

TOPICS DISCUSSED AND DECISIONS MADE BY THE AHDB RECOMMENDED LIST PROJECT BOARD 30TH MARCH 2023

Board members present:

Peter Gregory (Chair)
Patrick Stephenson (Chair of Wheat Crop Committee)
Greg Dawson (Chair of Oilseeds Crop Committee)
Marion Self (Chair of Barley, Oats and other Cereals Crop Committee)
Mark Ineson (MAGB)
Chris Piggott (AIC)
Andrew Newby (BSPB)
Richard Summers (BSPB)
Louise Everest (BSPB)
Jenna Watts (AHDB)
Ken Boynes (AHDB)

Apologies: Alex Waugh (UKFM)

Key items discussed:

1) The implications of the Northern Ireland protocol for variety recommendations

The separate status of Northern Ireland with respect to its relationship with the EU compared with the rest of the UK has implications for variety recommendations.

BSPB felt the full implications of the Windsor Framework are still not clear at this stage. BSPB agreed to seek clarification with DEFRA.

2) Testing wheat varieties for suitability for exports

The RL tests winter wheat milling varieties for suitability for export under the AHDB ukp and uks branding.

The importance of exports for the UK wheat market was agreed.

Difficulties in procuring laboratories able to perform the testing to a high standard were discussed.

The Board agreed a small group to work together to find suitable laboratories able to undertake the tests and produce reliable results.

3) Discussion of the outputs of the AHDB review of the RL

The review received 923 responses to the questionnaire. Three focus groups were held and there were interviews with 22 stakeholder organisations and companies. There were also written responses received from stakeholder organisations and companies including breeders.

Key findings and recommendations were presented to the Board, and the consortium members agreed to consider their responses and feed back to AHDB.

The Board agreed that the positive view of the RL by the industry meant radical changes were not appropriate, but that the RL should continue to evolve to meet the needs of levy payers in the future.

4) Precision breeding

The Board discussed the passing of the Bill by the UK Government on precision breeding and its potential implications for variety recommendations given that the devolved administrations of the UK have jurisdiction in this area.

The discussion highlighted that although gene edited varieties could reach a point where recommendation might be possible in as little as five years, this is unlikely to happen in practice unless the EU changes its policy on gene edited crops as the UK is not a large enough market to justify development of varieties for the UK alone.