



## QMS Management plan for Assurance Scheme Assessments during COVID-19 restrictions

QMS has been closely following the current Government guidelines on what steps should be taken to protect ourselves and others from the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Our priority is the health and safety of staff, contractors and quality assurance members. Therefore, it is essential that we all work together to protect ourselves and our colleagues.

QMS have created a Management plan for assessments to date.

### **1. Implement Remote Assessments**

- During cessation of physical assessments, a remote assessment programme will be implemented. **This will ensure that members certification continues seamlessly in these exceptional circumstances.** The remote assessment process is noted below, and Lloyd's Register will make direct contact with members to arrange their assessment and outline how the member engages with this new format.

The remote assessment is a 2-stage process

- Submission of documents by member to a portal or direct to assessor for review followed by a livestream assessment of the physical standards using a livestream application
- We appreciate not every member will have the ability to complete both elements of the assessment, therefore when face to face assessment resume these members can be assessed as a priority to ensure continued compliance.

### **2. Return to Physical Assessments**

QMS wish to provide reassurance to consumers that all products that carry the Scotch Beef PGI, Scotch Lamb PGI and Specially selected pork logos are produced to some of the highest standards.

Although the remote assessments have been proven to be successful there are times when the remote methodology is not a viable option. To ensure the integrity of the QMS Brands is protected robustly, QMS are resuming physical assessments where appropriate and in line with Government guidance.

- Where a physical assessment is deemed possible, to limit the amount of time spent on farm members will be given the option, through prior agreement with the assessor to submit documents in advance of the visit. If this option is agreed between the member and assessor, the member will be responsible for submitting documentation for review no less than 3 working days prior to the agreed assessment date.
- To ensure the safety of both assessors and members, a COVID-19 risk assessment will be conducted prior to every assessment to determine if there are any vulnerabilities that would either prevent or increase risk to member or assessor if a physical assessment took place.



- Where a member is categorised as vulnerable and identified as requiring a physical assessment the member may choose to have a representative present during the assessment to act on their behalf. Where this is not possible the assessors will refer the member to LR for discussion with QMS.
- The following strict protocol will be followed during any physical assessment by all assessors:
  - Park car in a suitably distanced area or as directed by the member
  - Wear suitable PPE which will be removed and replaced for each assessment - facemask, gloves, coverall or waterproofs
  - Maintain social distancing, for example stop handshaking, good hygiene.
  - Only conduct the assessment with one representative of the business they are assessing
  - The assessor will request that the member/representative manages all “touchpoints” during the assessment e.g. gates, doors
  - On farm times will be kept as short as possible and a good audit plan to be discussed with members informing assessors of the most efficient route around the unit to prevent any need to re trace the direction of travel
  - Will not travel in vehicles with the representative during the assessment or travelling to an additional unit (If applicable)
  - Will respectfully decline any refreshments
  - Restricted access to a rest room facility (Adhering to site/member guidance)
  - Will not enter house or office – if records need to be reviewed, they will do so outside in a suitable location and always wearing disposable gloves
  - The farm visit record must be signed by the member or their representative.
  - Remove all PPE after the assessment – double bagged and dispose/sanitise in accordance with government guidelines
  - Cleanse hands using hand sanitiser after the visit
  - Assessor or member/representative will have the right to terminate the assessment at any time should they be made aware of a risk to their safety as a result of COVID-19.

### **3. Continue to monitor and review the situation**

- QMS will continue to monitor the government guidance and the progress with resuming physical assessments.
- QMS reserves the right to continually review this management plan and revert to any stage of this protocol as relevant guidelines and restrictions develop.