

ON 9th September 2021

TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT: Mike Sheldon (MS) - Chair, Mark Houghton (MH), Robert Beckett (RBe), Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Tim Bradshaw (TB), William De Klein (WDK), Robin Thompson (RT), Simon Watchorn (SW), Adam Cheale (ACH), Richard Buckle (RBu), Robert Mutimer (RM)

APOLOGIES: Chris Aldersley (ChA)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Angela Christison (AC) - Strategy director – AHDB Pork, Tim Rycroft (TR) - Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Duncan Wyatt (DW) – Lead Analyst (Livestock), Carol Davis (CD) – Lead Analyst (Farm Economics), Lenka Rihova (LR) – Personal Assistant (Minutes)

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Apologies for absence

The Chair opened the interim Board meeting at 8am and welcomed those in attendance. Apologies were received from ChA.

The reason for this call was the urgency for the organisation to get agreement on a couple of subjects:

- The matrix of skills and experience needed for the new Sector Council
- To discuss the information we need to collect from levy payers in order to provide the Sector Council with weighted (as well as unweighted) responses from future votes on the levy funded work that AHDB undertakes.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Matrix of skills and Experience

AC presented on the current structure of the skills and experience on the Board. Key questions:

- Is this the right balance for the Sector Council?
- Do we have any over/under represented areas?
- Agreement on skills/experience needed.

A suggestion was made regarding a possible need for more/different categories in order to make the group more diverse. There are some skills and areas of expertise, which could be useful to the Board, which are not represented (retailer, feed manufacturer, sustainability).

The Board agreed that the current balance on the Board is broadly right. The outstanding question is how to get access to other skills and experience.

It was suggested to have the possibility to invite specialist speakers to attend the Sector Council meetings in order to help the Board to make the right decisions/choices (without including them as members of the Sector Council).

There was a consensus of the views of members of the Board subject to the suggested nuances.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – AHDB vote & Registration process

AC presented on the AHDB vote (the industry voting on what AHDB do) and reported on the proposal. Key sections:

- Challenges to the sector
- How the levy could be spent to address these challenges
- How important is this work to you?
- Rate the importance of products/services

In order to vote, a registration is required. This is necessary because AHDB do not hold data on individual levy payments. AC reported on the registration process and the questions that would be asked. The questionnaire will be made available to anyone who wants to complete it.

The AHDB vote is not a vote on whether levy is collected or not (that is Defra's decision).

The Board discussed the voting process. Some concern was expressed over the people who will be voting and whether they are levy payers or not.

A discussion was held in relation to who gets to vote, whether the owner of the pig or the person looking after the pig. The area of doubt is where risk is shared between the integrator and the farmer.

The levy is paid at the point of slaughter. The whole value chain is contributing to the levy. The Board has broadly agreed that people who have ownership through the supply chain need to be involved in the process.

Some concern was expressed over putting numbers in at the point of registration. There will be a checking procedure in place (sample auditing/ random checking). The key will be the communication and campaigns to encourage people to register to vote.

It will not be one system across the whole AHDB. Sector specific solutions will be required. Feedback was requested on the questions at the registration process.

The group discussed further the voting mechanism. The information is to notify (not to instruct) the Sector Council on the degree of support there is for each piece of work and where the support is coming from. It is important to get the balance right and make sure that everybody's voice is heard in the proper proportion. It will be up to the Sector Council to interpret the voting returns and to make rational decisions accordingly. Transparency of how decisions are going to be made is required (who can vote).

The Board supported the principle that the voting rights should be apportioned through the stages of production to take account of the fact there could be multiple owners of the pigs before it goes to slaughter. The Board agreed that it is the owner of the pig (and owner of the risk), who should have the voting rights. The group identified that there are some contractual arrangements where it is not entirely clear where the ownership and where the risk sits and therefore where the voting rights should accrue. The Board has broadly agreed to ask a range of questions in order to gather sufficient data proportion the votes properly. Help from the Board will be required in order to come to final recommendations.

A comment was made regarding adjusters/contractors. They are not taking any risk and should not be contacted.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Introduction of Tim Rycroft

TR joined the call at 9.10am and introduced himself to the Board. He talked about his background and future vision for AHDB.

Signed:

Date: