

It's all about

Consumer Confidence



The essential guide to the Quality Standard Mark Scheme with your questions answered.



Tough standards. Tender results.

Protect your business and enhance your reputation.

The Quality Standard Mark

Scheme benefits:

- Farm Assurance
- Quality Assurance
- Guaranteed Eating Quality
- Independently Inspected Supply Chain
- Traceable Back To The Farm

Laura Bishop, EBLEX Marketing Manager (Quality Schemes), explains why the Quality Standard Mark Scheme for beef and lamb has remained robust during the recent crisis. Here, Laura details the scheme's key benefits and tackles some of the questions she is asked about it by independent butchers, retailers and caterers.



"The Quality Standard Mark Scheme for beef and lamb was developed to address key consumer concerns about the eating quality of red meat, such as succulence and tenderness. Yet, recent events have focused the public gaze on the need for total product integrity throughout the beef and lamb supply chain.

"The recent crisis has given EBLEX a unique opportunity to strengthen the consumer perception that Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb offers something special because we can make assurances of traceability and provenance.

"If you are a retailer or a caterer, we can help you to convey this story to your customers through our marketing support, point-of-sale material and via our web-based tools and resources.

"The Quality Standard Mark Scheme continually evolves and reacts to market research. It is resilient and can address consumer concerns head on. The standards and specifications for Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb guarantee eating quality, which in turn delivers a purchasing preference from consumers."



"How do you assure Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb comes from English or British farms?"

"Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb is assured from farm to point-of-purchase, providing total product integrity. The whole supply chain (abattoir, supplier, distributor, retailer, foodservice outlet) needs to be signed up to the scheme in order to use the Quality Standard Mark and are independently audited.

"The mark carries two distinct logos and these indicate origin. If the livestock have come from quality assured farms in England, the flag of St George is displayed. If the livestock have come from quality assured farms in Britain the Union flag is used."



"What about the eating quality of Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb? Red meat is expensive and must deliver as far as the consumer is concerned."

"We take the eating quality of Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb extremely seriously. Our scheme standards stipulate carcass grades covering fat class and conformation. This in turn provides consistent product and higher meat yielding carcasses.

"In addition to this, our specifications cover animal age, gender, maturation and chilling regimes for beef and lamb as well as additional processing specifications for lamb in relation to seasonality.

"These additional specifications, underpinned by extensive research guarantee the eating quality of beef and lamb, which is absolutely vital in helping retailers and caterers to build consumer confidence."

"What about feeds, diet, drugs and food safety issues and is animal welfare given a high profile within the scheme?"

"By using farm assurance as a prerequisite, the scheme covers this and beyond. There are strict standards on the farm covering welfare, veterinary drugs, feeds and care for the environment.

"You can be confident that Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb delivers and that the scheme champions food safety and the sustainability of our farming industry."

Scheme for beef and lamb

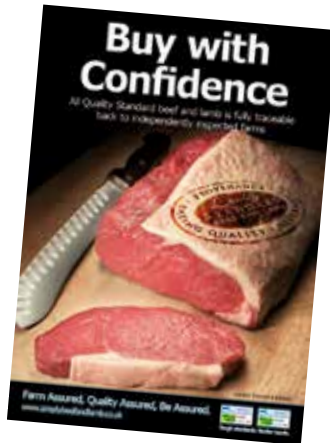
“How does the scheme protect consumers from issues such as the recent problem with supply chain integrity?”

“We cannot totally protect consumers and suppliers from fraudulent or criminal activity.

“However, we do our best to champion the integrity of the industry. We independently inspect every aspect of the supply chain for traceability and provenance.

“Paperwork is checked to ascertain where livestock have been farmed and that farmers and processors are accredited with a qualifying quality assurance scheme.

“We have just started to trial DNA testing of Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb products in order to further add confidence in the scheme's integrity.”



“How do you keep improving your offering?”

“We never stand still because we are committed to the sustainability of the farming industry. This can only be achieved if consumers are satisfied with the beef and lamb they have paid for. Otherwise, they will vote with their feet and not return to repeat purchase.

“We currently have a couple of projects in the pipeline and are researching a lamb mince specification to complement our existing beef mince and beef burger specifications. The new standards will cover ingredients, quality of product and fat content.

“We are also looking into developing a premium Quality Standard Mark for beef in order to help us continually undertake product development and address food safety concerns.”

“Who is in the scheme and where can consumers buy Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb?”

“Consumers can find Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb at their local retailer or restaurant.

“All of the major retailers, wholesalers, catering butchers and over 1,800 independent butchers are members of the scheme.*

“Every year we strive to improve the Quality Standard Mark in order to help sustain our farming industry; to add value to the supply chain and, vitally, to provide consumers with confidence in the beef and lamb they are buying.”

*To find your nearest supplier of Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb, visit www.eblextrade.co.uk.



“What marketing support does EBLEX provide to enable businesses to tell the Quality Standard Mark story to their customers?”

“Marketing support is available regardless of where you sit in the supply chain. Retailers and foodservice operators can benefit from point-of-sale and consumer literature, branding and merchandising.

“Suppliers are given marketing materials for carcasses, boxes and pack labels as well as a host of materials to help benefit sales. All of the marketing support we provide is free of charge to members of the scheme.”



“There is sometimes confusion between all of the different marks used on-pack. What is the difference between the Red Tractor Mark and the Quality Standard Mark?”

