

**House of Commons:**

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE**

Education and Careers in Land-based Sectors

Call for written evidence:

**Submission from the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board  
(AHDB)**

**23 October 2023**

## AHDB

AHDB is a statutory levy board funded by farmers and others in the supply chain. Its purpose is to be a critical enabler, to positively influence outcomes, allowing farmers and others in the supply chain to be competitive, successful and share good practice. It equips levy payers with easy-to-use products, tools and services to help them make informed decisions and improve business performance. Established in 2008 and classified as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), AHDB supports the following industries: meat and livestock (Beef, Lamb and Pork) in England; Dairy in Great Britain; and Cereals and Oilseeds in the UK.

Please note: As an evidence-based non-departmental public body (NDPB) AHDB is not in a position to comment/speculate on all questions relating to this inquiry.

## Summary

AHDB's inquiry submission details:

- A focus on education, rather than land-based careers per se
- Education about food and farming in schools as a priority for AHDB
- The collaborative approach between AHDB, the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) and Linking Education and Farming (LEAF) Education to deliver a UK-wide education programme
- Additional pilot projects to deliver immersive educational experiences in the food and farming sector for school children

## Inquiry questions and AHDB's response

1. ***Are there domestic or international examples of best practice in successfully promoting educational opportunities and careers in land-based sectors?***
2. School education is a key priority for AHDB. Last year, our levy payers voted 'educating the consumers of tomorrow' as one of the most important work programmes we deliver. AHDB's education work aims to ensure that school children understand about healthy eating and where their food comes from so they are informed consumers of the future. AHDB also actively supports children to develop cooking skills.
3. Farmers need support to engage in education activities and host school farm visits. It is essential that they are supported to hone the skills, knowledge, know-how and confidence to host such visits. This, coupled with the provision of support towards the costs of transport for schools, are areas that are regularly identified as barriers to delivering an effective and comprehensive school education programme about the food and farming industry. School children need more exposure to the farming industry and people working in it. However, anecdotally, we are aware that challenges persist around the provision of quality work experience, particularly for those under 18.
4. In addition to sponsoring Open Farm Sunday which delivers the dual benefit of educating the public while providing a platform for farmers to talk about British food and farming, AHDB has since 2018, worked in partnership with the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) to jointly deliver the Food - a fact of life ([www.foodafactoflife.org.uk](http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk)) education programme across the UK. The programme includes free, curriculum-compliant online resources for teachers of children aged three to 16 and professional development training, including conferences, webinars and workshops. The programme is focused on the core themes of where food comes from, nutrition, and cooking.
5. In the last financial year to 31 March 2023, the Food - a fact of life programme achieved 1.3 million resources downloads and trained almost 1,000 teachers. As a direct result of using the resources teachers stated that their students were 85% more informed about where food comes from, 69% more informed about how to cook, and 88% more informed about healthy eating.
6. To build on current success, AHDB is aiming to bring the 'where food comes from' message to life and enhance learning by coordinating educational visits and experiences of British working farms. This approach recognises the power of learning through experiencing, discovering, exploring and interacting with the real world beyond the classroom.
7. To test this approach, AHDB is currently undertaking a series of pilot projects with experiential learning at their heart. These pilot projects will aim to establish which initiatives deliver AHDB's education objectives. They include:
  - **On-farm school conference** – AHDB wants to enhance depth of learning around the where food comes from message for secondary students by providing them with the opportunity to see a working farm first-hand and engage with people from the industry. To achieve this, we are working with LEAF Education and the BNF to deliver an 'on-farm' school conference for around 200 GCSE students that will have experiential learning at its centre. The event will be held at Plumpton College in East Sussex on 14 November and include visits around their dairy and pig units, as well as fully immersive activities with industry representatives in dedicated local food producer, business and cooking hubs. The students will also engage in classroom activities before and after the event to further embed learnings.
  - **Supporting farmers to deliver school farm visits** – AHDB is running an exciting pilot project to help farmers deliver memorable and safe on-farm experiences for school children. In collaboration with LEAF Education, 20 farmers from England and Wales will be offered fully funded training via the Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS) (<https://visitmyfarm.org/courses>) to deliver impactful school visits and help give more children the opportunity to experience a real working farm first-hand, and better connect with where their food comes from. In addition, participants will gain access

to the support of education specialists to help deliver their first farm visit and opportunities to network with like-minded experienced host farmers. Schools participating in the pilot will also have access to funding towards transport, thereby addressing a key barrier to getting schoolchildren out on farm.

**8. Further information**

9. Any queries relating to this submission should, in the first instance, be directed to Andy Hutson, AHDB Senior Media and External Affairs Manager, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2TL. T: 024 7647 8822 E: [andy.hutson@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:andy.hutson@ahdb.org.uk)