

**SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE AHDB PORK BOARD
TELECONFERENCE ON 17TH MARCH 2020**



PRESENT: Mike Sheldon - Chair, Tim Bradshaw, Richard Buckle, Mark Haighton, Robert Shepherd, Simon Watchorn, Iain Wyllie, Robert Beckett, Adam Cheale, Nick Davies, Chris Aldersley

APOLOGIES: Robert Mutimer

IN ATTENDANCE:

Angela Christison - Strategy director – AHDB Pork, Mandy Nevel - Head of Animal Health and Welfare
Lenka Rihova – Minutes, Ben Williams - KT Senior Manager – Pork, Jen Waters – Head of Knowledge Exchange – Pork, Tim Isaac - Acting Knowledge Exchange Director

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Apologies for absence

Apologies received from RM. The meeting was held as a teleconference due to the current concerns around Covid19.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - Declarations of Interest

RBu declared that Cranswick has bought the Buckle Farms business, under their White Rose Farms subsidiary. RBu is now employed by WRF. CHA registered the same declaration from a Cranswick perspective.

MS noted that recruitment of new Board members is in process. The objective is to establish the proper balance of members on the Board.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Minutes from the meeting held on 22nd January

The minutes of the last meeting held on 22nd January were accepted as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Matters arising

MS recapped on the matters arising and action points, confirming all items were either ongoing, on the agenda or still in progress.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Directors Report / Operational Report

The report was taken as read and no questions were raised.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Budget sign off

The Chair sought a formal sign off of this budget.

AC recapped on the Pork Sector Plan that was approved in January. AC reported on the proposed budget for the next financial year, which reflects the agreed financial assumptions. The paper sets out spending plans for 20/21 following detailed planning by teams to complement the sector's strategic aims. The plan shows the predicted balance of spend over the next 5 years.

The relocation of AHDB staff to hotels due to the fire incident is likely to be covered by insurance and should not have impact on Pork Board's budget. This is an ongoing process.

MS commented on the 20/21 activity plan.

The Board formally signed off the budget for 20/21 as laid out in the Board papers subject to changes that may be caused due to current uncertainty.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – VAT

KB was unable to join the meeting due to the business continuity programme and dealing with Covid19.

AHDB is awaiting HMRC's response to our latest submissions.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – PHWC remit

MS's action was to redraft the remit of the PHWC and seek the Pork Board and Council's agreement. The Board discussed the PHWC document which reflects the Board's previous discussions. The



members suggested improvements to the wording (*Purpose*) and tone (*Entity*). It was suggested to change the *Purpose* to: *Continuing the improvement of health and welfare*. MS will edit the PHWC document before sending it to the Board for further comments.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – KE team development & plans for 20/21

JW delivered a presentation on KE team development & plans for 20/21. Key points discussed:

- **Farm Excellence Platform Survey** (separate to the levy satisfaction survey, focused on people who attended events).
- **Driving towards excellence:** KE team are ambassadors of AHDB, work to be consistent and in line with the strategy.
- **Knowledge Exchange Streams:** KE relationships managers to have account management with levy payers and stakeholders (breeding companies, vets).
- **Monitor farm stakeholders:** Central hub (collating feedback & input to progress forward).
- **Environment:** Growsave is part of NFU energy. A review looking at all different ways of improving efficiencies on farm across sector.
- **Data** (new website with an easy access and functionality)

JW felt positively about the current work. The objective is to get our voice out and make the stakeholders groups work better. There are already 8 businesses recruited.

The Board felt that Project blue (new website) should be the priority. Clicks, analytics and LEAN management have been used to identify the key and relevant information that will go on the website.

A concern was expressed about Pig Clubs and accessing information. Pig producers need to join the clubs to access information and learn about new techniques. The Board discussed the challenge with engagement and ways of getting the message out. The focus should be around joining forces with vet companies and those who organise pig specific events.

The Board debated over Pork sector split triangle and whether there is a danger of encouraging 2 tier industry. The aim is to allocate our resources proportionately and respond to industry needs. AHDB to fit with how the industry is developing, increase engagement, and be open to attracting more pig farmers to clubs. It is important that people sign up to Pork weekly. The Board supported the work.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Precision Pig

The Board sought the current status relative to the timeline, budget line and original design of the project design originally approved.

BW delivered a presentation on PP. The initial Project Proposal supported by the board identified a need to demonstrate value to the producer and wider supply chain of using RFID technology. There are currently 2 university farms and 2 commercial units with software and hardware installed that are building individual data points for the project. BW reported on the ear tag process and played a video on RFID trial Gills. BW felt confident about proof of concept of the technology on a small scale but a full installation at a large-scale commercial abattoir is still one of the key project aims. This would allow full data to be captured including yield and CCIR.

