

## **SUMMARY OF AHDB DAIRY BOARD HELD ON 23rd JANUARY 2019**

### **THE BOARD ROOM, AHDB, STONELEIGH PARK**

**PRESENT:** Gwyn Jones (Chair), David Cotton (DCo), David Craven (DCr), Andrew Fletcher, Tim Gue, Oliver Hall, Mary Quicke, Peter Rees, Scott Shearlaw, Sophie Churchill (Potato Board Chair)

**APOLOGIES:** Janette Prince, Richard Soffe

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Paul Flanagan, Anna Farrell, Jane King, Richard Laverick, James Wilde, Ken Boyns, Phil Bicknell, Chris Gooderham, Di Prescott, Rebecca Geraghty, Susannah Bolton, Delyth Davies, Rebecca Miah, Christine Watts, Sue Cleaver

### **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair, Gwyn Jones, opened the meeting at 8:30am and welcomed those in attendance, including Sophie Churchill, Chair of the AHDB Potato Board. Apologies were received from Janette Prince and Richard Soffe.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no new declarations of interest.

### **MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

The minutes from the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018 were examined, and three typos noted. Subject to these amendments, the minutes were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

An update on the matters arising from the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018 was given. The Board expressed concern that there was still no clarity for the industry regarding export paperwork post-Brexit. Several specific examples were discussed, for example, a cheese exporter who will not risk buying cheese for Australia as it will arrive post-Brexit.

Farmbench KPIs were now broadly agreed. It was confirmed that unless there was new significant feedback, it was now right to move forward.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - GWYN JONES**

The Chair's report was taken as read. The Board thanked the Chair for his valuable service bringing the varied industry connections together.

### **DIRECTORS AND OPERATIONAL REPORT - PAUL FLANAGAN**

Paul Flanagan presented an update on operational matters.

Scottish Dairy Hub would transfer across to NFUS from 4<sup>th</sup> February, which would free up money for another AHDB staff member in Scotland. The Board requested that the recruitment process be accelerated, including the advertisement for a North of England KEM role.

Anti-dairy messages were debated. The Board were in agreement that industry messages needed to be clear, and knowledge gaps filled, e.g. explanation of environmental costs such as carbon footprint of Dairy versus soya/almond milk. The Board felt that it would be useful to have a crib sheet with scientifically based evidence that could be used by Dairy farmers. AF already had infographics regarding carbon sequestration, and livestock's contribution to emissions. These would be circulated to the Board.

## **FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – PAUL FLANAGAN**

The finance management accounts were examined and discussed.

## **CEO UPDATE – JANE KING**

Jane King gave the Board an overview of the financial challenges and wider industry challenges that AHDB was currently facing. The Defra Request for Views had ended mid-November. Brexit planning was clearly a priority for ministers, and as a result AHDB was still waiting for a response from Government. However, some top messages coming through were as follows:

- There was a more favourable response to retaining statutory levy.
- Ideas were being explored around having a vote every 5 or 6 years to ask industry whether Boards are doing a good job.
- There were strong messages about AHDB being more accessible, more open and transparent, and communicating effectively the work that is done and where the value lies.

Jane King, Rebecca Geraghty and Tom Hind were involved in industry consultation and meetings about what the future might look like and what outcomes industry needed; for example, potentially becoming a more professionalised industry, how to make use of data and what opportunities for farmers will come from this, what can be done about exports, and should a strong British brand identity be built? All these ideas were being considered, and out of the work of the Food and Drinks Sector Council there would be recommendations that may impact many key stakeholders in industry.

The Board were updated with information about developments in the “What Works” campaign.

TH highlighted several programmes that are being considered by Defra, including ELMS – Environmental Land Management, and the Clean Air Strategy.

There was a concern from the Board that the AHDB recruitment process had become unwieldy. They reiterated their desire to have a new member of staff to head up the Strategic Farms as soon as possible.

Good progress had been made with the CRM project. Two of the Board members were involved, giving feedback, and this gave confidence.

## **LIP – RICHARD LAVERICK**

The Chair welcomed Richard Laverick who gave a verbal update on the latest progress with LIP. RL explained the developments surrounding funding, the resulting position being that Defra was now committed to funding the whole programme. AHDB could choose to make contributions if additions were required/desired further on in the life of the programme. Defra had confirmed that AHDB's role in the project was still to lead the project, and that its role would not be undermined.

RL summarised the phases of the project. There were two distinct elements – one of building the Livestock Information Programme, and then creating the Livestock Information Service that will use the system once it has been built.

The Board requested a joint LIP session for livestock boards, to get an update on progress, and meet the project management team that were implementing the project.

### **JAMES WILDE UPDATE ON LANCET REPORT RESPONSE**

The Chair welcomed James Wilde who gave the Board a short update on the AHDB response to the Lancet Report. AHDB led on the response to red meat and Dairy UK had decided to take the lead on the response to Dairy. Regarding red meat, AHDB got lines in to the Guardian, Sun and Express. AHDB had information on the website at midnight. There was an ongoing dialogue with NFU and the National Pig Association etc. Animated graphics were used on social media, for example, highlighting the emissions position on livestock versus other industries. AHDB contacted its contacts on Farmers Guardian, Farmers Weekly and the Grocer. This meant there was more of a showing for AHDB quotes than normal, particularly from Farmers Weekly. A monitoring brief was kept for the following days. As the report coincided with the Brexit vote there may have been less immediate coverage than expected. JW shared with the Board some of the information and resources (red meat focussed) which farmers, stakeholders and other advocates can use. AHDB was also working with the NFU to discuss how to go forwards, for example joint projects looking at the environmental framework, looking for gaps and how to add value.

