

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING OF THE AHDB PORK BOARD



ON 14th JULY 2021

TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT: Mike Sheldon (MS) - Chair, Mark Houghton (MH), Robert Beckett (RBe), Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Tim Bradshaw (TB), William De Klein (WDK), Chris Aldersley (ChA), Robin Thompson (RT), Simon Watchorn (SW)

APOLOGIES: Adam Cheale (ACH), Richard Buckle (RBu), Robert Mutimer (RM)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Angela Christison (AC) - Strategy director – AHDB Pork, Mandy Nevel (MN) – Head of Animal Health & Welfare, Lauren Dimmack (LD) - Animal Health & Welfare Scientist, Animal Health & Welfare, Jon Foot (JFo) – Head of Environment & Resource Management, Resource Management, Jen Waters (JF) – Head of, Knowledge Exchange (Pork), Technical – KE, Naveen Gupta (NG) - Finance Director, Finance, Lenka Rihova (LR) – Personal Assistant (Minutes), Jane Downes (JD) – Chair of PHWC

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.30am and welcomed those in attendance. Apologies were received from ACH and RB and RM.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Minutes from the meeting held on 19th May and 25th May

The minutes from the meeting held on 19th May and 25th May were accepted as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Matters arising

All the matters arising, and action points were either completed, on the agenda or in hand.

The Chair reported on current AHDB matters. There is a significant restructure taking place at AHDB. The Interim Pork meeting scheduled for 21st July will bring the Board up to date on the restructure and the new model.

A number of members of this Board were due to reach the end of their terms. Due to the current changes, AHDB have asked all current members of the Pork Board to extend their period of service, up until the autumn, by which time the new model should be in place. The Chair thanked those who have agreed to extend their service.

There is an active consultation with staff at AHDB. A large number of members of staff are at risk from a formal employment point of view. The management structure of AHDB will change significantly. Matters are extremely sensitive and it is a very difficult time for individuals involved.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Directors Report

The report was taken as read.

The Board expressed concern regarding Pig clubs. It is important to attract levy payers. AHDB is driving engagement in person and digitally and will ensure to do things that are valuable.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – PHWC Review

MS welcomed JD who is the Chair of the Pig Health and Welfare Council. JD delivered a presentation on PHWC and reported on work of this group. Relationships and engagement with the Board have been improved. JD thanked everyone for their support.

JD reported on PHWC's role and its positive impact on Government policy (significantly with the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway).

A number of members of this Board are involved in the subgroups of the PHWC. Positive comments were made regarding work and progress (communications & understanding the industry challenges).



AGENDA ITEM 7 – PRIMO report & Evidence gathering for Free Farrowing

A paper had been distributed to the group.

Defra commissioned AHDB to conduct an independent review of pig movements in relation to disease control. This is about the rules surrounding movement of animals and what reporting is required. AHDB commissioned Jim Scudamore to lead on the majority of the work. The report is now prepared in draft and is under the process of finalisation.

MN reported on the PRIMO report. The recommendations made are focused on how the industry would handle notifiable disease outbreak and how we can best protect the industry.

It was confirmed that the new LI traceability system and the Animal Health Pathway are both in development. Both of these developments will lead to changes in traceability and health control. A query was raised regarding the role of TDUG, which is traceability design user group for the LI system.

AHDB waiting on comments back from Defra before circulating the report to the organisations who contributed for their feedback.

The Board expressed various points of interest:

- **Lorry washing** - It was suggested to include this problem in the report.
- **Batches of pigs being mixed** - The way forward might to be the technology of individual ID.
- **Electronic tagging of pigs** - One of the recommendation in the report is that the industry as a whole needs to agree on the frequency of tags to be used.
- **Holes in the pigs' ears** - It was felt that holes in ears are acceptable, however rips caused by tags being pulled out are not.

The report was welcomed by the Board, they were happy to stand by it and for it to be branded as AHDB.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked MN, LD and all the contributors for their significant part in the report's compilation. He asked to pass his thanks to Jim Scudamore. MN thanked the contributors to the report.

Free Farrowing

MN reported on Free Farrowing. The political move to FF systems in several European countries along with New Zealand has led to some discussion in the UK. A number of producers have moved to FF, however there are many versions of FF and it is difficult to compare systems in the absence of convincing data.

The Board were informed that AHDB had commissioned a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) to provide as much evidence as possible regarding both sow and piglet welfare in various 'free farrowing' systems (tender to SRUC, Emma Baxter). The report is due at the end of August. The aim is to inform Government prior to any definition being given to free farrowing (i.e. the allowance or otherwise for some sow confinement in the first few days post farrowing). This work will build on our existing bed of evidence. It will also help producers when they consider what systems (if any) they want to invest in. AHDB will be providing evidence, strictly not recommendations.

