

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF AHDB DAIRY SECTOR COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 17th JANUARY 2022
TELECONFERENCE**

PRESENT: Lyndon Edwards (LE) - Chair, Peter Rees (PR), David Craven (DC), Andrew Fletcher (AF), Liz Haines (LH), Ian Harvey (IH), Mary Quicke (MQ), Scott Shearlaw (SS), Joe Towers (JT), Oliver Hall (OH)

APOLOGIES: Richard Soffe (RS)

IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Flanagan (PF), Lenka Rihova (LR) – minutes, Nic Parsons (NP), Roseanne Thomas (RS), Chris Gooderham (CHG), Liam Byrne (LB), Marco Winters (MW), Tim Rycroft (TR), Will Jackson (WJ), Ken Boyns (KB)

WELCOME, APOLOGIES, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair, Lyndon Edwards, opened the meeting at 9am and welcomed those in attendance. Apologies were received from RS.

Declarations of interests were received from OH (a potential proposal from Andersons to AHDB on providing service on Grass measuring and sampling) and IH (he is part of the NFU Dairy board).

The Chair welcomed Tim Rycroft and Ken Boyns. Introductions were made.

TR reported on activities in relation to the recent Horticulture and Potatoes Ballot. AHDB is transitioning into a new operating model and progress has been made. TR thanked KB and people across the organisation for their work & support. On behalf of the organisation, TR also thanked the Council for their support in delivering the change.

The overall feedback on the mechanism of the Shape the Future vote has been positive. The aim is to get as many farmers as we can to vote and focus on positive messages to get people registered.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – 23RD NOVEMBER AND 16TH

DECEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting on the 23rd November and 16th December were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

PF went through the actions. All completed or on the agenda.

It was suggested to contact Janet Swadling (TIAH) to host a session on TIAH (The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture) and invite all the Sector Councils.

DAIRY SECTOR NEEDS/WORKSTREAMS

The workstreams have been refined based on the received feedback. The costs in the workstreams are estimates only. Once the workstreams have been finalised, they will be used to set the questions in the Shape the future vote where we get levy payers' views on what is most important to them.

Activities within the workstreams will be reviewed in the next few months. The results & recommendations will be available in June. Financial pressures will need to be considered. The

aim of this meeting was to ask the Council whether they were happy with the sector needs and workstreams and whether they had any concerns.

AHDB will not be making any fundamental changes before the Shape the future vote. Conversations to be held after the vote.

The Council discussed the expenditure on strategic farms, which is not mentioned in the workstreams. It was felt that strategic farms are our delivery mechanism rather than a topic and that this should be reflected in the relevant Workstreams.

Communication & engagement with levy payers is key. Each activity under the workstreams will have an integrated Comms budget. Transparency & presentation of the figures are important. The current focus is on levy payers' input and what they want their money to be spent on. Conversations to be held around broadening external funding (currently received from WelshGov, Betty Lawes Foundation and from breeding sector).

The Council went through the Workstreams. The only significant discussion was around Education, People in Agriculture and Sustainability workstreams where there is some thinking to do/tweaks to make. No real pushback on other workstreams text. Key points:

- **We Eat Balanced Consumer Campaign**

- ⇒ use more generic term about workstream rather than reflecting existing campaign
- ⇒ Impact, climate & sustainability – key in addressing consumers (influencers)

- **Education Programme**

- ⇒ Wider approach to education required
- ⇒ nutritional & environmental concerns (where the food comes from)
- ⇒ fact sheets & consistent messages across to teachers

- **Supporting our Industry to Deliver Sustainable Change**

- ⇒ AHDB to become a trusted source
- ⇒ Need to add research and grassland work to objectives
- ⇒ farmer to farmer activity key

- **People and Agriculture**

- ⇒ work with others where appropriate
- ⇒ AHDB to be an influencer in what other people do, going into Education
- ⇒ simple language & being clear on what AHDB can deliver

- **Market Intelligence**

- ⇒ A clear attribution of information to AHDB (logo etc.)
- ⇒ DairyPro – resource required, longer-term plans to be discussed at the March meeting
- ⇒ MI cost includes buying Kantar & other data

Shape the Future update

NP, RS and CHG joined the meeting at 11am.

