

## AHDB Horticulture Board meeting

### SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HORTICULTURE BOARD HELD AT STONELEIGH ON 12TH OCTOBER 2021

#### CONFIDENTIAL

**PRESENT:** Hayley Campbell-Gibbons (HCG), Michael Barker (MB), Peter Judge (PJ), Jamie Dewhurst (JD)

**APOLOGIES** – Rob Saunders (RS)

**REMOTELY-** Mark Eves (ME), Keston Williams (KW), Roma Gwynn (RGw), Rob James (RJ),

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

Ken Boyns (KB) – Divisional Director – Services , Naveen Gupta (NG) – Finance Director, Finance  
Guy Attenborough (GA) – Corporate Affairs Director, Corporate Affairs , Rob Clayton (RC) - Strategy  
Director (Potatoes), Strategy, Debbie Wilson (DW) – Head of Knowledge Exchange (Horticulture) ,  
Cathryn Lambourne (CL) - Crop Protection Senior Scientist (Diseases), Adam Doxford (AD) – Crop  
Protection Senior Scientist (Pesticide Regulation) , Claire Hoskins (CH) – Defra,  
Lenka Rihova (LR) – PA, minute taker

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

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.30am and welcomed those in attendance. This was the last Horticulture Board meeting in the current format.

Apologies were received from RS.

The Board papers had been distributed prior to the meeting and been taken as read.

#### AGENDA ITEM 2 - Declarations of interest

MB declared that he has joined the Food Chain charity as a trustee (on a voluntary basis).

ME and RJ are part of the NFU Board.

#### AGENDA ITEM 3 – Minutes from previous meeting on 22nd June and 16th September (interim)

The minutes of the last meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and 16<sup>th</sup> September were accepted as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair.

#### AGENDA ITEM 4 – Actions from previous meeting on 22nd June and 16th September (interim)

HCG confirmed all actions were either completed, on the agenda or in hand.

Action 6.8 (*to share a RAG analysis - technical projects, with the Board*): DW has given a verbal update under 6.3 item. AHDB will report on the progress of projects that are winding up at the November panel meetings.

#### AGENDA ITEM 5 – Chair's report

There was no written Chair's report.

The Chair's term finishes on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. PJ had kindly agreed to become an interim Horticulture Chair.

HCG reported on matters discussed at the recent AHDB Board meeting with the new Board members. The job roles have changed significantly, the Chairs will be on core 3 days a month contract.

The Chair reported on the spring vote mechanism for the other four sectors. There is still no official statement from the Minister in relation to the plan for Horticulture. The expectation from some is that every sector will have a yes/no ballot – the new format will focus on giving levy payers a say on what AHDB do. There can still be a yes/no vote if there is a strong voice for it. The right to trigger a ballot remains in the legislation.

The AHDB Pork Board has agreed to a one-month levy holiday to help ease the burden of the financial pressures faced by levy-payers and recognise the difficulties in the industry.

KB provided further details on the future voting mechanism, the pork levy, AHDB's legal ability to support the pork industry with its challenges and the possibility to change the law in future.

### **AGENDA ITEM 6 – Wind up update**

- Legacy arrangements
- Statutory Instrument/Consultation
- Finance Update

KB provided an update on the ongoing wind down and staff implications. Defra has funded some Resilience Fund work and will attend the November panel meetings to provide an update on the consultation.

RC, DW and CL joined the Board meeting and presented on the legacy arrangements. Key areas covered:

#### **Overview of obligations**

- ⇒ **Archive** – all products, tools, services, data, research previously paid for by levy that may still have value and/or be relevant to the industry
- ⇒ **Legacy website** – Horticulture and potatoes separated from the main site
- ⇒ **Libraries** – access to the outcomes of levy payer investments
- ⇒ **Products and services** – something we do/have done for industry that a third party wants to take on and deliver
- ⇒ **Transition projects** – 2023 – 2025
- ⇒ **Regulatory Work** – Adam Doxford leading
- ⇒ **Breeding clubs and royalties**

CL provided an update on Research and the RAG analysis. There were 69 projects reviewed (2 red, 15 amber research projects and 2 KE). More details can be provided on request.

