

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RL PROJECT BOARD  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2014  
BSPB, 114 Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely,**

**MINUTES**

<b>Chairman:</b>	Prof Graham Jellis	
<b>Present:</b>	Dr Susannah Bolton (HGCA)	Mr David Houghton (Chairman cc)
Mr Mark Ineson (MAGB)	Dr Thomas Jolliffe (BSPB)	Dr Penny Maplestone (BSPB)
Mr Nigel Moore (BSPB)	Mrs Heather Peck (Chairman cc)	Mr Paul Taylor (AIC)
Mr Jonathan Tipples (HGCA)	Mr Andrew Ward (Chairman cc)	

<b>In attendance:</b>		
Prof Peter Gregory (observer)	Simon Oxley (HGCA)	Ms Anne-Marie Sonko (notes)

<b>Apologies:</b>	Dr Richard Summers (BSPB)	Mr Gary Sharkey (nabim)
	Dr David Cranstoun (HGCA)	

<b>Minute</b>		<b>Action</b>
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**19/01 OPENING REMARKS**

The meeting was opened at 10:15 by the Chairman. Apologies were received from David Cranstoun and the Chairman welcomed Mark Ineson and Nigel Moore (in place of Richard Summers).

**19/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman invited members to declare any changes to the Register of Interests and/or the conflict of interests forms previously completed. Nigel Moore completed his part of the conflict of interest form which was noted. There were no changes to existing declarations to be recorded.

**19/03 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES (paper 3a)**

The Chairman went through the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2014, page by page and it was agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES (paper 3b)**

The Chairman went through the minutes with confidential information removed (Page 10 proposals for changes of crop committees removed). All were happy that this version would be the public record of the meeting.

**19/04 MATTERS ARISING**

**Cereals 2014**

Susannah Bolton (SB) summarised the event, which was extremely successful and took place in the best weather in her recollection. Despite the overall numbers being slightly down on last year, HGCA had record numbers of publications taken and particularly the RL publications. The PA system for the RL plot tours worked very well. One element which was perhaps disappointing was the plots were in poorer condition than had been hoped for. She added that HGCA had been allocated possibly the driest spot on the site which was not acceptable.

Simon Oxley (SO) agreed and said in future we would tighten up our criteria on where the stand should be sited, considering influences such as what was the previous crop, soil etc., although we would not be at the same site next year.

Andrew Ward (AW) offered help in monitoring development of plots as next year's site is very close to his farm and he is happy to take a look when required.

David Houghton (DH) expressed congratulations to the RL team and all HGCA staff.

Jonathan Tipples (JT) agreed we were on the worst corner on the field, with Jonathan adding that Gleadell, who were sited furthest into the same corner, were particularly unhappy but glad to be next to the HGCA stand, which he considered a compliment.

Feedback had been received from David Cranstoun (DC) who felt some of the demonstrators were under-prepared and he had provided some guidance as to what would be helpful for HGCA demonstrators for next year.

The Chairman also passed on his congratulations for the Cereals event and in particular thought the PA was a great improvement. It had meant people could spread out more without needing to gather around the speaker.

JT expressed his thanks to Mark Bollebakker for getting the OSR plots established after having tremendous difficulties and thought it a shame he could not attend due to illness. Simon told the members that Mark was now fit and back to work.

**19/05 ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (Paper 4a)**

The Chairman reported on the action points from the previous minutes:

**19/06 RL MANAGER'S UPDATE (Simon Oxley)**

Simon Oxley presented the update, the focus of which was the planning meetings for the three crop committees which have been held over the last few weeks, the final one being on the Monday prior to the Board Meeting. The timing of the barley meeting needs consideration as it depends on report information being available from MAGB. SO explained it would be good to hold the meeting a bit earlier to allow the Barley Crop Committee Chairman to be properly prepared for the RL Project Board. Simon then thanked Anne-Marie and Christine for helping with the

minutes at these meetings in Denise's absence.