JW and the team will launch an AHDB free farrowing webpage at the end of July. This will contain all the work we have to date and signpost to external information where appropriate. The webpage content will continue to build with case studies from those who are already pioneering alternative (to farrowing crates) systems.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - Welfare Training

A paper had been distributed to the Board.

JW reported on Welfare Training. AHDB Pork have produced a new 'industry asset' in the form of a mandatory training module on pig handling. JW presented on the AHDB Pork Online Training Hub (in draft). The Board discussed the cost (£10/month/module). Payment will be taken before

commencing the course (RT can roll out across UK), when successfully completed a certificate is issued, which can be used as proof for RT.

The certificate goes to the individual who should then let the business know that they have completed the course. Integrators can buy as many modules as they think they need.

There will be a soft launch at the end of July. This will become a RT standard in November. Thereafter everyone who is working with pigs will have to demonstrate that they have completed the course.

There will be a guide and other tools available in order to ensure that people using the product can understand the language.

There will be two more modules rolled out over the next two years, full cost recovery in place.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked JW, MN and their teams for the work and progress made.

The Board were very impressed and endorsed the product and the plan to roll it out.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - FCR Tool development

JF reported on FCR (Food Conversion Ratio). A paper had been distributed to the Board.

It is about what is AHDB's role in environment and environmental performance in our sector. FCR is the starting point.

The proposal is to seek agreement to develop the FCR tool that would be built within the existing pig hub to pull out as much data that the farm has available and provide standardised FCR values.

In the absence of comparability there is a need for a pre-competitive tool - on what needs to be measured and how across the sector, that demonstrates an industry baseline, individual farm benchmarking and progress (just as we have for antibiotics).

FCR was selected as 80% of the pork carbon footprint is accounted for by feed, so while FCR does not tell the whole environmental impact story, it is the biggest contributor.

There is also a wide range of FCR in the industry, and so good scope to make an impact. However, it is a proxy (not accurate carbon footprint calculation) so this is the beginning of a more sophisticated programme that will include other measures at a later stage.

JF reported on the proposed timeline for development (6 months of development for the software). Some data have been obtained from AgroSoft.

It is important to have a quality data set that we as an industry can get behind and have confidence and identify where AHDB can make a difference.

Some doubts were raised but the significant majority within the Board agreed to support this work.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – VAT

NG joined the meeting at 12.10pm and gave a verbal update on the VAT status. A paper had been distributed to the Board.

The VAT matter is a key risk that AHDB have been managing over a period of time. Whilst we wait for HMRC to conclude its next review stage, we are putting forward a section 33 application. AHDB believe that this is our next option to mitigate the impact of the loss of current VAT status.

AHDB cannot lobby, however will attempt all possible avenues to mitigate the decision as it stands. AHDB are getting support from the ministers. NG reported on the possible implications to the Pork sector. It is important that the sector Boards are aware of this risk. AHDB have taken all the necessary advice from various experts but the risk remains.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – Red Tractor

AC reported on the letter that has been sent to Jim Moseley at RT from AHDB. There is a hold on funds moving from AHDB to RT. AHDB is requesting further assurance regarding RT's strategy before providing further funding. There are particular issues in other sectors, but it wasn't a pig issue particularly that drove this. AC asked the Board for their views on this matter.

The group discussed the issues and challenges that AHDB are posing to RT. Integrators most concerned about RT. There was a general feeling that RT needs to be more effective in terms of consumer communications, standards development and enforcement of existing standards. It was felt that the market is overtaking RT on various subjects.

The group briefly discussed funding. AHDB provide around 250K to RT a year in total (60K pork).

The aim of this discussion was to ensure the Board was fully aware of the steps taken and that there were no objections to that. AHDB are waiting for a response from RT. AC asked the Board to contact her if they had any further questions. The Board understood the issue.

AGENDA ITEM 13 – AOB

MS reported on “Pigs Tomorrow”, which is a conference organised by Lewis Business Media with AHDB and other sponsors. There is a need for a processor to speak at this event. ChA (Cranswick) is likely to provide a presenter. It is a good showcase for AHDB in terms of positioning us as industry leaders and an opportunity to show farmers the work AHDB does. MS encouraged the Board to attend the conference.

The Board expressed concern regarding labour shortage. The pork processing industry (and to a degree farms too) is really struggling to attract and retain staff. AHDB cannot lobby. The ask was for AHDB to add our voice to ensuring the problem was highlighted on a regular basis with Defra. AHDB have regular meetings with Defra, NPA and BMPA - the subject has been mentioned repeatedly and will be again.

Signed:

Date: