**P**3

**Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board Order 2008**

**Voting in a Ballot on Continuation of the Horticulture Levy**

**Guidance Note**

1. This Guidance Note provides information on how the ballot vote will be run on whether the horticulture levy (which includes levy on mushrooms) should continue. It is intended to help you establish if you are entitled to vote and, if so, the balloting process.
2. The latest versions of this Guidance Note, and a similar Guidance Note on requesting a ballot, are published on AHDB’s website at www.ahdb.org.uk/about/Ballot.aspx. The version current at the relevant time will be applied.

**Background**

1. The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board Order 2008 (the Order) provides for eight levies. They relate to pigs, cattle, sheep, milk, horticulture, potatoes, cereal and oilseeds.
2. The Order permits AHDB to hold a ballot on whether the horticulture levy should continue.i
	1. The Order sets out who is entitled to vote (see paragraph 5 below).
	2. Ministers are not bound by the results of a ballot.ii

**Categories of voters**

1. In relation to the eight levies, 14 voters and categories of voters are set out in the Order.iii
	1. There is one category of voter for the horticulture levy:
* Any personiv who pays the horticulture levy in the 12 months preceding the closing date of a ballot.
1. This Guidance Note P is intended specifically for persons eligible to vote in a ballot on the continuation of the horticulture levy.

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*i Article 11 of the Order.*

*ii Article 11(7) of the Order.*

*iii Article 12(1) of the Order.*

*iv Throughout this Guidance Note, ‘person’ includes individuals and businesses, as appropriate.*

**Enquiries about ballots should be addressed to:**

**The Ballot Officer, AHDB, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2TL**

**Guidance on voting in a ballot**

1. **You may vote**v **in a ballot on whether the AHDB horticulture levy should continue if you can show that you qualify by being a member of the relevant category of voters** (see paragraph 5 above) **in the twelve calendar months preceding the closing date of the ballot**.vi
	1. If you pay horticulture levy at any time in those twelve months, you may vote in relation to a ballot about whether the horticulture levy should continue.
	2. There is only one vote permitted for each levy paying business.
	3. If you are entitled in relation to more than one levy, you may vote in ballot(s), if called, about any or all of those levies.
2. **An independent ballot company will be appointed to run the ballot.** It will issue the ballot voting papers by post to all AHDB horticulture levy payers. If you do not receive voting papers and believe you are eligible please contact the AHDB Ballot Officer at ballot@ahdb.org.uk.
3. The ballot will be open for a period of four weeks.
4. You will be able to cast your vote:
	1. By post using the ballot paper provided and returning it to the independent company in the pre-paid envelope provided;
	2. Through the independent company’s online web-voting portal
5. You will need to provide:
	1. Your unique voting reference number which will be printed on your ballot paper
	2. Your AHDB levy payer number (available from your last levy invoice or estimate)
6. All votes will be validated against AHDB levy records to establish whether you qualify. Any ineligible votes will be disqualified.
7. Your vote must be received fully completed by midnight on the closing date stated on the ballot paper. Papers received late will be disqualified.
8. An independent scrutineer will oversee the determination of the result of the ballot.

**What happens next?**

1. The Order requires the results of a ballot to go to relevant Ministers for consideration.vii
2. AHDB will publish the result on its website.

**Contact information**

1. **All communications in relation to ballots should be made to the Ballot Officer, AHDB, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2TL.** ballot@ahdb.org.uk.
2. Requests that a ballot take place must be submitted in accordance with the Guidance Note on requesting a ballot.
3. AHDB will publish balloting information on its website at www.ahdb.org.uk/about/Ballot.aspx.

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*v Article 12(3) of the Order sets out that a partnership has a single vote.*

*vi Article 12(2) of the Order.*

*vii Article 11(7)*

*Version 3, November 2020*