- The OSR trial visits are now completed and the cereals are currently being inspected with the predicted early harvest giving greater impetus to get these completed. The breeders are encouraged to look at the plots and raise any concerns with Bill Handley.
- Sample labels are now being prepared ready for the quality samples for MAGB, BCE and NIAB
- A meeting was held with FERA regarding the gazette. Fera explained that delays can occur when they are waiting for information to come from other countries. Prior to the Board meeting Fera will be contacted as to whether varieties have completed the NL process or not. Nigel Moore asked how often at candidate selection RL varieties are still waiting to be listed and was advised that it had happened before but it was rare and very rare at recommendation.

#### **19/07 BCE PROCEDURES (Paper 8)**

The Chairman presented the report, which he took as read. Specific items highlighted included:

At the last Wheat Crop Committee concern was expressed about the interaction with BCE not being as good as it might be.

Susannah Bolton explained that BCE have been going through a thorough review and consultation on branding. The feedback has been very positive but with some small changes which the document in the Crop Committee Handbook represents, including the selection criteria and process for varieties to meet the export standard. There has also been discussion on how we might want to communicate the BCE data and how we might use that data in other ways. Heather Peck (HP) confirmed sharing data was an issue which was raised at the Wheat Crop Committee meeting.

Thomas Jolliffe asked whether breeders could see the full information for their own varieties and controls as with nabim testing and it was agreed that was a sensible idea.

#### **Action: Request to BCE to provide breeders with full information on varieties & controls – Susannah Bolton**

The testing methods were discussed and SB explained that all testing sites were quality assured but that discussions are on-going with BIOS regarding the variability of the data.

Paul Taylor (PT) reminded the Board of the importance of the export market and the value of the data that is available through BCE.

The Chairman concluded that the Board was happy with the paper and recognised the need to make sure on-going collaboration and coordination is in place.

**Susannah  
Bolton**

**RLP COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS TRIALS AND DISEASE TESTS (paper 9)**

SO presented the paper as written by Jenna Watts and explained that the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) for crop diseases was a challenge, particularly to get data on yield and quality loss for individual diseases. CBA has been easier to quantify with livestock diseases but crops are more difficult as disease complexes are common.

The paper sets out the criteria for carrying out CBA in order to help us make improvements in the provision of information and disease management.

The paper gives details of the assumptions required to complete the analysis. More data is required in order to identify dominant diseases with and without treatment in order to understand yield loss. This is the beginning of an on-going process to put something in place which gives the CBA for a particular disease.

HP considered that the paper did not address the question that the committees had posed, which was 'what would be the financial benefit to a farmer of growing a variety with a higher disease resistance rating, taking all factors into consideration, including balancing yield loss against spray costs – i.e. the difference between growing a resistant variety with growing a variety of lower disease resistance rating and controlling the disease with chemicals'. She did not believe that the paper addressed the core issue of setting minimum standards.

SO explained that although assumptions had to be made, the methodology being used should provide the best analysis of loss due to a single disease, in this case yellow rust.

SB supported this by adding that to do this sort of analysis in a way which is genuinely robust is very difficult. There would be different steps in the development of the methodology and this is the first step to define the methodology which needs to be understood and agreed in the first instance.

Nigel Moore (NM) suggested looking at historic literature on diseases and yield loss as quite a lot had already been done on the yield difference penalty between untreated and treated, and on varietal differences in response to fungicide. It was not always the most susceptible varieties which had the greatest fungicide response, so looking at the difference between treated and untreated trials alone does not provide a full measure of the costs and benefits of disease control. He stated that the important question would be "What is the value of increased disease ratings?".

TJ added that a classic risk analysis approach, considering both the impact and likelihood, could be more appropriate.

Peter Gregory (PG) was not sure whether CBA was the right way forward for the RL and recommended a discussion paper setting out what the options are, defining the questions needing to be answered, establishing

what data would be needed to answer them and then identifying how much of that data was available.

