

**SUMMARY OF AHDB DAIRY BOARD MEETING
HELD ON 24th JULY 2019**

THE BOARD ROOM, AHDB, STONELEIGH PARK

PRESENT: Gwyn Jones (Chair), David Craven, Oliver Hall, Liz Haines, Ian Harvey, Mary Quicke, Scott Shearlaw, Joe Towers

IN ATTENDANCE: Phil Bicknell (item 10 – 13), Susannah Bolton (items 10-13), Sue Cleaver (minutes), Paul Flanagan, Jenny Gibbons (item 9), Phil Hadley (items 10 -13), Tom Hind (items 6 – 11), Jane King (items 5 – 9), Nic Parsons (items 10 -13), Lucy Randolph (item 12)

APOLOGIES: Andrew Fletcher, Peter Rees, Richard Soffe

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair, Gwyn Jones, opened the meeting at 8:30 am and welcomed those in attendance. Apologies were received from Richard Soffe, Peter Rees and Andrew Fletcher.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations of interest.

MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 15th May 2019

The minutes from the meeting held on 15th May 2019 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Board discussed the “meet the team” meeting that had taken place on 23rd July, which they had found insightful, and had stimulated lively debate. They felt it would be useful to have a similar meeting on an annual basis.

Andy Richardson (VOLAC) and Graham Wilkinson (ARLA) had attended the Dairy Board dinner the previous night. The Board appreciated their time and for sharing their thoughts around the future of the industry. There had been interesting conversations regarding the Danish model and the relationship between ARLA and SEGES.

CEO UPDATE

JK updated the Board with the wider developments that were taking place at AHDB. The delivery agreement for the Livestock Information Programme had been signed, which AHDB would be building in partnership with industry and government. The initial results from the Defra Request For Views consultation would be shared with the Main Board at their meeting on 30th July. There was a discussion of the political changes that were taking place, the improvements in increasing the openness of AHDB, and the need to continuously strive to engage farmers and growers.

DIRECTOR'S AND OPERATIONAL REPORT



PF presented the Director's and Operational update. There was a discussion of the dependence of several KPIs on FarmBench.

FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Finance Management Accounts were discussed. The largest variance was due to the delay to the Dairy Improvement Project (DIP) in Wales.

WELFARE OUTCOMES – Jenny Gibbons

JG updated the Board on the latest developments in assessing welfare against progressive standards on continuously housed dairy herds in Britain. Twenty progressive continuously housed herds were independently audited against a progressive health and welfare dairy standard. Measures included disease, antimicrobial usage, mortality, environmental comfort (including recording of lying times), novel measures of positive welfare, environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

There was debate around the perception of the public regarding continuously housed cows. There was a role for AHDB to provide independent, objective, reliable scientific evidence. It also had a duty of care to present the facts within the broader context of the direction of consumer trends.

The Board were appreciative of the results so far, as this was an information gap that needed addressing. They approved JG's proposal to take the welfare consultation work forward by consulting with all involved in order to scope out possible next steps. JG would present the results of this consultation at the November Board, and provide some costs for further work.

STRATEGIC DAIRY FARMS – Susannah Bolton, Nic Parsons

Nic Parsons reported on the Strategic Dairy Farm Group (SDFG) programme, including a background to the programme, an update on present activity and recruitment, and a plan for future activity.

The Board noted the geographical location of the farms, and there was a discussion of the current gaps in SW Scotland and Cumbria, and the plans to fill them.

NP was keen to take best practice from other sectors, e.g. the C&O model in which the new Strategic farmers are brought together in an induction style meeting, to form their own cohort that will provide support and motivation. They could also become involved in the Dairy Leader programme that Mark Campbell offered (December 2nd, 3rd, Cardiff). There were opportunities for upskilling, for example, media training, opportunities such as visiting Weetabix, or different dairy businesses to gain different ideas, people management skills etc. Communications and press should be harnessed to raise awareness of the SDFG programme which in turn would build momentum and increase awareness of the benefits.

TH stressed that it was important not to lose sight that the SDFG programme was not only about delivering an increasing number of farms, but to make a difference in the performance of the Dairy industry. The KPIs would be the ultimate measure of success.

The Board highlighted the need to plan the meeting content carefully so that it was sufficiently challenging for high achieving farmers, and also encouraged a continued attendance at meetings. Farms that opened their doors faced increased scrutiny, and the Board discussed mitigating factors, including the importance of the thorough pre-launch audit which provided evidence and gave assurance. The Board wanted to be able to access a library of reports from each SDF. Nic committed to working with Marcomms to put that in place.

STRATEGY DISCUSSION / DAIRY PLAN



PB updated the Board on the development and renewal of the strategy for AHDB. This was a process that would carry on over the Autumn with final sign off for the Dairy Plan taking place at the March Board meeting. PB presented the outline model that would be used for all sectors. The Board highlighted the need for sufficient flexibility to allow AHDB to respond rapidly to change.

The Board broke in to groups to debate what the priority areas for Dairy would be for the next five years. They discussed the areas that would fall under the “segments” of the model – business, technical, environment, reputation, domestic and international, and which would be the key themes for Dairy. PF would present a more detailed consideration of these themes for debate and approval at the September Board teleconference.

EXPORTS UPDATE – Phil Hadley/Lucy Randolph

The Board were presented with a review of existing market development and an overview of upcoming events and events that had taken place from September 2018 to date. LR presented highlights of work that had taken place in China, Hong Kong Singapore, USA, UAE and Canada.

The Board discussed the possible impact of Brexit on exports both within the EU and outside.

Preparations had been made for the China inward Dairy mission. It was likely that this would be a visit commencing around 14th October. If the dates worked out, AHDB could offer the support of a translator.

The Chair thanked PH, LR and the exports team for their hard work for the Dairy sector.

AOB INC 2020 DATES

126/19 The Board approved the proposed 2020 meeting dates.

127/19 The Chair closed the meeting at 14:00.

