

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF AHDB DAIRY SECTOR COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 16th DECEMBER 2021
AS A TELECONFERENCE**

PRESENT: Lyndon Edwards (LE) - Chair, Peter Rees (PR), Richard Soffe (RS), David Craven (DC), Andrew Fletcher (AF), Liz Haines (LH), Ian Harvey (IH), Mary Quicke (MQ), Joe Towers (JT)

APOLOGIES: Scott Shearlaw, Oliver Hall

IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Flanagan (PF), Ken Boyns (KB), Kate Saunders (KS) – minutes

Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. He explained that the object of the meeting was to refine the workstreams ready to bring back to the council meeting in January. KB to give a session on the Environment/Sustainability and Animal Health & Welfare teams.

Workstream review feedback

PF reminded the council of the workstreams that were previously reviewed and gave some detail around each (colour coded table previously circulated)

Comment was made on the importance of 'how' AHDB engage with levy payers. This needs to be measured and how levy Payers hear about the benefits is important.

PF commented that there is an outstanding action on the Education Programme and the age group target audience. This is to be followed up.

A session for will run in March 2022 to brief the sector councils on the education programme. This will include updates on the work AHDB do with organisations such as BNF and LEAF.

To ensure the good work AHDB are doing is communicated externally the EatBalanced campaign has been published in the Farmers Guardian. The Communications team are also looking at using Farmers Weekly and other avenues.

Education Programme – comments from Sector Council

- The EatBalanced campaign could be incorporated with the Education Programme.
- The language needs to be clear. It is about consumers and educating young people rather than training and educating people already in the industry. The headlines need to be clear.
- Resources are needed in schools to incorporate agriculture into the curriculum and there are plenty of opportunities to build the environment element into Science.

KB led the discussions on Environment, Animal Health & Welfare and Workforce development (slides previously circulated) . KB gave detail around the 4 key areas that need work on - Clarity, Protect, Promoting and Safe Steps

Environment (Slide 1)

Comments from the Sector Council:

- The tone has to be positive and balanced. AHDB needs to be driving the agenda forward externally and internally (the word 'cope' in the headline is too passive and not positive enough).
- Levy Payers need assistance in producing a long-term spending plan (including what will be need such as training, grants etc)
- A starting point to help levy payers with a direction of travel on benchmarking is needed.
- If AHDB could become the 'go to' for Science and Evidence in Agriculture' this would help with reputation and trust.
- All data should be published and available.

The Sector Council agreed this captures the right territory to continue to work on the workstreams further.

Animal Health & Welfare (Slide 2)

KB introduced the section on the Animal Health & Welfare workstream.

Comments from the Sector Council:

- Focussing on improving what is already being done is most important. Reputation needs to be protected in everything AHDB do. Individual vet practises will not develop the tools, AHDB have to do that.
- The AHW pathway (N.B. this is England only) is the one that provides the mechanics of improvements.
- There appears to be a market failure in areas such as mastitis and lameness.
- Tools created must be user friendly. They need to be backed up with support to ensure they are used effectively.
- The calf to calving model could be rolled out to other areas of AHW.
- AHDB need to be aware there is a range of different audiences. This needs to be kept in mind when articulating it.

KB summarised the comments received on the AHW section. There seems a focus needed around reputation and some gaps in research (although need to be clarified where they are).

Workforce (Slide 3)

KB introduced the section on Workforce. Fundamentally, there is a lot of work that AHDB have inherited with a relatively small number of levy payers valuing the training courses around leadership and skills. There has also been questions around the work of TIAH.

Comments/views from the Sector Council on Skills:

- The Agri-leader conference brings in other industries and other perspectives. AHDB gives these opportunities to farmers that they are unable to do themselves. This sits at the core of what AHDB should be about.
- Management training is essential for the industry, particularly as farms get larger.
- AHDB should be doing more in terms of facilitating and being the 'hub'? Facilitating the best speakers into the industry rather than delivering all the work themselves.
- KB explained the set up & remit of TIAH. It is fundamentally funded by Defra and has been developed in the last 12-18 months.

- In recent years, Digital events have been more popular than face to face. Need to explore this being used for high level training.
- Discussion groups are a good value way of putting money in and hands off. Farmers can run the events themselves and use the AHDB funding as they see fit. This is a model that has low input for AHDB and effective.
- KB informed the council that AHDB are currently exploring whether they should help to do something about the labour availability issue. This would be a long term investment and is being currently explored. NFU have fact sheets to help with obtaining overseas labour.
- Regarding domestic labour, in the main the education is based on Key stage 2/3. There is a need to have materials for older children. Skills needed are people who can teach and present in the classroom to inspire young people with their careers.

Levy Payer Engagement Plan

PF updated the council on the Levy Payer Engagement plan. Registration has opened and there was 71 registrations by Monday. A weekly update and breakdown will keep coming through. Wales and the South West have the highest numbers to date.

LE and PF have been speaking to several processors and the KE teams are continually focusses to getting people to register and capturing information

A calendar of activity on a month-by-month basis with specific targets for the team will be in place.

The role for the sector council is to encourage contacts to register as much as possible, to work with local KEMs.

The Chair informed the group that the advertisement for a Dairy Sector Council member is now on the AHDB website. He asked the group to encourage anyone suitable to apply. Applications open until 12th January 2022.

END & CLOSE

The meeting closed at 17.00