The Chairman added that the analysis is needed for sound decisions, both within the RL and by HGCA to justify the RL.

SB agreed with the suggestion for a discussion paper and stressed there were a number of questions which need answering, and that it would be helpful if the Board would provide the questions for which answers are needed. The RL Board was asked to identify the key questions they would want future work to address.

All agreed this would be a good way forward i.e. that a discussion paper be prepared along the lines proposed by PG above. .

The Chairman summarised and asked for all to give their views to SB and suggestions as to the most appropriate analysis.

**Action: Board members to provide their list of key questions to Susannah Bolton**

**Susannah  
Bolton**

19/09

## REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

- **OSR Crop Committee** (paper 10a (i))

Andrew Ward presented the meeting with feedback from the Oilseeds Crop Committee meeting held on 14 May 2014.

The variety Fletcher was discussed since it had not been NL listed prior to the RL decision meeting.

SO had no further information from Bayer as to whether they intend to take it forward or not.

A proposal to include disease observation plots to provide more information on light leaf spot (LLS) in England was supported. The Board agreed with this proposal.

### **Specific categories**

**IMI** - There were two presentations on IMI from John Peck (BASF) and Andy Stainthorpe (DuPont Pioneer). Following discussion the Committee decided to propose IMI as a characteristic of low importance. There was some concern that growers would miss the fact that IMI varieties needed special treatment, resulting in uncontrollable volunteers. It was decided that IMI varieties should appear as a separate category at the side rather than in the main table.

The Board discussed and agreed with this proposal.

**HOLL and HEAR** varieties were discussed and it was decided that any new varieties with these characteristics should be recommended in their own right. Discussions took place on how these varieties would be presented in the table in these situations to highlight their quality

characteristics. In particular, for HEAR varieties it was agreed that they should be listed in a separate column. The Board agreed with this proposal.

**Pod Shatter Resistance** - Mathew Clarke gave a presentation on pod shatter resistance and how this can be assessed and included as a trait. The Board discussed and it was generally felt this would be a trait which would be important to growers but it would need a standardised acceptable protocol and a mechanical test to measure accurately before it could be included in the RL.

**Turnip Yellows Virus** – Jo Bowman (Limagrain) gave a presentation on turnip yellows which was discussed by the Committee. It was proposed that Turnip Yellows Virus resistance should be a specialist category for a limited length of time, to be reviewed annually. The breeder would be invited to the next meeting to make a presentation for Amalie to be re-sown in trials as a candidate in this category. The Board accepted this proposal.

The Committee had proposed the following:-

***Yield target, comparators and characteristics of importance – East/West:***

- Shortness of stem to increase from medium to high for candidate selection and recommendation.
- LLS increase from high to very high at recommendation stage.
- IMI to be added as a characteristic of low importance for candidate selection and recommendation.
- The agronomic merit calculation to be changed from 1.5 to 2 for LLS
- The Yield targets and comparator varieties for 2014 were set as described in paper 10a (i)

***Yield target, comparators and characteristics of importance – North:***

- Stem stiffness increased from medium to high importance for candidate selection and recommendation.
- IMI to be added as a characteristic of low importance for candidate selection and recommendation.
- LLS remains high importance for candidate selection and recommendation.
- The yield targets and comparator varieties were set as described in paper 10a (i).

The Board agreed these proposals.

***Minimum Standards***

It was proposed by the Committee that the disease rating for LLS for E/W be increased from 3 to 4 due to severe problems controlling the disease in varieties with a rating below 4.

The Board discussed the proposal and all agreed the importance of the disease and its potential impact. There was, however, a general reluctance to increase the minimum standard as the most appropriate mechanism to address this. It was argued there was no evidence that the raising of the standard in the North was the reason it was not such a problem for the region. The loss of income to the industry was acknowledged as was the importance of the yield penalty for higher resistance.