KB reported on the archive, which will eventually need a long-term owner.

Some concern expressed over the legacy arrangements and losing work that is older than 7 years. AHDB will upload all content to the legacy site from the start of AHDB. Beyond that, the default that goes into the archive and index will be available. AHDB will go back as far as possible.

Communication around the legacy arrangements & archive is key. Some concern expressed over sensitivity and confidentiality around work funded by private companies and licencing arrangements around projects.

The Board discussed coded products & permissions in projects. There are some difficulties around this but AHDB staff will make sure there is a key list to allow identification when needed.

Some concern expressed over the legacy of royalty payments of research that has been delivered into and supported by AHDB. Growers' input is important.

HCG thanked the presenters for their work and support.

CH from Defra has joined the meeting at 10.30am. Defra is going through the clearance process within government on a draft consultation document. It will be a shorter consultation period of about 6 weeks. There will be a consultation engagement process with stakeholders. CH has briefly commented on what is in the consultation. Defra is still working on this. Board members to contact CH directly in relation to the engagement process with stakeholders.

Defra will share a copy of the consultation with certain members a couple of days in advance.

KB thanked CH and her team for their help and support. CH left the meeting at 11.35am.

NG joined the meeting at 10.40am and provided a finance update on the Horticulture wind down. A paper had been distributed to the Board prior to the meeting. Final levy invoices are expected to go out once we have the final approval on the levy rate from Defra.

Some concern expressed over levy payers who voted no and will not want to pay another levy. Clear communication critical, AHDB to work with levy payers and make it clear that AHDB have a legal obligation under the SI to raise this levy and collect it and will have to take legal action if it is not paid.

NG reported on the levy collection process, costs and audit work. AHDB will only incur costs where needed to as part of the wind down plan. The timeline assumes there will be delays in collecting all the levy and this has been factored in.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7 - Final levy 21/22 communication to growers (the comms piece/invoice)**

GA provided a comms update.

It is likely that AHDB will communicate the new levy rate in advance of anything coming out from government about the future due to the delays in the consultation. A draft letter is currently with Defra. The devolved administrations have requested to see it.

GA presented on the key messages in the invoice letter and reported on issues (the last invoice the levy payers will receive). The intention is to include a breakdown of costs within the communication. There will be a primary letter from HCG, a letter from finance and an invoice. GA reported on the timeline – awaiting ministerial sign off on the levy rates to enable AHDB to start sending out invoices and estimates.

Defra is still looking at mechanisms to provide public funding to cover a multitude of potential scenarios because CRD require a coordinated system for the EAMU/EAs, hence a long term solution is necessary. This statutory levy will end (Defra's message), levy payers may have an option to ask for a levy in the future. It is important to respect the vote that has taken place.

There will be clarity around the statutory levy if the consultation in its current form goes forward. Once the consultation has come out, there will be more clarity.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8 - Hort governance arrangements**

- **The draft TOR**
- **EAMU/EA Governance 2022/23**

KB reported on the draft TOR for the Horticulture board, based on the board approved RACI agreed earlier in the year. No questions raised. It will now go to the main AHDB Board for approval.

AD has joined the meeting at 11.15am.

The Board discussed EAMU/EA Governance 2022/23 and the panel structure. It was felt that the panels should continue but with a reduced remit. The proposal for an overarching advisory panel

should be amended to retain the panels underneath it. Updated TOR for the panels and the advisory panel will be drafted and the draft TOR for the panels shared with the panels in their meetings for feedback. Revised TOR will be brought back to the next horticulture board for approval.

Ongoing contact with the industry and crop associations will continue.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 9 – AOB**

There were no AOB.

PJ, on behalf of the Board, expressed his gratitude towards HCG and thanked for her support and services to the industry through this difficult time. This was HCG's last Horticulture Board meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.30am.