

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE AHDB DAIRY SECTOR COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 8.30 A.M.
IN THE BOARD ROOM, AHDB, SISKIN PARKWAY EAST, COVENTRY**



PRESENT:

Lyndon Edwards (LE) (Chair), Mike King (MK), Colin Ferguson (CF), Patrick Morris-Eyton (PME), Liz Haines (LH), Rob Nancekivell (RN), Ian Harvey (IH), Joe Towers (JT), Peter Rees (PR), Gemma Smale-Rowland (GSR), Andrew Warne (AW), Emma Furnival (EF), Andrew Rutter (AR), Anna Bowen (AB)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Flanagan (PF), Nic Parsons (NP), Katie Davies (minute taking), Graham Wilkinson (agenda items 1-6 only), Liam Byrne (LB) (item 7 only), Ken Boyns (KB) (item 10 only), Tony Holmes (TH) (item 11 only), Will Jackson (WJ) and Roseanne Thomas (RT) (item 13 only)

AGENDA ITEM 1 – CHAIR WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

LE opened the meeting and welcomed everyone including the four new Council members joining their first official Sector Council meeting. LE noted that NFU had joined the dinner the previous evening.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was suggested that due to new members now on the Council, everyone reconfirms their declarations of interest. These are all noted on the main register and new members will be emailed a form to complete noting theirs.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

The minutes of the Sector Council meeting held on 17 September 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SECTOR COUNCIL MEETING HELD 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

PF verbally updated the Council on actions from the September Sector Council meeting. There will be an interim Council meeting arranged for some time in December.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – CHAIR REPORT / LEVY PAYER FEEDBACK FROM COUNCIL

LE updated the Council on key activities he has been involved with since the last Council meeting.

- Action Group on Johnes is arranging an annual conference on 26 November to be held in Worcester.
- Southwest Dairy Show at Shepton Mallet was a busy event and had a good amount of levy payers coming to the stand.
- Genetics advisory forum meeting - with main thrust towards single step genomics to benefit x-bred cattle.
- Export showcase event at Ashridge House had a significant presence from UK exporters and overseas buyers. The event was a fantastic success, so well done to the AHDB exports team.
- LE noted he is now chair of Dairy Roadmap. Doing a review currently and looking to move this forward with strong plans.
- LE and PF attended IDF in Paris. Gained a lot from attending this show which has a significant worldwide presence.

LE noted there had been a couple more Dairy Insights events with stakeholders and farmers held in Wales. PF noted that Arla has asked to do an insight day with their board of representatives, so a date is being confirmed for this. RN feels everyone on the Council needs to join an insight day. PR asked how the invite list was drawn up for Wales as there could have been improvements here. LE acknowledged that they do not have the farmer audience for these quite right yet and there are learnings to come out of the events in Wales and Scotland. LE noted we need to review how these insight days are arranged.

Action: LE and PF to follow up with all attendees of the insight days and look to set up a community.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – 2024/25 BUSINESS PLAN

GW presented the updated business plan slides. The activities run to the end of the financial year and GW noted they are currently working on the plan for 2025/26 which will need input from the Sector Council.

GW noted the overall RAG status for Dairy is green “on track.” On key essentials 5, GW noted there is an all-staff conference in December which the Board are also joining. Measurements on a new vision for the organisation is going to be presented at the December main Board meeting. PDRs are at 90% complete and linked to the business plan. Janine Hayter, the new Head of Culture and Transformation has recently joined the organisation to help with the work around culture.

On key essentials 6, GW noted they are taking a three-year forecasting approach so getting more of a longer-term view on finances. An interim update to the website has been completed, with discovery work now being done on further updates. This work will be shared with the main Board in early 2025 to get approval to move forward with it. GW noted the leadership team are currently looking at all risks on the corporate register and will refine these.

On key essentials 7, GW noted that LIDAR scanning is being done on the baselining project. The report on the work we are doing around Data Custodian was published last week. The team are busy turning the report into a business case to put to Defra to secure funding. The independent assurance review will also be published towards the end of the year. GW noted that he and Nicholas Saphir (AHDB Chair) are meeting with the SoS, Steve Reid, in the coming weeks.

PF presented the dairy specific slides which have no changes and overall RAG status still on track.

PF noted there was one area where the target was missed - this was around Medicine Hub. Industry (RUMA) target was 4,000 for 2023 datasets and the industry only managed to hit c. 2700 datasets. A report will be released later in the year. A robust discussion followed.

Action: It was agreed that Medicine Hub would be discussed in further detail at a future meeting.



AGENDA ITEM 7 – MARKETING

Liam Byrne joined the meeting and presented some slides on recent marketing activity specific to the dairy sector. These included highlights from the “Let’s eat balanced” campaign and the “Milk your Moments” campaign. The Milk your Moments campaign was in collaboration with BUCS (British University and Colleges Sports Clubs) and AHDB now sponsor the Milk Championship BUCS Super Rugby. An advertising campaign featuring Olympic champion, Christine Ohuruogu featured in 11 Nationals, had regional broadcasting and social content was seen over 13 million times.

LB gave an update on the work Kate Arthur has recently been doing around our nutrition and health strategy, focusing on promoting the nutritional benefits of red meat and dairy. LB emphasised the importance of engaging with external stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, e.g.: doctors, dietitians and NGOs who are very vocal in the media and retailer nutrition teams, and the challenges of influencing their perspectives on red meat and dairy. Key activities included a BNF round table event and webinar, a farm visit at Harper Adams for Nutritionists in industry, and the Nutrition Society Symposium in Belfast.