It was suggested that raising the minimum standard would create a market for non RL varieties and that the information given to growers allows them to make a choice based on robust independent data and is a better alternative to raising minimum standards.

HP considered that if the concern was that varieties with a minimum standard of 3 and yield increase of +2% go through on automatic recommendation, it should be open to the Crop Committee to discuss prior to recommendation and propose not to recommend a variety due to the balance of features being inappropriate for the list.

Andrew Ward (AW) argued this would lead to lots of appeals which would be costly and time consuming.

SB raised concern with regard to the messages we put out which influence farmer behaviour. We have a minimum standard of 6 for Scotland and 3 for East/West and there needs to be consistency.

TJ did not support the proposal on the basis that it was not supported by scientific data.

The Chairman called upon the members to vote on whether to raise the minimum standard for Light Leaf Spot for the E/W region from 3 to 4.

*The resulting vote was 5:4 against raising the standard.*

The Chairman suggested that as an alternative to raising the minimum standard, the wording in the Crop Committee Handbook should be changed to ensure discussion of any variety above the 2% yield target which only had a rating of 3 for LLS. It was therefore proposed that automatic recommendation for the E/W would change to 2% above yield target and a minimum rating of 4 for LLS. The changes were agreed and Andrew asked for confirmation of these changes to be sent to the breeders.

- **Wheat Crop Committee** (paper 10b)

HP presented the feedback from the Wheat Crop Committee which was held on 20 May 2014.

***Additional Fusarium control varieties in inoculated trials*** – it was agreed by the Committee that the controls currently being used did not reflect the full range of resistance to Fusarium. New controls would be included this autumn. SO reported that the BSPB would help in the

identification of appropriate varieties. The Board supported the proposal.

**Autumn sown wheat** – BSPB had presented a paper which set out three options to provide more information on winter wheat varieties to be recommended in late autumn sowing category. The breeders preferred the option which would allow breeders to nominate any recommended variety for inclusion in late autumn trials. SB had indicated that the costs were uncertain and if excessive, might impact elsewhere. However the Committee supported this option and recommended it to the Board subject to funding availability. SB had suggested that three cost scenarios should be presented at the next Crop Committee meeting. The Board agreed that it was too late to introduce changes this year, so requested a paper to be presented in January 2015 for a decision to be made by March 2015.

**Action: Paper on costs to be prepared for the next Wheat Crop Committee meeting with subsequent proposals being discussed at the January 2015 board meeting. Bill Handley**

**Bill Handley**

JT added that the definition of winter and spring crops will be important for the implementation of the 3-crop rule and that Defra had indicated that it would be based on how varieties were classified in the RL. There was also some concern that the term “late autumn sown” could be misleading. HP suggested that actual trial sowing dates should be provided on the table rather than a reference to season.

**Minimum standards** – these were discussed at the meeting but there was no wish to make any decision on changes without proper and balanced consideration based on the facts available. There were therefore no changes made.

**Comparators** – changes were agreed and were listed in paper 10b. HP added that breeders can look at other varieties for additional comparators if they wish. SO highlighted the following changes:-

- change to the wording on the mechanism on yield target
- The inclusion of a provisional group 1 variety category.

- **Barley Oats & Other Cereals**

David Houghton (DH) presented the feedback from the Barley Oats & other Cereals Crop Committee meeting which was held on 23 June 2014.

**Additional disease observation plots** - the proposal for additional disease observation plots to provide new information on susceptibility to crown rust was approved by the Crop Committee.

**Nitrogen on winter barley** – It was thought that the protocol for nitrogen fertilisation should be more definitive so trial managers had more guidance. Bill Handley had produced a new protocol document with the following specific wording on fertiliser:



Winter barley and spring barley

Malting management:

A sub-set of trials are designated as malting trials and should be grown under an appropriate nitrogen regime. The timing and rates of application of nitrogen fertiliser to malting barley is critical and trials operators should consult advisory publications and advisors in order to attain the best yield whilst producing the best possible samples for the assessment of malting quality. Early N application is advisable - by mid-March for winter barley and by the 3-leaf stage (GS 13) for spring barley (application to the seedbed is commonly practised for spring barley). To delay beyond these timings may increase grain nitrogen to unacceptable levels.

