

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE AHDB BEEF AND LAMB SECTOR COUNCIL  
MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 AT 08.30 A.M  
BOARD ROOM, AHDB, MIDDLEMARCH BUSINESS PARK, SISKIN PARKWAY  
EAST, COVENTRY CV3 4PE  
(Virtually enabled)**

**PRESENT:** Colin Bateman (CB) (Chairman), George Fell (GF), Bryan Griffiths (BG), Anne-Marie Hamilton (AMH), Gama Khan (GK), James Shouler (JS)v, James Taylor (JT), Steve Thompson (ST), Paul Unwin (PU)(v), Scott Donaldson (SD), Isla Roebuck (IR),

**APOLOGIES:** N/A

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ken Boyns (KB), Samantha Charlton (SC), Tony Holmes (TH), Will Jackson (WJ), Jenn Birrell (JB) (item 7), Tom Dracup (TD) (item 14), Chris Gooderham (CG) (item 7), John Gilliland (item 7), Dave Craig (DC) (item 13), David Eudall (DE) (Item 14), Anna Hughes (AH) (minutes)

**AGENDA ITEM 1– CHAIR WELCOME/REPORT**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

N/A

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- GK has been approached by Government regarding the British Hala Charter
- BG and WJ sit on the Red Tractor sector board
- SD sits on the Board of the LAA

**AGENDA ITEM 4 – MINUTES FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

Point 13.2 on the previous minutes to be amended to 'International comparison' instead of Domestic comparison

The minutes of the council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record subject to the amendments raised.

**ACTION: AH to confirm that the roadmap reference on 4.2 has been added to the minutes from the September meeting and feedback to IR.**

**MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION POINTS FROM THE SECTOR COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

WJ explained that most of the actions were either complete or covered in the agenda.

The 'Start and finish group' has been set-up and the first one has taken place (on agenda)

The logic model has been updated.

**ACTION: JB to circulate logic model after meeting. 10.2 Non levy income lines to each of the workstreams will be added for the next financial year**

Izak Van Heerden to be invited to the May meeting as he's currently on his Nuffield Travels in South America

## **SECTOR LEAD REPORT – WILL JACKSON/ SAM CHARLTON**

WJ informed the group there had been a lot of activity over the past few weeks including Gulfoods which GK attended in his own capacity. A meeting of the B&L Roadmap had recently taken place and CB will be attending the next Genetics Working Group tomorrow.

SC explained that there has been an increase of activity in Bluetongue, stakeholder meetings have continued and the first Roots to Resilience module had taken place in January with the next one taking place in May.

The sector council requested the engagement plan be recirculated

**ACTION: SC to recirculate the Engagement Plan (Completed after the meeting)**

## **BASELINING – CHRIS GOODERHAM/KEN BOYNS**

CG was welcomed to the meeting and updated the group on the Baselineing project. He explained that it is cross sector and the focus is to underpin marketing and reputation work around sequestration. CG informed the council that there has already been a pilot system being used within the GHG National Inventory and Scope 3 Declarations.

CG explained that the baselining will show the net carbon position for 150-200 farms for reputation and roadmaps and test the technology. This will be the start of behavioural change. CG added that JG has some limited information from testing on his farms and that the vast majority of the carbon is below ground as opposed to in trees.

CG explained that the aim for Beef & Lamb is to use the data from 60 farms over 5 years. The costs are currently front-loaded. CG added that there may be a way to tap into some Government funding as opposed to solely using Levy Payer money.

CB asked the Sector Council to express their appetite to fund the baselining work and if they would like to fund it in the proposed way.

JG was welcomed to the meeting, he explained that one of the challenges with Scope 3 Declarations, is that it is on a product basis. AMH asked if there is any way to look at what work has already been carried out on soil nutrients? CG explained that, as long as samples have been taken in the same way they could be used.

CG explained that numbers presented are purely for B&L baselining only. The group queried if there was an issue with using English Levy in Scottish farms. CG explained that if QMS help fund the pilot then this could be used for the Scottish farms. Harper Adams may also be interested but CG would be asking them for a monetary contribution which again could be used for the Scottish farms. WJ commented that conversations had taken place with the devolves. AHDB are looking to work with other partners to leverage the money available.

