

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

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

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.

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 80 trainees and 60 member companies and it is growing fast.

BBC Rural Affairs Advisory Committee, Chair 3 days p.a. *(2005-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.

Women in Food and Farming, Founder in 2011 and organiser of network of 600+ members

TrinityAgTech, Senior Advisor to Management Board *(2020-present)*

The Farmers Club Charitable Trust, Trustee *(2021-present)*

Recent role

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

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 3/10 (YouGov survey).

Previous Board Memberships

NED The AF Group, Chair of RemCo and NomCo (2012-2021)

A £250m farmer-controlled purchasing organisation for its 4000 members across the UK.

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

NED Met Office, Member of Audit and Risk Committee, RemCo and NomCo (2013-2016)

Governor Harper Adams University (2012-2016)

Chair 2011 Oxford Farming Conference, Director (2009-2011)

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

Public Member Network Rail (2012-2015)

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 being 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

Visiting Professor Cranfield University 2021

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.