It was felt that three years allocated to this project is a realistic total, including allowance for some slippage.

The Board further discussed the technology. It was felt that low frequency is the way forward. The LF tags allow individual ID on farm. BW stated that ruling out UHF entirely was not something the project aimed to do, but was maintaining the directive of demonstrable value of existing technology, not spending levy money for industry R and D.

BW sits on the value added group for LIP at LIP's request. This will bring an additional value out of Precision Pig.

Data driven decision-making is what we need to be embracing. We need to understand what factors are influencing the production. The Board endorsed the project.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – ASF

The objective was to seek the guidance and support of the Board. What more could be done to support the industry. The impact on AHDB and our activities and how we would shift resource accordingly. The Board discussed supporting the industry and if anything has been missed. AC commented on the paper BP287. Covid19 may cause disruptions to food supply chain, distribution and labour, which may result in an animal backup on farm.

The Board sought clarification on the metric system on page 47 (surveillance and protection).

Concern was expressed regarding the risk of overstocking on all pig farms in the event of movement standstills. The board agreed that farms' contingency plans could only reasonably cope for a limited period of standstill. The board further agreed that it was essential to engage DEFRA in the design of a welfare slaughter scheme.

A debate took place regarding contingency plans. It was agreed that all farmers should have a contingency plan, and that it was the farmer's responsibility to look after the welfare of animals in difficult circumstances. It was agreed that AHDB should be able to provide advice to farmers as to how to design their contingency plan.

MN confirmed that protection zones and surveillance zones should be in kilometres.

An ASF group has been created to work through the contingency planning. AHDB is liaising with Jim Scudamore and Christine Middlemiss about DEFRA's expectations and collaborating with NPA.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – Addressing persistently high antibiotic users

There is a research project with SRUC looking at the barriers to reduce antibiotic use. Interviews with vets were held. A questionnaire will give us indications of what the barriers are to identify risks and opportunities to reduce antibiotics.

The antibiotics are regulated and largely controlled by the vets who should not be changing their prescribing principles. The focus is on reduction and responsible use.

Concern was expressed about unfairly identifying users as "persistent" or "high" users. As an industry, we should identify the genuinely persistent high users and have a programme of action to help them improve. The industry needs to agree the definition of what a persistent high user is. The group spoke about what attitude towards persistent high users should be and discussed proposed solutions. MS on behalf of the Board would like to see a concrete agreement made by AHDB, NPA, Red Tractor, PVS, and PHWC as to definitions and plans of action.

AGENDA ITEM 13 – Environment and Buildings project plan

JF delivered a presentation on the Accelerated Ammonia Project. The EU international obligations are to reduce ammonia pollution by 16% by 2030. The current emissions factors are modelled on 20 years old data. The actual ammonia emissions are very different compared to 20 years ago due to changes in production (genetics and nutrition). This project enables a rapid assessment of actual ammonia emissions to feed into revising and changing Environment Agency emission factors.

There are 6 data collection systems running. A final report will be available at the end of the project (September 2020). The collected data so far looks positive. Covid19 may derail the project due to potential restrictions on collecting data on farms. Work with the contractor on a contingency plan is in hand. The Environment Agency requested the raw data from the whole trial, but they are likely to accept AHDB's analysis of the data. The ability to justify any changes to the emissions factors is important. JF reported on results so far from slatted farrowing sows systems and slatted dry sows systems.

A concern was raised regarding August, which was not monitored. It was felt that a full annual set of data was required.

The group discussed risk mapping associated to the project and whether all relevant factors are included. There is a risk register (including animal disease) and a risk assessment for anybody associated with the project. There may be disruption to the project due to Covid19, either because of movement restrictions or because the project is entrusted to a sole operator contractor. The Board supported the project.

AGENDA ITEM 14 – Genetic Event Expenditure

PH was unable to attend the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 15 – AOB

MS reported on the Board representation on the PHWC subgroups. There is a request to consider AHDB Pork Board members' involvement in the agricultural apprenticeship project shaping the future of agricultural apprenticeships. A document summarising all the different positions will be created and dealt with via email. Volunteers are encouraged.

The group discussed how AHDB could support the industry in the light of Covid19. The Board's concern was around providing care to animals if the situation gets worse. They also sought some assurance from Red Tractor that assessments and certification would be managed appropriately.

A discussion took place about the recent Countryfile programme. No industry representative was present. It was felt that there should be a follow up from Red Tractor.

It was IW's and MS's last meeting. MS expressed his gratitude to IW and RS for their input.

The next Board meeting on 19th May remains in plan followed by a joint meeting with NPA. *Subsequent to the board meeting, the plans for a joint session with NPA have been postponed.*

The meeting closed at 11:40am.