BG told the group he thought baselining is a good idea but expressed concern that 20 or so beef and sheep farms won't be robust enough in terms of the amount of data. IR echoed BG's concerns that 20 farms is too low adding that his company already carry out carbon foot

printing of 500 farms and it may be worth reaching out to current farms using carbon footprints to see if there is some data that can be utilised.

CG commented the importance of getting farms signed up to enable them to have access to the data and not rely on a third party. KB explained that there is a lot of complex environmental data. AHDB have started looking at 'Data Custodian' which could bring together vast data that could be used via a carbon calculator meaning we can compare ourselves to lots of our competitors. There have been conversations with the NFU and QMS and the plan is to talk further in the next month with the NFU. Tom Bradshaw is keen to develop a data transparency partnership.

KB asked the Sector Council if there is an appetite for the industry to come together? JG explained that NI are further ahead with the nutrient health scheme and that it is about value and building the trust. There is a pre-agreed pro-forma for scope 3 declarations but the raw data belongs to the farmer.

The group queried which software would be used. KB explained that he is meeting with Agrimetrics this afternoon and that this could be used as a commercial partner. KB had recently met with Trinity Ag.

SD expressed concern that no-one is carbon auditing up the chain and that there needs to be a true picture. JG explained that in future scope 3 reporting could become mandatory and that this could feed into the greenhouse inventory.

CB asked the SC if they are in support of the baselining project and use the processors that we already have? CG explained that the two phases are above ground and below ground. CB queried if anyone has objections to working with retailers and processors.

There were no objections and the council were happy to support the project.

#### **LEVY INCREASE – WILL JACKSON**

WJ wanted to acknowledge the effort that the AHDB teams and CB had put in last year on the levy increase. Letters had now been sent out to all the processors asking them to adjust their figures and a message will be sent out from Nicholas Saphir and CB explaining what the increase in levy will be spent on.

#### **MANAGEMENTS ACCOUNTS – TONY HOLMES**

TH explained that there will be a reduction in income for the full year and for workstream expenditure. There will also be a reduction in expenditure for mainly exports, farm payments and core comms.

GK queried if the exports budget could be split out to show the spend in the various areas. WJ explained that Exports are broken down into three activities: trade shows, international market insights and market access & maintenance.

**ACTION: to have a deep dive at the next sector council meeting to increase the level of detail in exports.**

IR queried if there should be any concern around the underspend in reputation. WJ explained that a lot of the work is reactive such as responding to the Chris Packham tweet and the ITN video and is hypothecated to other workstreams. BG expressed concern that the Exports is under budget despite it coming high in the Shape the Future votes.

**ACTION: WJ to invite Phil Hadley's replacement to a future meeting to go through Exports.**

## **BUDGET – WILL JACKSON**

CB explained that IR, SD, WJ and himself had a meeting to go through the line that sits below the workstreams as it is a very detailed process. The same group, together with PU, then went over the budget line by line and it had become evident that some of the workstream descriptions weren't clear and some of the spend was potentially in the wrong area. Also, the terminology needs to be changed to be more relevant to each sector. CB expressed that there is an enormous level of detail which is also a vast improvement with transparency.

WJ presented slides and explained that there would be an overspend and that there is an agreed reserve level, should there be a need to wind up a sector. Based on the budget at the moment the plan is again to overspend as there has been a build-up of reserves over the past 3 years.

WJ explained that there is an increase in budget mainly for environment work and to cover the baselining work and marketing. There will be an increase in the marketing budget.

WJ highlighted that the education budget was doubled last year and will be increased this year. There is potential that the Education budget may have to increase further as C&O are tight on funds due to the bad harvest and may pull out of education, therefore the other sectors will have to add additional funding.

The group were told that with regards to core comms there will be hypothecation with 5 teams feeding in to one budget. WJ explained there have been assumptions made before but due to timesheets it's easier to show how the staffs time is broken down. The Comms team are unable to allocate all their comms for the year as they only have an 'indication' of what is coming up but has just been redistributed into the workstream (WJ explained this in more detail with slides).

The group discussed the budget around Medicine hub. JT commented that the sector council should be uploading their data to medicine hub. WJ suggested that Ray Keating could be invited to a forthcoming sector council meeting. The group were told that there was no spend on BVD as this project will be handed over to DEFRA and that Ruminant Health & Welfare is mainly the secretariat and people attending the meeting.