The Board asked how information was being imparted to influencers. AHDB had a growing pool of advocates and experts who were very knowledgeable about emissions, and were retweeting AHDB content. Resources needed to be evidence based. The Board discussed the ongoing areas for emissions work, such as methane production versus impact on biodiversity.

### **SENSE CHECK ON ACTIVITIES – PHIL BICKNELL**

PB introduced the Board to a sense check on activities that was taking place at AHDB. The starting point was the Activity Plan which captures all current activities, and was also used to ensure hypothecation within teams. All current activities were being considered carefully, to check whether they were still a good fit, for example, in terms of current strategy, sector priorities or levy payer impact. This was just the start of the process, and the list would be reviewed to pinpoint priorities. The aim was to free up space to focus resource on the things that make the biggest difference, resulting in a greater organisational focus and clarity, for staff, boards and industry. There would be a clearer narrative back to the industry on what we do and what we don't to, and a greater impact for focussed activity that delivers meaningful change.

It was critical that decisions were supported with evidence that gives indication of outcome and value. An ideal would be to be able to have evidence that for every £ of levy, this delivers £X back.

JK highlighted that the Sector Boards had a role to be courageous about narrowing down and having a clear focus. The Dairy Board were ahead in this, with the strong focus on Optimal Dairy Systems.

The Board discussed issues surrounding recruitment to an industry that had an aging workforce. JK shared the work that AHDB was doing in devising a new skills strategy for industry to promote a dynamic forward looking industry. Tess Howe was working with a skills leadership group and stakeholders looking at the issues surrounding recruitment and career development. Several of the Board were working with schools and colleges, and emphasised the importance of a collective industry campaign to form a coherent plan that promotes careers in agriculture – industry was looking at AHDB to help drive momentum. The Skills Strategy was not UK wide as the devolved nations were producing their own strategy, however Tess was sharing all findings with QMS and NFUS.

### **MI REPORT – CHRIS GOODERHAM**

The Chair welcomed Chris Gooderham and Patty Clayton. CG presented an update outlining the challenges set and next steps for MI.

The Board were very complementary of the MI team activity, including the videos, future looking work, and dynamic articles. PR suggested adding on to the website when the video will be updated next. There was a discussion of how the new website will help highlight other related and relevant articles and direct users to further useful content.

### **CRM – DI PRESCOTT**

The Chair welcomed Di Prescott and Rebecca Geraghty to the room. DP provided the Board with an update on the progress of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) data, in particular on the segmentation criteria and work that had been undertaken to improve the quality of the dairy data. PR and JP represented the Dairy Board on the working group that had been set up to review and improve the segmentation criteria for data held on the CRM, to provide for the basis for better targeting and lead to greater engagement with AHDB. The Chair thanked DP and summarised that there had been good progress with the CRM data, and it was now moving at pace. PR was thanked and JP was thanked in her absence for her contributions.

### **FARMBENCH – REBECCA GERAGHTY, SUSANNAH BOLTON**

The Chair noted that most of the Dairy Board had now used Farmbench, and generally everyone found it clear and easy to use. SS had given detailed feedback and was positive that it would be a good programme once finished.

It was noted that training KE managers would be critical. The Dairy sector would need more support than initially anticipated. Suggestions from the Board regarding Farmbench improvements were:

- A “wizard” for first time users to talk through where to enter data
- Setting up grass as a crop
- Using the discussion group training session as a model for training farmers – i.e. which would result in creation of their own “self-help” groups
- “Test farm” had not worked for all Board members
- Not a lot of business keep their dairy heifers separately, so they would not be able to separate out their overheads in this way. There was a workaround in Farmbench to put these costs together at the end, which could be signposted to help first time users.

SB updated the Board with progress on recruitment of a new senior individual to lead on the Strategic Dairy Farms. The Board were very keen that this process take place as quickly as possible, and requested a schedule showing closing date, interview date, and target start date.

### **WALES ACTIVITY UPDATE – DELYTH DAVIES**

The Chair welcomed Delyth Davies who provided the Board on the progress of Welsh Dairy. The delivery of Strategic Farms in Wales would be undertaken jointly with Farming Connect. PR had agreed to chair the steering group.

The message from Welsh government was that they were getting impatient to have Strategic Dairy Farms in Wales. Four farms were needed in the system as soon as possible. The Board discussed the issues surrounding farm recruitment. There are instances where a farm may for example, fail an audit. It was important to have the deadline in place, but also from a reputational risk point of view the farm would need to be the right one. The audit, or potential for audit failure, did not necessarily mean that farm would not be recruited, if it then agreed to make the requisite changes.

### **CONSUMER ACTIVITY, NEW CREATIVE – REBECCA MIAH**

The Chair welcomed Rebecca Miah and Christine Watts. RM presented the Board with a market development update paper, which was taken as read. The following topics were included:



- A social listening piece of work on animal ethics and welfare to understand what consumers are saying was taking place.
- A continued push for retail engagement had resulted in potential interest from ASDA and Co-op.
- A positive story linking dairy with emotional well-being was highlighted.

**AOB**

The Chair closed the meeting at 1pm.