly reflected in each year's activity and financial plan. Together with other directors, review performance and report on this to the Ownership Body.

3. With the Chief Executive and the Board, maintain and oversee engagement and communication with key stakeholders to actively represent the company and its aims – including promotion of the Red Tractor – to farmers, processors, retailers, wholesalers and food service

operators, consumers, government and a wide range of interested organisations.

4. Agree the objectives of the Chief Executive to reflect the delivery of the agreed activity and financial plan and review his performance.

The Chair is expected to spend about one day a week (50 days a year) on company business.

**Person specification:**

This is a high profile, demanding and complex post, which requires the following experience and personal characteristics:

1. A person of stature with previous experience and accountability at Board/Chair level.
2. Good knowledge of the food supply chain but with sufficient detachment to be seen as independent by all the major stakeholders of AFS.
3. Commercially minded and comfortable with dealing with issues around ensuring that the organisation's assurance standards develop to meet market requirements, whilst at the same time securing sustainable production.
4. Experience at dealing with government, representative bodies across the food supply chain and bodies representing consumer interests and reconciling their different interests.

**Remuneration:**

A fee of c. £30,000 will be paid, together with out of pocket expenses

**Application and selection:**

If you would like to apply for this position, please send:

- Your CV; and
- A covering letter briefly setting out why you are interested in applying and how your background and experience demonstrate your suitability for the post

Your application should be sent to Bal Jacob ([Bal.Jacob@nfu.org.uk](mailto:Bal.Jacob@nfu.org.uk)), the Head of HR at the National Farmers Union, who is facilitating the arrangements for this appointment on behalf of the Ownership Body.

It is expected that a selection panel drawn from the Ownership Body will interview an initial list of candidates in mid June and the Ownership Body will interview a final shortlist of around three candidates in early July. There will be an opportunity for shortlisted candidates to meet with the CEO of AFS before the final interview.

### **Data Protection and Equal Opportunities:**

AFS will provide equality of opportunity to all job applicants and will not discriminate either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origins, sex, sexual orientation, religion or spiritual belief, marital status, age or disability.

Any details provided in the form of a CV may be copied for use during the recruitment process. Once the process is complete the data will be stored for 12 months and then destroyed. If you are the successful candidate, relevant information may be taken from your CV and used as part of your personnel record.