“The Red Tractor and Quality Standard Mark schemes have different market dynamics.

“Both are robust assurance schemes, championing food safety and provenance, but the Quality Standard Mark Scheme has additional standards related to eating quality through maturation regimes, animal age, seasonality and gender.

“In addition, carcass specifications for Quality Standard Mark approved product encourage producers to provide the market with higher meat yielding livestock, which helps to increase value and profit throughout the supply chain.

“The Quality Standard Mark Scheme also has additional standards covering beef mince, beef burgers and veal. Both schemes play an important role in sustaining and enhancing the market for assured beef and lamb.”

Call our **HOTLINE** on **0845 491 8787** for details of how to join the Quality Standard Mark scheme and benefit your business.

To sign up to the scheme you can call our hotline or visit our website at www.eblextrade.co.uk

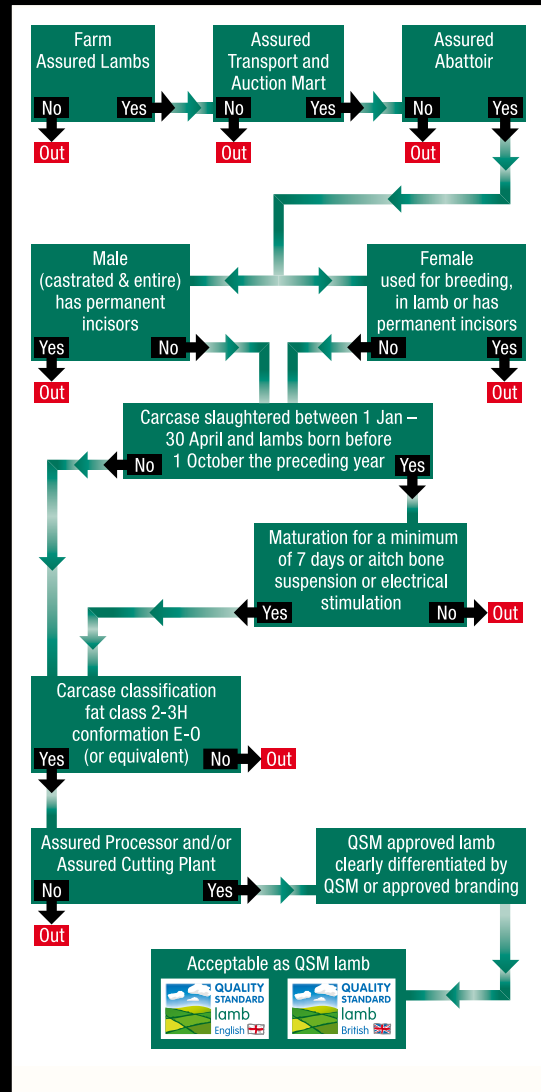
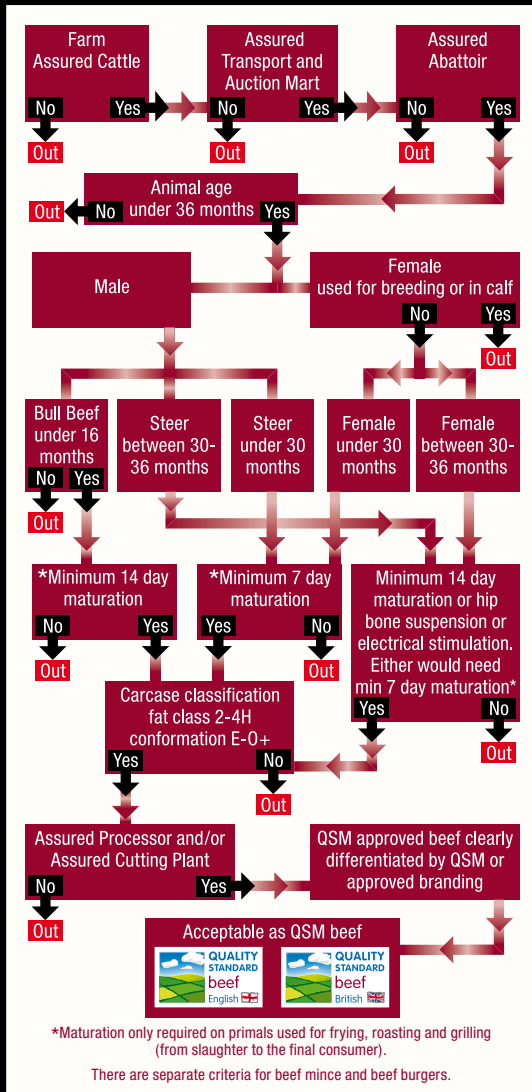




Tough standards. Tender results.

The assured supply chain for Quality Standard Mark beef and lamb


Standards and specifications of the scheme cover:


- Farm assurance • Animal welfare • Animal age and gender • Seasonality • Care for the environment
- Quality assurance • Carcase classifications • Maturation regimes • Food safety • Eating quality



  The Quality Standard Mark Scheme for beef and lamb provides one of the highest levels of independently inspected quality assurance for meat in the United Kingdom. The standards contain combined guarantees of food safety, animal welfare, care for the environment and enhanced eating quality.

To join the scheme or for more information please call the Hotline on **0845 491 8787** or visit **www.eblextrade.co.uk**

 Follow us on Twitter: @eblextrade

 Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/eblextrade