

## AHDB Horticulture Board meeting

### SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HORTICULTURE BOARD CALL HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021

#### Teleconference

#### CONFIDENTIAL

**PRESENT:** Peter Judge (PG) – Chair, Michael Barker (MB), Jamie Dewhurst (JD), Roma Gwynn (RGw)

**APOLOGIES –** Keston Williams (KW), Rob Saunders (RS), Mark Eves (ME)

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

Ken Boyns (KB) – Divisional Director – Services, Debbie Wilson (DW) - Senior Research and KE Manager, Lenka Rihova (LR) – PA, minute taker

#### AGENDA ITEM 1 – Welcome & Apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 10am and welcomed those in attendance.

Apologies were received from RS and KW.

The purpose of this meeting was to give feedback following the AHDB Board meeting held on 1st December and navigating next steps. Key points covered:

- Feedback from the Board
- Conversations held with levy payers (including panel feedback)

The Chair reported on the AHDB Board meeting.

The Board's position is it cannot publicly promote possible solutions for future horticulture models. Crop associations might be the vehicle to bring concepts to life.

The ministers will respect the vote and the levy is expected to end. Any changes would require a strong industry desire to do something differently. EAMU/EA expected to continue in some way, Defra is looking at solutions. The Board discussed possible outcomes:

- Levy ends, no action from the industry, transfer of royalties (charity), completely wound down
- Statutory levy kept in some sectors as per Better Levy Group views, Defra to consider only if there was strong feedback in the consultation response
- Voluntary set up, royalties to continue for some time, voluntary subscription, EAMU/EA continues but not a levy funding mechanism

AHDB is not able to publicly promote any future vision, cannot publicly advocate solutions. It is up to external people to promote it if they wish to do so (industry to go to Defra).

The Chair has reported on the meeting with the spokesperson for the Better Levy Group. A series of questions raised (consistent with what has come out of the panels). The key questions are around wind down costs. A suggestion to create a finance FAQ document, which should then be in the public domain.

The group discussed the Better Levy Group and AHDB's responsibility to engage with them (give answers). AHDB needs to provide a managed transition. It is up to Defra and the industry to establish next steps to transition in to. The key challenge is whether the alternative proposal will be put forward and whether there is enough desire for it from industry.

The responsibility of the Horticulture Board is to wind up Horticulture against budget within a governance process and make sure that what has been committed to is delivered and to ensure there is a smooth transition.

It was felt that the proposed foundation model is a possible way forward. It will support Horticulture as long as growers want it.

KB presented on Hort Panel Finance Q&A. Most of the questions that have come out of the panels are a request for more detail. AHDB to provide more detail on the panel level (costs).

KB commented on the EAMU/EA programme costs, VAT and staff costs. HMRC might change the VAT status on the levy from 1st April.