NP presented on registrations. The focus has been on people whose contact AHDB already have, moving to stakeholders and wider audience. NP reported on registration & regional numbers and deliverables in the next month.

PF presented on Dairy KE team (organisational chart) and commented the staffing changes that are taking place within the team.

Comments were made on the registration process. Proactively registering for farmers is key (in compliance with GDPR). Wider stakeholder conversations will be arranged.

WJ thanked the Dairy/KE team for their effort in increasing registrations.

RT presented on communication activities that are supporting the Shape the Future.

The Chair reported on activities & conversations with the key stakeholders in the industry. Sector members have reported on their activities. Cooperation is key in supporting the registration to vote.

CHG presented on results to the Council (registration process). The aim is to provide weighted (based on milk volume) & unweighted results for all questions. In the next few weeks, the team will be looking at the structure of the voting portal. Key points covered:

- **Results breakdown**
- **Bandings for results – Dairy**

A geographic split (England/Scotland/Wales) was requested. On the current volume bandings, we could lose one band at lower level and increase one band at top end.

The Chair thanked RT and CHG for their input.

RT and CHG left the meeting at 11.50am. LB joined the meeting.

WE EAT BALANCED CAMPAIGN UPDATE

LB provided an update on the We Eat Balanced Campaign. It went live on 4th January and is running until 28th February. Results are expected at the end of March. Positive commentary coming back (farmers, consumers, processors, retailers). AHDB are monitoring for negatives (not many). Focus on communication. LB reported on the key statements the campaign was built around:

- ⇒ **Vitamin B12 & health**
- ⇒ **One of the most sustainable in the world**
- ⇒ **Welfare standards**

A comment was made about working with influencers. AHDB are working on this and have some influencers within the farming circles. It was suggested to involve high profile personalities (cost and what it delivers implications/concerns). It hasn't worked out very well in the past.

A comment was made about Beyond Meat campaign.

SECTOR DASHBOARD & FINANCIAL UPDATE

KB re-joined the meeting at 12.15pm.

A paper had been distributed to the Council prior to the meeting. PF reported on the sector dashboard. The paper has been taken as read.

PF commented on the Medicine Hub, which is now managed by Ray Keating. Good progress is now being made, particularly on Dairy.

There have been some resource gaps in the Environmental team, and recruitment activity is in place which aims to address this. The AHDB Environment steering group will be looking at all the current work. There was further questioning on resource levels within teams to deliver activities. AHDB is going through a process of change. We'll have a clearer picture when the reforecast process is complete & this will be factored into budget paper in March.

KB reported on LI, which operates independently of AHDB. Comments made on cattle system and the policies around it.

The group discussed LIP in relation to the consultation process (discussions with levy payers as to their role in LIP).

PF reported on the management accounts. A paper had been distributed to the Council prior to the meeting.

KB commented on level of reserves. A revised reserves policy will be presented to the AHDB board (a paper to go out). Meetings on budgeting are in place.

KB reported on VAT. AHDB is currently budgeting on both basis (can & can't reclaim VAT). AHDB is working closely with Defra.

A comment was made about the increased number of Dairy debtors.

PF reported on the levy rates for 2022/23. The Dairy Council agreed to maintain the levy rate at the current levy.

GENETICS STRATEGIC REVIEW

MW joined the meeting at 12.40am and reported on the Genetics strategic review. Feedback to be received in July. Value for levy payers is key. Some concern was expressed over the challenges of having an independent & objective review (who does the review is critical).

Strategic review recommendation was approved by the Dairy Council.

AOB / MASTITIS PATTERN TOOL

The Council discussed the Mastitis pattern tool. A paper had been distributed to the Council prior to the meeting. The objective was to discuss whether to renew funding for the Mastitis Control Plan for 2022 at a cost of £42K. It was agreed to keep it going at the minimum cost. A further review in June.

LE reported on appraisals, which should be completed by 10th February.

The Sector Council recruitment has been extended until 24th January. Interviews to be held in early March.

Future meeting dates to be provided once they have been finalised.

The meeting closed at 1pm.