LB noted a Parliamentary briefing proposal is being worked up to take place before the end of March '25. The new government has made promises and pledges around offering free breakfast clubs and free school meals. This briefing will be in collaboration with Elaine Hindal (BNF) and Stephen Morgan (Minister for Early Years). LB noted the significant role of milk with breakfast clubs.

IH noted that with the new intake of MPs, the NFU had formed university graduate style relationships with these MPs. Could they be included in this parliamentary briefing work. LB confirmed Kate Arthur would work with NFU on seeing if this could happen.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – WALES BVD PROPOSAL

PF gave a brief overview of the paper from the Wales Industry BVD Steering Group that was included in the pack for information. AHDB provided funding in the past for BVD work in England, but this has now stopped. PF noted the Wales BVD Group was asking AHDB to consider supporting their effort with match funding from HCC. The Wales BVD group would then propose to ask the Welsh Government to match this with additional funds to reach their total cash requirement. In addition to the cash fund, the Wales BVD Group also plan to explore other sources of funds or in-kind contributions from the industry.

EF asked if there was a timeline for this funding or was it infinite. PR noted that he believed the request was for three years, but he would seek confirmation of this and report back. IH noted his concern as to why we would contribute to bring Wales up to the standards of Scotland on BVD, when England does not have anything in place themselves. CF noted that the Council need confirmation of the amount, the term of funding and that the funding would be conditional on the other organisations matching our funding. LH noted the Council cannot decide on this without looking at the entire business plan and budget for next year. PR agreed and said we can delay this discussion and any decision until we have agreed the budget for next year.



Action: Discussion and decision on any BVD funding to be rolled forward and taken as part of fixing budget for 25/26.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – LEVY PAYERS CONTACT DETAILS

PF gave a brief update on progress to date on getting levy payer contact details. There is further work to do but a redacted list of active English and Welsh dairy farmers and their addresses are available on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website.

AW noted our KE/Engagement team should be owning this area of work and they need to drive this forward. The outcome we would like is to have all our farmer's contact details.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – DATA CUSTODIAN

Ken Boyns joined the meeting and presented some slides updating the Council on progress made so far on Data Custodian. He noted the UK is going to push tougher environmental rules. KB further noted that AHDB was working in collaboration with key stakeholders. The Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP is a partnership between Government and Industry to improve the environmental sustainability and healthiness of food and drink through better food data). The report on the work will be published on 1 November, and there is a meeting with FDTP next week which Minister Daniel Zeichner will also attend. A clear proposal for the recommendation on the way forward will come to all Sector Council meetings in January 2025.

Action: KB asked to circulate his Data Custodian slides as well as the IGD report to the Council members.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – FINANCE UPDATE

Tony Holmes joined the meeting and gave a verbal update. The full year forecast predicts an overspend for the Dairy Sector with an increase in net levy income being more than offset by an increase in workstream expenditure, the majority of the overspends are in Animal Health & Welfare, Livestock Genetics, Environment and Commercial/Betty Lawes. Some of these costs have been offset by a forecasted reduction in Core Comms as costs are booked against specific workstream activities.

TH noted he is happy to show each quarter once the accounts are finalised.

Action: EF, IH and TH to have a meeting to discuss what could be included within the finance paper going forward.

TH noted work on the 2025/26 budget has started and papers would be shared at the appropriate time. The budget will then be approved by the Sector Council at the March meeting.

IH asked if there were any implications to AHDB on the recent NI changes. TH is still confirming if AHDB are exempt and will confirm once he knows.



AGENDA ITEM 12 – BUSINESS PLAN AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL FOR 2025/26

PF would like to get a sense of direction of travel from the Council to allow him to draft his workstreams for the budget planning. His suggested 2025/26 key essentials for dairy were:

- a) Drive demand for British dairy
- b) Data and evidence to underpin our reputation and farmer engagement
- c) Collaborate to produce a sector delivery plan
- d) Add value to levy payer businesses

PR was concerned about the removal of practical support for farmers which was one of the key essentials for this year and where would that then sit in the business plan.

Action: LE asked the Council to go away and reflect on this slide then feedback any comments to PF.

AGENDA ITEM 13 – COMMS TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

Will Jackson and Roseanne Thomas joined the meeting. WJ briefly updated the Council of his new role as Market Development and Communications Director. He then presented some slides around the comms team and their areas of work.

Action: WJ asked the Sector Council to all check their preferences on our website to ensure they are getting all the publications they would like.

RT presented an update on the task and finish group work. She noted the Qa Research was included in the Council papers. Key takeaways from this research were timing of emails and what time they should be sent shorter and sharper emails and the relevance of content. RT also noted the change in Strategic Comms and each sector now has a dedicated comms lead supporting the sector and reporting into the Sector Directors.

LH asked if there will be a chance to review the new website accessibility. PF confirmed that yes, this will be able to happen.

IH noted that there is no benchmarking and development activity in the report. WJ confirmed that measurements for dairy comms will be included in the business plan and the sector now has a dedicated strategic comms person.

AGENDA ITEM 14 – FARMER ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

NP gave a verbal update on the working group. There is a gap for someone on a seasonal calving system to join the group - AB volunteered to join. The next meeting will be in December.

PME asked NP if the KE team could ensure they advertise the strategic farm events much further in advance. EF asked if the Council could have a rolling calendar that showed all events over the next 12 months.



AGENDA ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS
LE closed the meeting by thanking PR for all his contribution and time to the Dairy Sector Council over the last few years he has been a member. He massively helped LE when he first joined as PR was the interim Dairy Sector Council Chair.
AGENDA ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Date of next Meeting: Thursday 16 January 2025 at AHDB offices in Coventry.

