

# FACTFILE: GCSE HOME ECONOMICS: Food and Nutrition



## Food Quality Assurance Schemes

### Learning Outcome:

Students should be able to:

- Identify and explain the following food quality assurance schemes including:
  - The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS); and
  - The Bord Bia Quality Mark.

### What is a Quality Assurance Scheme or Quality Mark?

A Quality Assurance Scheme, for a food product, is a programme whereby the food is produced to a set of standards (rules) and the producer/processor is inspected (audited) to ensure that production is in accordance with those standards.



### Learning Outcome Link:

**Food Provenance**

**Demonstrate understanding of the origin of food.**

### The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS)

The Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) is a 'Guarantee of Quality from Farm to Fork' – and is fully accredited to the strict ISO 17065 European standard. This scheme ensures that Northern Ireland farmers set very high standards and take enormous pride in the way they care for their animals and manage their land.



### What is this Farm Quality Assurance Scheme?

The Northern Ireland Beef & Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) is owned by the Livestock & Meat Commission for Northern Ireland on behalf of the Beef and Sheep meat industry, and is part of the Red Tractor food assurance scheme.



The Northern Ireland Beef & Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme was developed to give consumers assurances about the farm end of the production chain of their food. It is about farm quality:

- the quality of the production methods used;
- the quality of care for animals which is practiced;
- the quality of the farm environment; and
- above all the quality of concern for the customer in producing beef and lamb which is wholesome, safe and free from unnatural substances.

### Product Standard

The Product Standard and Scheme Rules are drawn up by the Standard Setting Committee and are sent to all participants and applicants. These manuals give full details of all the requirements which need to be met and of the regulatory procedures which must be followed. There are 8 main elements to the Product Standard:

- 1) Animal husbandry, stockmanship and welfare;
- 2) Animal health;
- 3) Animal nutrition;
- 4) Animal traceability – identification, sourcing and records;
- 5) Housing and handling;
- 6) Transport;
- 7) Environmental care; and
- 8) Farm procedures.

### What are the benefits?

- Taste the quality in Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb. It all comes down to the lush, green, wholesome land the animals are free to graze on.
- Freshness and quality of the beef and lamb. Farmed in harmony with the environment, grass fed beef and lamb is lean, tender, naturally nutritious and wholesome and internationally renowned for its succulence, texture and flavour.
- This quality assurance is backed by an internationally recognised quality standard and is based around Government's legislative requirements. This reputation rests on a scheme that ensures farms are independently inspected and certified by a UKAS approved Certification Body operating to a European standard (ISO 17065).
- The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme is one of the world's longest running assurance schemes and was officially launched in 1992 to give consumers assurances about the farm end of the production chain with 3 key pillars: food safety, animal welfare and care for the environment. When you see the logo you can be sure the meat is of premium quality and of the highest standards.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- **Over 11,000 farmers** participate in the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme.
- **Over 90%** of all beef produced in Northern Ireland is Farm Quality Assured.

## Assurance and Logo

The Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) is approved for, and is part of the Red Tractor Scheme operated by Assured Food Standards (AFS). Beef and lamb which is produced to the Standards of the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance Scheme may carry either the:



**Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assurance logo** or the



**Red Tractor logo**

Beef and lamb products to which the Red Tractor logo is applied must be produced from an assured whole chain. In addition to farm assurance, animal feed suppliers, livestock markets and collection centres, livestock hauliers, abattoirs, cutting and packing plants must all be assured to the appropriate standards. Food businesses that further process and/or cook product are also required to hold current and valid certification to the British Retail Consortium (BRC) Global Standards for Food.

[www.lmcni.com](http://www.lmcni.com)

## Summary

- The Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) is a 'Guarantee of Quality from Farm to Fork' and is fully accredited to a strict ISO European standard.
- This scheme ensures that Northern Ireland farmers set high standards and take pride in the way they care for their animals and manage their land.
- It is owned by the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland and is part of the Red Tractor food assurance scheme.
- Overall it is about farm quality including:-
  1. Food safety;
  2. Animal welfare;
  3. Care for the environment; and
  4. Producing quality meat which is lean, tender, naturally nutritious and wholesome.
- This scheme is independently inspected and certified by a UKAS Certification Body operating to European standards.
- The Product Standard and Scheme Rules are sent to all participants and applicants. There are 8 main elements to the Product Standard:-
  1. Animal husbandry, stockmanship and welfare;
  2. Animal health;
  3. Animal nutrition;
  4. Animal traceability;
  5. Housing and handling;
  6. Transport;
  7. Environmental care; and
  8. Farm procedures.

