

21 January, 2013 | By [Alex Lawson](#)

# Analysis: Five reasons why Christine Tacon may prove an astute appointment as Groceries Code Adjudicator

Former Co-operative farming boss Christine Tacon has today been appointed as the first Groceries Code Adjudicator to arbitrate disputes between large supermarkets and their direct suppliers. Retail Week takes a look at why Tacon may be the right woman for the job.

**A strong background:** Tacon would probably never have predicted her appointment as Groceries Code Adjudicator when she set out on her varied career. A chartered engineer, she worked in zinc die casting for three years before joining Mars where she worked in production planning for 18 months before moving into marketing. She worked on one of the bids for the National Lottery with Vodafone, before becoming marketing director at brick manufacturer Redland Brick. Her career in food restarted at dairy brand Anchor, where she was marketing and then also sales director. Her work at The Co-operative Farms, the retailer's food production division, gave her the retailer perspective to add to her supplier knowledge which may prove key.

**Retail experience:** She is credited with transforming The Co-operative Group's farming business from a £6m loss on a £40m turnover in 2000 to a £6m profit on a £65m turnover in 2012. She restructured and removed layers of management and took major decisions such as exiting dairy farming and expanding into fresh produce packing during her time at the mutual.

**Has previously connected farmers and retailers:** During her time at The Co-op she integrated farms with the rest of The Co-operative Group, connecting farmers with group initiatives. She is also credited with raising awareness of the farming business within the group. She is also a member of the department for the environment, food and rural affairs-sponsored Implementation Group of the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy, setting a new strategic direction for the industry including a requirement for farmers to connect with their markets.

**Understands farming culture:** Tacon, who lives on a farm in Macclesfield, has a strong understanding of rural culture and has networked with landowners, government, the BBC, EU, industry leaders and grower groups. A regular public speaker, farmers may feel she represents their interests equally with retail's.

**Unique personality:** Tacon is known for her eccentricity and drove classic cars including Morris Minors around the world. Her cheery personality, combined with strong business sense, may help broker disputes and communicate well between retailers and farmers.