

TOPICS DISCUSSED AND DECISIONS MADE BY THE AHDB RECOMMENDED LIST PROJECT BOARD 22nd June 2023

Board members present:

Peter Gregory (Chair)
Greg Dawson (Chair of Oilseeds Crop Committee)
Marion Self (Chair of Barley, Oats and other Cereals Crop Committee)
Chris Piggott (AIC)
Samantha Brooke (BSPB)
Chris Guest (BSPB)
Jenna Watts (AHDB)
Lisa Black (Independent)

Apologies: Patrick Stephenson (Chair of Wheat Crop Committee) Alex Waugh (UKFM) Mark Ineson (MAGB) Andrew Newby (BSPB) Richard Summers (BSPB) Ken Boynes (AHDB)

Key items discussed:

1) The implications of the proposed changes to legislation regarding precision bred organisms (gene edited organisms) for the Recommended Lists

Precision Bred Organisms (PBO) could enter the testing system as soon as 2026. PBOs would need to be indicated clearly on the Recommended List as they would be for drilling in England only under current proposed legislation.

It was suggested PBOs be trialled and treated the same way as conventionally bred varieties. BSPB will run an industry led database for PBO varieties, in accordance with government requirements.

2) Reports from the Crop Committees

The wheat committee discussed nitrogen use and the current specifications for milling wheats. Sustainability and carbon footprints are increasingly a consideration for end users and some now accept lower protein. However, for most farmers 13% protein remains a target specification for Group 1 wheat and so the RL will continue with this.

The wheat committee increased the minimum thresholds for automatic selection to 6 for septoria and yellow rust resistance plus a 2% yield benefit over current varieties. Overall minimum standards are linked to the National List and will not be altered.

The barley and oats committee discussed the potential for the milling oat market to become more diverse, with different quality requirements. There are differences in end user processing, making it difficult to apply standard tests beyond the current ones. The quality requirements for oat milk are uncertain, but the committee are in discussion with oat milk millers.

3) The RL review

The board discussed the outputs from the RL review and their implications for the RL. The key requirement is to decide the underlying purpose of the RL. It can then be decided what trials are needed to fulfil that purpose.

Providing a level playing field to test varieties and the independence of the data were noted as key to the success of the RL. The board agreed that testing varieties under commercial conditions is impossible in a trial system as different varieties would be treated differently under commercial conditions.

RECOMMENDED LISTS

Better communications and guidance can help levy payers get more out of the RL and how to use it to understand how varieties will perform under their farm system.

The variety selection tools and RL App will undergo changes in response to the review.

The Board established a small working group to consider the purpose of the RL, propose trials to fulfil the purpose and examine medium term issues that could affect the questions being asked of the RL.