

Christine Tacon CBE
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I am an experienced executive and non-executive director and government regulator. I combine strategic leadership with a good, practical understanding of both private and public sectors. I have a strong commercial background in fast moving consumer goods, food, farming, retailing and the environment. I am a driver of change and have extensive communications and media experience.

Current Board and Committee roles

MDS Ltd, Executive Chair (May 2016-present)

A not for profit, member-owned organisation recruiting and training graduates in the food and fresh produce industry. Trainees undertake four 6-month assignments in member businesses. There are now 65 trainees and 55 member companies, twice the size of 2016.

The Red Tractor (Assured Food Standards), Chair (Jan 2021-

An independent body owned by the UK food chain which manages and promotes assurance on behalf of the food industry. AFS develops standards and promotes their use through the food chain and to consumers. Post Brexit the Red Tractor brand will be vital to promote UK food over imported goods.

The AF Group, Director, Chair of RemCo and NomCo (2012- present)

A £250m farmer-controlled purchasing organisation for its 4000 members across the UK. AF has experienced substantial growth and is providing an invaluable service to its members during the current pandemic and getting excellent Net Promoter Scores.

BBC Rural Affairs Advisory Committee, Chair 3 days p.a. (2005 to present)

The meetings are attended by producers and researchers of programmes such as BBC News, Costing the Earth and Countryfile. Our role is to ensure the programmes remain topical and accurate.

Advisor to 2 start-up businesses WET Engineering Ltd (2016- present) and **Agxiata** (2020)

Recent role

Groceries Code Adjudicator, a BEIS Ministerial Appointment (June 2013-October 2020)

The role was established to encourage, enforce and monitor adherence to the Groceries Supply Code of Practice by the large UK grocery retailers with turnover >£1bn in dealing with their direct suppliers, following Competition and Market Authority investigations. I was the first independent regulator and had the power to launch investigations and impose sanctions, including penalties up to 1% of UK turnover. The UK is unique in having a regulator and legally binding Code and I am currently doing consultancy work for other countries facing supply chain issues.

- Improved compliance in all retailers - demonstrated, and encouraged, through annual surveys
- Pioneered working in a collaborative way as a regulator, as well as using investigative powers
- Statutory reviews concluded the GCA was an “exemplary modern regulator with an international reputation” and was “highly effective”
- Considerable public profile achieved, building awareness amongst suppliers to raise issues
- Completed investigation into Tesco plc in 2016 and Co-operative Group in 2019
- Arbitrations conducted as required
- Reduction of suppliers experiencing Code breaches from 8/10 to 4/10 (YouGov survey).

Previous Board and Taskforce Memberships

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Member (2012-2017)

NED Met Office 2013-2106 (Board and member of Audit and Risk Committee, RemCo and NomCo)

NED Ursula Agriculture 2013-2016 a technology start-up analysing satellite and drone data

Governor Harper Adams University 2012-2016

Chair Food and Drink Engineering Forum 2012-2014 across IMechE, IChemE, IBD, IFST, IET

Chair 2011 Oxford Farming Conference, Director 2009-2011

NED Farmway 2012-2013, a farm supply business which we sold

NED Rural Payments Agency, Audit & Risk Committee member DEFRA 2001-2009

Public Member Network Rail 2012-2015

DEFRA Regulatory Challenge Panel Member 2011- 2015

Member Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) Business Advisory Board 2012-2014

Member Rabobank Agricultural Advisory Board 2004-2011

Member Implementation Group of the Strategy for the Future of Food and Farming DEFRA 2003-2006

Trustee Forum for the Future 2003-2006

Executive experience 1982 to 2012

11 years in the Co-operative Group as Managing Director of the Co-operative Farms including a year on the Co-operative Food Executive Board

- Credited with turning around the farming business, losing £6m p.a, to one of the most respected farming businesses in the UK, in 2011 making £6m profit
- Integrated production vertically into packing and branded produce in Co-op stores
- Encouraged co-operation in machinery sharing, input purchasing and focus on R&D
- Initiated the award-winning "From Farm to Fork" project which had over 250k school children spend an educational day on a farm and Habitat Heroes, a project enhancing the environment for red-listed species on the farms
- The Co-op farm business sold in 2013 at £50m premium to the value of the land, which I perceive as the value I added

12 years in fast moving consumer goods: brand management with Mars Confectionery and Vodafone and Marketing Director at Anchor Foods (now Fonterra)

- Launched the Tracker brand at Mars Confectionery and created the Milky Way advertising still known to children today (through You Tube). Was one of the first engineers to be recruited into marketing and used my analysis of data to make significant differences in strategy.
- Created the Free-Range butter campaign for Anchor which ran for 15 years
- Worked as a consultant for Vodafone for a year on their National Lottery bid

5 years in engineering with Coats Viyella (Germany, France, UK) and Marketing Director, Redland Bricks

- 3 years at Coats Viyella in Dynacast, the high precision zinc die-casting subsidiary mainly supplying the motor industry. Trainee then Quality Assurance Manager
- Redland Bricks was owned by Redland plc, I was the only female director in the plc. I used traditional marketing skills to increase margins considerably in the bricks business.

Awards/Education/Interests

Accredited Mediator February 2020, MCI Arb

Women in Agribusiness Demeter Award of Excellence (Awarded in Denver, USA) 2018

Honorary Professor, Harper Adams University 2016

Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, Cranfield University 2014

CBE for Services to Agriculture 2004

Chartered Engineer, FIMechE, FIAgrE, FRSA, FRAgS, Chartered Environmentalist

MBA Cranfield University

MEng and MA Cambridge University, Production Engineering

Fluent French and German speaker, basic Spanish

Enjoy veteran cars (annual participant in London to Brighton Veteran Car Run), narrowboating, parkruns, vegetable growing, theatre and activity holidays.