

**SUMMARY OF THE CEREALS & OILSEEDS BOARD MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 19th MARCH 2020 AT 8.30 A.M.**

TEAMS MEETING ONLINE

PRESENT:

Paul Temple (Chairman) (PT), Ian Backhouse (IB), Bob King (BK),
Howard Leland (HL), David Neal-Smith (DNS), Andrew Moir (AM)
Mark Wood (MW), Russell McKenzie (RM), Jane Biss (JB), Tony Bell (TB)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Grantley-Smith (MGS), David Eudall (DE), Paul Gosling (PG)
Kate Saunders (notes) (KS) Haroon Jabar (HJ)

CHAIR WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

PT welcomed the Board members to the meeting and explained that due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 the meeting will be shortened, particularly as it is now a TEAMS virtual meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence. However, due to technical issues with the system James Price and Tony Bell were not on the call.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES FROM THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30TH JANUARY 2020

The Board agreed the minutes from the previous meeting held on the 30th January 2020 were a true record and can be signed off by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING AN ACTION POINTS FROM THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30TH JANUARY 2020

Not covered (however all actions completed, ongoing, covered in the Director's report or on agenda)

CHAIRMANS REPORT

Not covered

SECTOR DIRECTORS REPORT

Not covered – taken as read



C&O MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS / LEVY UPDATE AND DEBTORS AGE ANALYSIS

The Board approved the accounts for January 2020

BUDGET 2020/21

MGS introduced the budget for 2020/21. He reminded the Board of the agreed strategy and illustrated some of the activities proposed. Regarding Farm Performance there will be more on IPM focus together with Environment and Climate change (Jon Foot was originally planned to present on his early ideas on environment at this meeting which is now postponed)

The Board agreed that the budget can be signed off but with the caveat of maintaining a close watch on income and adjust expenditure accordingly.

EARLY THOUGHTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY AND THE CARBON CALCULATOR

Not covered - postponed

VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

Not covered

2ND INTENTIONS PLANTING SURVEY AND 2020 HARVEST FORECAST UPDATE – DE presentation

DE presented AHDB's latest C&O production forecast for harvest 2020/21. The ranges for wheat, barley, OSR and oat production are all down on 2019/20 as an effect of the wet autumn and winter. Spring plantings underway. In addition to the reduced volumes, there is the issue of quality and availability especially of milling quality wheat.

Spring oats rather than winter are looking favourable particularly in Scotland and there is an expectation of higher than usual Spring oats plantings in central south England. Although it was agreed that in normal circumstances it wouldn't be economical to move oats across that distance.

To get a better idea of the planting of quality crops, the Board asked whether it would be favourable to bring AHDB's Spring variety survey forward. DE confirmed this would have to wait until the survey results were received in mid-May.

The Board discussed the new issue of the crashing price of crude oil, which is having a big impact now, possibly leading to a prolonged slow-down in economic activity depending on how quickly the global economy can recover. It is also having an effect on biofuel production and the putting a question of the short-term future of the UK biofuel plants (and those in the USA).

AGENDA TEM 13 – AOB – COVID-19

MGS reported to the Board the CLG is now having weekly meetings (facilitated by AHDB) and met yesterday at the request of trade associations to talk about COVID issues. These meetings will continue on a weekly basis. The main focus of the meeting was hygiene along the supply chain and in particular at farm level. In the next 48 hours an CLG will agree a set of procedures for people entering and leaving farms and handling the associated paperwork. Supply Chain issues will be identified and a single uniform document is being worked on to be produced imminently.

The Board discussed the current COVID-19 crisis and the role of AHDB going forward. The following points were made:

- The 2 key areas of concern are Health & Safety and the need for farmers to get clarity on how to handle staff, general hygiene and the supply chain



- Can passports be emailed to the point of delivery?
- Ensure Levy payers do not get lost in the excess of information and misinformation on social media. AHDB should be the point of sensible advice
- AHDB needs to work hard at keeping the supply chain going, ensuring food security for the nation and getting next year's crop in the ground.
- If Agronomists are not be able to come to farms where does that leave the farmer who needs advice?
- Lorry driver availability. There may be a need for a rebalancing of drivers and adhering to the tasks and assurance schemes. Animal feed being equally important in that discussion
- The MI team need to look at the implications on the food chain and in particular the rebalancing of food to consumers from food service to retail. Overall it is not anticipated that demand will drop, but the form the food supply takes is already changing rapidly.
- AHDB needs to add weight to the arguments to ensure the food processing sector has the level of workers it needs.

MGS asked the Board to let him know of any other points by the end of the week. These will be taken to the main AHDB March Board meeting.

The Chair thanked the 5 departing Board members for their period of time on the Board (Ian Backhouse, Andrew Moir, James Price, David Neal-Smith and Bob King). He apologised for the fact that the current Covid-19 situation prevented him from addressing this adequately but he would endeavour to address it properly at a later date.

The Chair informed the Board there are now 6 new appointed members that will be joining the Board from 1st April 2020.

MGS informed the Board that the new AHDB Chair, Nicholas Saphir had now been appointed. In time this would mean that the new Strategy would be approved and that the Request for Views work would be released by Defra.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 09.30

Dates of future meetings: -

Thursday 25th June 2020

