

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF AHDB DAIRY SECTOR COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2024, AHDB,
MIDDLEMARCH BUSINESS PARK, COVENTRY**

IN PERSON ATTENDEES: Lyndon Edwards (LE) - Chair, Mike King (MK), Rob Nancekivell (RN), Gemma Smale-Rowland (GSR), Patrick Morris-Eyton (PME), Liz Haines (LH), Ian Harvey (IH), Scott Shearlaw (SS), David Craven (DC), Colin Ferguson (CF), Andrew Fletcher (AF), Peter Rees (PR), Joe Towers (JT)

APOLOGIES: None

REMOTE ATTENDEES: John Gilliland (JG) (Items 5), Jenn Birrell (JB) (Item 12), Will Jackson (WJ)

IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Flanagan (PF), Nic Parsons (NP), Tony Holmes (TH) (Items 9 & 10), Ken Boyns (KB), Chis Gooderham (CG) (Item 5), Dave Craig (DCr) (Item 8), Anna Hughes (AH) minutes

<p>AGENDA ITEM 1 - WELCOME & APOLOGIES</p> <p>The Chair, LE, opened the meeting at 8.30am and welcomed those in attendance. No apologies for absence.</p>
<p>AGENDA ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>CF has stepped down as Director of NFUS</p>
<p>AGENDA ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 5 December 2024 were approved.</p>
<p>AGENDA ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>PF went through the actions from the last meeting explaining most were either complete or would be covered on the agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levy payer contact details will be discussed later on in agenda – Lucy Randolph had supplied a slide showing DBT and AHDB funding. - LE and Phil Hadley have discussed B&L exports. – PF explained that action on Marketing refers to full evaluation of activity, that is in plan for later in 2024/25. - PR recently attended a cross-sector dashboard working group. <p>IH has attended the first RB209 working group and encouraged others who have an interest or knowledge of fertilizers to put themselves forward. https://ahdb.org.uk/nutrient-management-guide-rb209</p>
<p>AGENDA ITEM 5 – ENVIRONMENT</p>



CG & JG were welcomed to the meeting and updated the group on the baselining pilot explaining the focus for this is to underpin marketing and reputation work.

CG explained that the cost for 50 Dairy farms over five years, with the costs currently front-loaded. CG added that there may be a way to tap into some Government funding as opposed to solely using Levy Payer funding.

AF queried if AHDB need to re-do the work that is already taking place in Northern Ireland and Scotland. CG explained that what AHDB are proposing is a more enhanced version of what is already being carried out.

The Sector Council were in agreement to support the baselining activity.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – CHAIR REPORT/LEVY PAYER FEEDBACK FROM COUNCIL

LE highlighted the Engagement Team updates that were included in the pack. Marco Winter's team is also working on an index for health similar to Johnes system which is currently being used in France as a statistic on bull breeds.

LE had recently attended DairyTech and commended the AHDB team and those that put the stand together, adding there was a lot of positivity around the event. LE went on to explain that the event coincided with the announcement from DEFRA regarding the levy increase.

LE explained that the Let's Eat Balanced marketing campaign had been live since the New Year and the feedback had been good. IH expressed concern that feedback he had received at Semex that farmers hadn't seen Let's Eat Balanced and stressed that AHDB should encourage farmer comms so farmers can be 'pointed in the right direction'.

PF and MK attended Gulfood at the start of the week – PF explained that there were seven exporters on the AHDB stand. Lucy Randolph had arranged a breakfast event on the first morning with over 50 buyers. 100,000 people from 190 countries attended Gulfood and there were 5500 exhibitors. The sector council requested a list of trade events AHDB will be attending during the year from LR.

ACTION for Lucy Randolph to supply a list of trade events

AGENDA ITEM 7 – FARM ASSURANCE

DE was welcomed to the meeting. WJ gave the group an update on developments over the past few weeks explaining that the NFU have commissioned a report of the Governance of Red Tractor and the review is available on the NFU website: <https://www.nfuonline.com/updates-and-information/red-tractor-reviews/>

WJ explained that in the past week NFU Scotland and Ulster Farmers Union are now on board with AHDB and NFU on a broader review of Farm Assurance. The parties are in the process of putting a commission in place. WJ added that the hope is that a review will be carried out and reported back by the end of the year.

