

AHDB Horticulture Board meeting

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HORTICULTURE BOARD HELD AT STONELEIGH ON 7TH FEBRUARY 2022

Teleconference

PRESENT: Peter Judge (PJ), Michael Barker (MB), Jamie Dewhurst (JD), Rob Saunders (RS), Keston Williams (KW), Roma Gwynn (RGw)

APOLOGIES – Mark Eves (ME)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ken Boyns (KB) – Divisional Director – Services

Rob Clayton (RC) - Strategy Director (Potatoes), Strategy

Debbie Wilson (DW) – Head of Knowledge Exchange (Horticulture)

Adam Doxford (AD) – Crop Protection Senior Scientist (Pesticide Regulation)

Jenna Watts (JW) - Head of Crop Health and IPM, Research

Lenka Rihova (LR) – PA, minute taker

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Welcome & Apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting at 4pm and welcomed those in attendance.

1.2 The purpose of this call was to take the board through the EAMU prioritisation process and timeline before starting procurement and ask the board whether they agree with the process.

1.3 Papers had been distributed to the group prior to the meeting.

1.4 KB and the Chair gave an update on Governance.

1.5 The terms of reference for this board have been updated (signed off by the main board). The key role is to provide oversight going forward and supporting the managed transition.

ACTION: Revised ToR to be circulated.

1.6 There might be a need for this board to make some recommendations on prioritisation and where the final money gets spent. The priority lists will be brought to the main AHDB board for a sign off.

1.7 This board will ensure there is good understanding and links from the crop areas (any board gaps will be filled with a Co-opted members from panels). A paper on this subject is required and will be checked with the horticulture board to ensure they are comfortable with the approach before any steps are taken. The aim is to look at the skills and knowledge we need and ensure we have a board that is still functioning. Where people have left with a particular crop expertise, this board will make sure that the particular crop expertise is maintained.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Papers

2.1 RC presented on the EAMU for 22/23 process and progress and reported on the changes. The purpose of today's meeting was to ensure that this board is familiar with the process before launching the procurement element and talking to panels and stakeholders. This board need to be in a good position to defend it.

2.2 There is a lot of detail on the website around the approximate panel split and further sub splits (transitional research programme and EAMUs). There is some ability to flex the amounts, particularly between how much is spent on efficacy, residues and applications/associated costs and prioritise the most critical areas.

2.3 RC presented on the overall prioritisation, steps specific to residue trials and other notable factors.

2.4 A more precise budget will be presented to the board in March when prioritisation decisions may need to be made.

2.5 There are a number of products and services that drive the risk register. We need to keep those services running alongside the risk register ('the minimum viable products' budget allocated).

2.6 The approach to procurement is important (procuring on a menu and capability basis). The aim is to have the option to pick and choose the absolute best value in terms of delivery when we know the costs of particular pieces of work.

2.8 The aim is to deliver priorities that are important for the industry.

2.9 There are still some queries outstanding about what is going to be feasible and what is practical. AHDB are getting prices in for pieces of work to help us to make the final decision around what work is going to be funded. What is going out for procurement isn't a definite decision. It is about getting costs so that we can optimise the value the industry gets at the end of this process.

2.10 It was felt that it is a suitable process and we are heading in the right direction. Communication is key.

2.11 Some concern was expressed around the prioritisation. The key is to give the transparency and the fairness of the process. It was agreed that Roma Gwyn would provide support to the staff team undertaking the work and act as a point of reference and expertise that the team could seek advice from.

Action: RG to be contacted by team for advice and support as needed.

2.12 The Chair thanked everyone for their work on this subject.

2.13 The group discussed the proposal for a horticulture foundation, which could be a way forward for the future. It would be a voluntary funded mechanism for supporting the research needs of the industry.

2.14 Defra are looking at future options for EAMUs and EAs (strong positive feedback in the consultation). This area of work needs to continue. A meeting with Defra to be held on defining limits of EAMU/EA work – acknowledging that research and EAMU/EA are not separate.

2.15 The meeting closed at 5pm.