### The Bord Bia Quality Mark

The Bord Bia Quality Mark means that food has been produced to the highest Bord Bia quality standards and you know where it comes from as it has been independently checked at every stage.

### Who can use the Bord Bia Quality Mark?

Currently, there are over 52,000 producers and 120 processors and packers certified members across all the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Schemes. They are inspected regularly before they can be certified and allowed use of the Quality Mark.



### What are the quality standards behind the Bord Bia Quality Mark?

In addition to meeting legal requirements, farmers are audited against a range of standards including:

- animal health;
- welfare and traceability;
- water and feed;
- pasture management;
- environmental management; and
- farm safety.

In addition, some of the main requirements for processors and packing plants include:

- product identification and traceability;
- inspection and testing;
- hygiene; and
- good manufacturing practice.

### Where will you find the Bord Bia Quality Mark?

You will find the Bord Bia Quality Mark on the following products from members of the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Schemes:

- pre-packed beef, lamb, pork, bacon;
- cooked ham;
- rashers;
- turkey, chicken, duck; and
- sausages and burgers.

You will also find it on eggs, fruit, vegetables and potatoes.

## Quality Assurance – What is involved?

In the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Schemes all steps in the food chain from production to final packaging for sale to the end user are Quality Assured; these include the farm or growing unit, the meat factory or packing centre and any secondary processing food factory (smoking, curing, cooking etc).

There are 3 basic components in a Quality Assurance Scheme:

Standards

Audit

Certification

### 1. Standards

The standards are the rules that members must comply with and these are drawn up by a panel of experts. These experts are selected from various parts of the industry/supply chain and include independent scientific and food safety expertise. This panel meets on a regular basis to update the standards in accordance with changes in legislation and improvements in best practice. The main areas covered by the standards include traceability, animal welfare, care for the environment, safe use of medicines and chemicals at farm level and animal welfare, food safety, hygiene and traceability at factory level.

### 2. Audit

The audit is the inspection of the farm or factory to ensure that the food is being produced in accordance with the standards. The audit is conducted by independent auditors and all members of the Quality Assurance Schemes receive inspections at regular intervals to ensure compliance. In addition random audits are also carried out where necessary. The auditor makes a recommendation as to whether the farm or factory is to be certified.

### 3. Certification

After the audit is completed, and provided that the farm or factory meets the requirements of the standard, the next step in the process is certification. An independent certification committee makes the decision to certify. Certification is official confirmation that the audit has been passed and the member is then eligible to apply to use the Bord Bia Q mark on product where appropriate.

## What does the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Mark (Q Mark) mean?

Where you see Bord Bia Q Mark on a product it means that the product has been produced in accordance with the required Quality Assurance standards and secondly the flag and the 'Origin Ireland' on the mark verify that the product was produced, in its entirety, in Ireland – **where you see this mark it means that the food was farmed and processed in the Republic of Ireland.**

There are 3 main versions of the Q Mark:-



([www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie))

## Summary

- The Bord Bia Quality Mark means that food has been produced to the highest Bord Bia quality standards and consumers know where it comes from.
- Inspections are carried out regularly before producers and processors can be certified and allowed use of the Quality Mark.
- Farmers are inspected against a range of standards including:
  - Animal health;
  - Welfare and traceability;
  - Water and feed;
  - Pasture management;
  - Environmental management; and
  - Farm safety.
- An audit / inspection is carried out on the farms or factories to ensure that the food is being produced in accordance with the standards. An independent certification committee then makes the decision to certify. Certification is official confirmation that the audit has been passed and the member is then eligible to apply to use the Bord Bia Quality mark.
- Some of the main requirements for processors and packing plants include:
  - Product identification and traceability;
  - Inspection and testing;
  - Hygiene; and
  - Good manufacturing practice.
- All steps of the food chain are Quality Assured, from production to final packaging for sale to the end user; these include the farm or growing unit, the meat factory or packing centre and any secondary processing food factory.