DE explained to the group that in the B&L Sector there is a piece of work looking at comparisons of standards in Australia, NZ, North America. DE added that for B&L the consultant is Jonathan Burnie. CF queried what the scope of assurance would be with DE explaining it would be the evidence gathering.

ACTION for an update on Farm Assurance at the next Sector Council meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – DIGITAL, DATA & TECHNOLOGY

DCr was welcomed to the meeting explaining that he was asking the Council to: support high level plans to update AHDBs Digital, Data and Technology platform and services; release some funds to allow AHDB to begin discovery work; return to a Council meeting in the summer where DCr will present discovery findings and potentially request further funds

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

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

DCr explained that he will be introducing some improvements to the website in the next 6-8 weeks. The group were also asked for volunteers for a cross-sector DD&T steering group.

ACTION for DCr to forward some more information to the group including a breakdown of the discovery work, however the Sector Council were minded to approve the request for funding.

ACTION for Volunteers from the Sector Council to put themselves forward for the DD&T steering group.

LH requested that more of the tools and services on the website take Accessibility into consideration and that she would be happy to work with DCr.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – FINANCE UPDATE

TH explained that the FY Forecast is that the Workstreams are underspent.

IH expressed concern that the Core Comms budget is so high, especially going into 2024/25. TH explained that some Comms work can be pre-planned as part of the budgeting process, but some other work is linked to business need throughout the financial year. Actual Core Communications costs will be lower than budget as costs will be allocated to Workstreams during the financial year.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – BUDGET

PF went through the 2024/25 budget highlighting a significant increase in exports, marketing and environment. PF asked the Sector Council for confirmation that they were happy with the proposed budget.

The group approved the budgets against each Workstream and Shared Services costs except Animal Health and Welfare and Core Communications workstreams where more detail was requested.

Action for PF to provide more clarity on the Animal Health and Welfare workstream budget

Action for PF/TH to provide more transparency on the Core Communications budget, what Communications budget sits against each workstream & process for costs to move from Core Communications budget and Workstreams during the year

The group were told that, with regards to Genetics, there is likely to be proposals put forward from Marco Winters on additional resource. Income for the Genetics workstream is focused to double during 24/25 and with this increased income comes a greater expectation from the Sector in terms of delivery.



AGENDA ITEM 11 – LEVY PAYER CONTACT DETAILS

PF explained to the group that he wants to have contact details for all active dairy farmers. Having considered PFs paper, the Sector Council view was that the best route to secure farmer contact details and keep these up-to-date was from the processors. The group went on to discuss how AHDB can make it easier for processors to supply details taking GDPR issues into consideration. Agreement was for PF to follow up with the main processors and ensure that this route is exhausted before moving to alternative routes.

Action for PF to speak to Emmanuel Ogungbe regarding GDPR guidance and then contact the processors and feedback to the sector council.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – DASHBOARDS

JB was welcomed to the meeting and explained to the group that, for the dashboards going forward the reputation work will be split out. PR queried if there is any way to separate out the areas waiting for data therefore time can be spent focusing on the right areas.

ACTION for JB to remove the areas which are waiting for data on future dashboards to avoid confusion on what requires focus and what is simply awaiting data

ACTION AH to ensure Dashboard is earlier on the agenda at the next meeting

AGENDA ITEM 13 – AOB

- BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sports) update attached to pack for info
- Dairy Exports working group notes and actions added to the pack for info
- Dairy Marketing working group notes and actions added to the pack for info
- During yesterday's induction the group were reminded that the teams at AHDB are always looking for farmers who would be happy to share their story
- GSR asked if there was any update from Dairy Roadmap team on Soya, NP explained the guides are currently being updated and will share them as soon as they become available
- IH explained that the ['Fair Dealings Obligations \(Milk\) Regulations 2024'](#) opened yesterday, the process will take 6 weeks taking either a yes or no vote, 3 months after that contracts have to be code complaint then 12 months changes in contracts must be code complaint.
- LE thanked SS, AF and DC for their contribution to the sector council over the past 6 years and presented them with a small gift to mark the occasion.

AGENDA ITEM 13 – DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Thursday 6 June 2024
- Tuesday 17 September 2024
- Tuesday 12 November 2024

