

**TOPICS DISCUSSED AND DECISIONS MADE BY THE AHDB RECOMMENDED LISTS
PROJECT BOARD 21st MARCH 2024 VIA MS TEAMS**

Board members present:

Peter Gregory (Chair)
Greg Dawson (Chair of Oilseeds Crop Committee)
Marion Self (Chair of Barley, Oats and other Cereals Crop Committee)
Patrick Stephenson (Chair of Wheat Crop Committee)
Chris Piggott (AIC)
Steph Speirs (BSPB)
Chris Guest (BSPB)
Jenna Watts (AHDB)
Lisa Black (Independent)
Mark Ineson (MAGB)
Mark Dodds (BSPB)
Russ McKenzie (AHDB)

Apologies: Alistair Gale (UKFM), Chris Guest (BSPB), Richard Summers (BSPB)

Observers: Louise Everest (BSPB)

Key items discussed:**1) Trial conditions**

It was noted that several winter oilseed rape trials have been abandoned due to a combination of flooding/waterlogging and CSFB. Cereal trials are in a better condition, but it is inevitable that parts of some trials will not be usable given conditions over winter.

2) UK Cereal Pathogen Virulence Survey

The future of the UKCPVS was discussed as AHDB is reviewing its contribution to the funding. There was a consensus that monitoring wheat rust populations is important, but the current project is not delivering what the industry requires.

The Board agreed to set up a small working group to agree its position on UKCPVS which will then be reported to the Cereals and Oilseeds Sector Council.

3) Ending Automatic Recommendation of Varieties

The Board agreed that it was no longer appropriate to recommend varieties that had met minimum standards and target specifications, on the basis of their yield alone, without them being considered by a crop committee. The Board recommended to the Crop Committees that they end automatic recommendation.

4) Increasing The Importance of Untreated Yield in Variety Selection

The Board discussed increasing the importance of untreated yield in variety selection to match the importance placed on it by farmers. The quality of the untreated yield and treated yield data was discussed.

The Board agreed that at a minimum, the Crop Committees should increase the importance of untreated yield as a character of importance to either high or very high. The committees are also asked to consider introducing an untreated yield target.

5) Number of varieties in trial

The Board discussed the large number of candidate varieties in trial in 2024 and the consequences of this for the AHDB budget and the wider industry.

Large numbers of candidate varieties places a burden on the seed trade for seed multiplication.

The Board discussed the current rules for candidate selection and concluded that they were appropriate, but that committees can be too willing to give a variety the benefit of the doubt. This can be appropriate where there is doubt about data quality but should not be the default position.

The Crop Committees need to be encouraged to use the criteria firmly but fairly. The number of candidates selected this year will be monitored to see if further action is required.

6) Changes to Disease Calculation Methodology

The Board discussed proposed changes to the statistical methodology used to calculate disease ratings. These should ensure consistent and stable ratings and remove the need for re-setting ratings, which is sometimes required.

The Board were supportive but wanted to see the impact of the changes on the current ratings.