**ACTION: CG and the sector council to meet and look at strategic direction of the AH&W workstreams and budget.**

**The Sector Council agreed to sign off the proposed budget but would like further clarification on AH&W**

**ACTION: WJ to report back to CB with the plan for AH&W in three weeks.**

JS congratulated the AHDB teams for the much-improved budgets reporting.

## **B&L DASHBOARD – JENN BIRRELL**

JB was welcomed to the meeting and explained that JT recently attended a Task & Finish group looking at the dashboards.

CB expressed concern that there is a lot of repetition and that the targets should be a lot smarter with regards to the levy payer satisfaction survey. WJ explained that it is up to him and his teams to get the right outcomes in place. CB expressed concern that some of the targets are rushed and it would be useful if the dashboards linked into the budgets. CB requested that this piece of work be completed by September.

ST explained that the dashboards are a really great opportunity to showcase their work.

## **DIGITAL, DATA & TECHNOLOGY – DAVE CRAIG**

DC was welcomed to the meeting explaining that he is looking to carry out a 3-month piece of work which will upgrade the digital, data and technology 'discovery work'. He would then carry out a short concise 18-month piece of work consisting of eight projects in four groups running from April 2024 – March 2026. DC explained that he is asking for the support from the sector council for high level plans to upgrade AHDB's DD&T platform and services.

The council were asked for funding over the next 3 months to cover three projects:

- Digital infrastructure upgrade & digital engagement
- Data platform & infrastructure upgrade
- CRM/user ID systems upgrade

DC explained to the group the costs to upgrade everything over the next year and the costs to become 'best in class' over the next 18 months. DC explained that he is hopeful in being able to secure additional funding from DEFRA.

**The Sector Council accepted DC proposal and he will be invited to a future meeting to present further detail.**

## **AFS ASSURANCE – WILL JACKSON/DAVID EUDALL/TOM DRACUP**

WJ updated the council on Red Tractor explaining that Campell Tickell had released their report on [Greener Farms Commitment](#) last week. However, Red Tractor had taken this as the go-ahead to carry on. WJ explained that in the past week NFUS and the Farmers Union had come on board with AHDB & NFU and are in the process of putting a commission in place. WJ added that he hoped a review will be carried out and reported back by the end of the year.

TD was welcomed to the meeting. He reminded the sector council of the background behind the standards review - an evidence-based report looking at farmgate standards in England and some international markets, including the USA and Australia. TD explained that the final draft of lot one comparing England to Australia and NZ is due in the next week and will be shared with the sector council. The plan is then to publish the document late March. TD gave an example of traceability documentation and assurance. GK expressed concern that there isn't a Halal expert and that he would also like to see a breakdown of the legal definitions. TD explained that the report is farmgate only.

DE explained to the group that the LAA management ended at AHDB in January. The next stages for the MI team will be to look at how data can be used within the liveweight market. Conversations have been taking place with other data providers within the liveweight market and if there is a way to add transparency. DE informed the council that there is some money in the budget to purchase the data going forward. SD asked if the priority was to simply

get hold of the data. DE explained it was but there needs to be a piece of work carrying on with the interpretation and they have asked the LAA for a license to use the data.

SC asked if there were conversations with LAA with regards to how AHDB are allowed to use the data. The group agreed that there is a gap in market transparency that AHDB must try to fill this.

**ACTION: AH to circulate the report when it becomes available**

BG queried if there is something Red Tractor can do with environment but not Greener Farm Initiative.

## AOB

SC explained that she is recording a podcast with the new CEO tomorrow and asked the SC for any questions they would like asking. The podcast will be sent out on Friday with an internal and an external version.

**ACTION: WJ to share the link to the internal podcast with the sector council.**

AMH commended AHDB on their support and webinars for Blue Tongue. WJ explained that the AH&W are looking at Blue Tongue, African Swine Fever and Schmallerberg and the team is being strengthened with more expertise.

GK told the group that AHDB are supporting Ramadan, looking to build a domestic base and eventually get the consumers on board.

## CLOSE

The meeting closed at 1.10pm