

TOPICS DISCUSSED AND DECISIONS MADE BY THE AHDB RECOMMENDED LIST PROJECT BOARD 20th March 2025

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)
Chris Guest (BSPB)
Louise Everest (BSPB)
Jenna Watts (AHDB)
Russ McKenzie (AHDB)
Mark Ineson (MAGB)
Richard Summers (BSPB)
Lisa Black (Independent)

Apologies: Steph Spiers (BSPB) Alistair Gale (UKFM)

Key items discussed:

1) Impact of reduced levy income

- Two consecutive poor harvests have reduced levy income and put pressure on budgets. The Recommended Lists project has been asked to make savings in the 2025/26 financial year.
- A list of trials to potentially cut was presented to the Board.
- The importance of different trials and ways to improve the success of trials was discussed.
- The Board agreed to propose to the Crop Committees that all except a small number of the trials listed be cut for harvest 2026 unless a strong case for retention was proposed. The final decision on those trials to be suspended for harvest 2026 will be made at the June meeting of the Board.

2) Potential changes to yield targets

- The Board were presented with scenarios that included higher yield targets with a view to reducing the number of varieties on the lists and reduce costs.
- Increasing the yield target would increase the relative importance of fungicide treated yield, which is counter to what farmers are currently asking for.
- It was decided not to pursue further this option.

3) Long term budgetary constraints

- The potential impact of SFI reducing AHDB Cereals and Oilseeds levy income, the increased costs AHDB is facing and the impact this could have on the long term budget for the RL were discussed.
- It seems certain that the RL will have to operate with a more constrained budget in future, reducing what the RL can do.
- AHDB will conduct an internal review over spring/summer 2025 to consider the future of the RL and any scope to generate non levy income from the RL.