

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE HORTICULTURE BOARD HELD AT STONELEIGH PARK ON 10th JULY 2019

PRESENT: Hayley Campbell-Gibbons, Martin Evans, Rob Saunders, Alison Spaul, Rob James, Louise Sutherland, Martin Emmett, Roma Gwynn

IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Tones - Strategy Director Horticulture, Lenka Rihova- Minute taker, Tom Hind- Chief Strategy Officer, Dave Chandler– Warwick Crop Centre, Rebecca Geraghty- Interim Chief Technical Officer, Diane Prescott- Head of CRM, Phil Bicknell - Market Intelligence Director, Gracie Emeny- Knowledge Exchange Manager, Debbie Wilson - Head of Knowledge Exchange Horticulture, Lauren Colagiovanni- Marcomms Manager – Horticulture, Anna Farrell - UK Marketing & Communications Director, Kate Mackenzie - Senior Knowledge Exchange Manager (Panels) – Horticulture, Jon Knight – Head of Crop Health & Protection

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Apologies for absence & declarations of Interest

LS announced that she had recently been appointed as Director of Ceres Agri-Tech Knowledge Exchange Partnership and is an independent research advisor.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Minutes from the meeting held on 13th March 2019

(5.4) HCG reported that the petitioners had pulled out of the proposed meeting.

The Board agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting, which could be signed off.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Actions from previous meetings

HCG provided a quick update on each action.

(5.4.1) It was agreed to recirculate the AHDB position statement on the petition.

HCG confirmed that AHDB Horticulture would no longer participate in Fruit Logistica.

(10.7.1) HCG would ask Lee Abbey for a briefing on the development of H&S policy for autonomous robotic vehicles.

(9) The proposed labour costs dashboard required further work and would be brought back for discussion at a future meeting.

(11.2.1) A substantially improved version of the operational report for 2018/19 had been included in the board pack.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Chair's report

Recent AHDB Board meetings covered various matters including the Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey, the Defra Request for Views (R4V) on AHDB, and AHDB's future vision, strategy and priorities. Members expressed concern that the R4V might lose relevance if publication was further delayed.

Growers are engaging positively with Strategic Horticulture Centre events.

Activities of the Horticulture Levy Working Group were covered under item 6.

Discussions at the most recent NFU Horticulture Board meeting included the R4V.

HCG and RGe planned to visit the top ten horticulture levy payers over the next few months.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Member’s reports on sector & panel issues

RS (TF) - The labour remains the main challenge. TF223 meeting is coming up. Three major projects in Tree Fruit panel are: Fruit Quality group (ways of improving storage and understanding ways of growing), P&D challenges, revised next stage contract project (rootstock).

The biggest challenge in all sectors is labour supply and quality, and maintaining compliance with employment law.

RJ (PE) – The retailers are proving increasingly difficult to deal with. Alien pests and diseases (e.g. ToBRV) brought in on seed or planting material from Holland pose a continual threat. Defra and the NFU should be encouraged to take this up with the Dutch government.

LS (SF) – AHDB will be well represented at Fruit Focus. Development of the EMR Wet Centre continues. The soft fruit pest and disease programmes are making good progress, and are expected to enable a 50% reduction in pesticide use.

MEM (HNS) – reported that the ornamental sectors remained extremely buoyant, to the extent that demand from the landscape sector is expected to outstrip supply in 2020. The proposed merger of the two ornamental panels remained under discussion. Xylella coverage, awareness and risk are rising. Environmental reputation of garden centres is being questioned in a forthcoming television programme.

MEV, Field veg: Supply is consistent, labour quality and ETI audit pressures in the sector. A bacterial project is being shaped up currently. Good level of grower engagement at trials and events.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Horticulture Levy Working Group

HCG reported that the group had met recently to consider options for improving the horticulture levy arrangements to make them fairer and easier to operate. Various actions were agreed, several of which are now being implemented. Others require further work to assess their feasibility and practicability.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Finances

RGe gave a presentation on AHDB Horticulture’s finances on behalf of Helen Walker, which included descriptions of sector support, central, and staff costs. Various improvements in wording and format of sector panel finance papers were suggested.

RGe led a discussion of panel budgets and the allocation of the cross-panel pot and reserve. Members agreed that the cross-panel pot should be hypothecated to panels as previously decided, unless there was a particular reason for doing otherwise.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – AMBER (IPM)

DCh and GE presented a summary of the AMBER project. Members expressed their enthusiastic support. A discussion followed on the development of AHDB Horticulture’s IPM work when AMBER and SCEPTREplus end in 2020. Applied crop protection research in the UK is now almost exclusively reliant on AHDB’s limited funding. It is vital that this is used to leverage research council funding for such work in future. Board asked how the findings of this work were being communicated to growers. HCG asked if there would be potential to merge the two programmes and re-brand them using grower language.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Commissioning & management of technical work

RGe outlined a proposed standardised approach to the commissioning and management of AHDB technical work. Members argued that the role of panels should be strengthened in various ways, and that more use should be made of external experts.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Horticulture Engagement Group

RGe presented an outline of the group's activities. A discussion followed on changing mind-sets, partnerships working, value chain analysis, and sensitivity. Members approved a proposed cross-panel workshop to be held in January 2020.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – CRM

DP provided an update on development of the CRM, which members welcomed.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – Extended Skills Survey

MEM presented a proposal for AHDB Horticulture to fund a cross-sector skills survey, in association with the OHRT Skills Working Group, members of which include BALI, Lantra, the NFU and others. After discussion, members unanimously approved the proposal.

AGENDA ITEM 13 – AOB

MEV suggested that more consideration be given to the future development and exploitation of Intellectual Property by AHDB to build and secure future income.

MEM proposed a study tour to Japan to introduce people to completely new approaches to horticultural production.

The Board thanked JK for his work over the years and wished him well in his career after AHDB.

DW introduced KM, who had been appointed recently as Senior KE Manager (Sector Panels) after six years in AHDB Dairy KE team.

AGENDA ITEM 14 – Conclusions & actions

HCG reprised the agreed actions.

AGENDA ITEM 15 – Dates of 2020 meetings

LR confirmed that members had been notified.

AGENDA ITEM 16 – AHDB Strategy & Horticulture Sector Plan 2020-25

PB outlined progress made on the 2020-25 AHDB Strategy. HCG suggested that AHDB should be more focused and radical, and that softer language was needed to make it more digestible to growers. TH commented on the dual focus on production and markets, and stressed the growing importance of environmental sustainability as a driver of industry activity. A discussion followed on productivity and reputation.

ST outlined progress made on the draft Horticulture Plan 2020-2025, and next steps, before leading a facilitated brainstorming session with three groups to address the following questions.

- What should AHDB Horticulture do?
- What should AHDB Horticulture not do, or do less of?
- What should AHDB Horticulture's main goals be?

A discussion followed, which covered the scope for industry co-funding of some activities, and the potential impact of the Defra R4V on AHDB. TH noted that SSD's would be consulting industry and

drafting sector plans over the next few weeks, and that the Horticulture Board would be asked to sign off the Horticulture Plan at its November meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 17 – AOB

HCG noted that it was officially MEm's final Board meeting, but that he would be attending the November meeting as part of the process of handing over to his successor.