Winter barley malting (brewing) trials: 607, 608, 609, 610 and 613

Spring barley malting (brewing) trials: 622, 627, 630, 631, 632, 633 and 635

Spring barley malting (distilling) trials: 623, 625, 626, 628, 640 and 641

Feed management:

The remaining trials are designated as 'feed' and the application of nitrogen should be the optimum for yield and physical grain quality.

Applications to winter barley feed trials should be split into 2 or (preferably) 3 timings:

Application 1: 30% of total N\* at GS 24-26 (mid-tillering)

Application 2: 50% of total N\* 3-4 weeks after application 1 (around GS31).

Application 3: 20% of total N\* 3-4 weeks after application 2 (around GS32-33).

In the event of only two applications being possible, apply 60% at or before GS31.

\*The total amount of N applied should be based on advisory guidelines.'

The Chairman said that growers and agronomists felt this is now common practice. DH added that the Committee did not want to disadvantage any early vigorous varieties and the protocol should suit hybrids but not favour them.

The Board agreed with the proposal to amend the protocol for nitrogen applications.

**Minimum standards** – these were discussed and it was agreed they

would all remain the same. It was also decided not to introduce Ramularia standards at the moment. James Brown is currently doing an assessment on Ramularia, the results of which will be needed first before standards can be set.

**Straw yield as characteristic of importance** – the data available at this time was insufficient and to do work on straw yield was a costly exercise. It was decided not to do anything at present but to keep it under review.

**6 row hybrid barley** – James Taylor Alford (Syngenta) had presented a case that the 6-row hybrid barleys were being disadvantaged. The Committee had already agreed to be more prescriptive with the nitrogen protocol and had already agreed a change in the proportion of feed to malting trials.

**Yield targets, comparators, and characteristics for winter barley**

It was proposed that in future there would only be two segments for winter barley – UK malting and UK feed, instead of the current four (2-row malting, 2-row feed, 6-row and 6-row hybrid).

Within the feed segment, a single yield target was proposed, which would be the average of the highest yielding 2-row and the highest yielding 6-row, which could be a hybrid. DH gave an example of how this would affect scores using current figures and explained there was an almost unanimous approval of this method.

Within that feed segment separate comparators for 2-row, 6-row and 6-row hybrid would be maintained and the Committee had defined the initial comparators as follows:-

- 2-row – KWS Glacier and KWS Tower
- 6-row Escadre KWS Meridian
- 6-row hybrid – Volume

The Committee proposed to set the automatic selection level for feed winter barley as yield target plus 3% (raised from 2%), plus a specific weight of 66. This gave a greater capacity for discussion of varieties above the yield target.

Penny Maplestone confirmed there had so far not been any adverse reaction from BSPB members, though they had only had a day to consider the Committee's proposal.

It was confirmed this was for candidate selection and recommendation from this year. The Board unanimously approved the changes.

**Criteria and Targets for malting** – the mechanism would remain the same as last year and the comparators unchanged. Specific weight was changed from medium to high for malting and the Rhynchosporium rating raised from high to very high for feed categories. The rating for Net blotch was changed to very high for recommendation for both feed and malting, but not at candidate selection as there is insufficient data at that stage. The consistency of the weightings between disease and malting was queried and the

decision was taken to increase malting assessments to very high. The Board agreed the Committee's proposals.

***Yield targets, comparators, and characteristics for Spring Barley:-***

The Committee proposed that the automatic recommendation level would remain at 2% above the yield target. The comparators were set for the year.

Weightings – specific weight changed to high

- Nitrogen content for UK malt distilling changed to high
- Ripening for UK malt distilling 2-row feed in candidate selection and recommendation, changed to very high but left high for UK malt brewing.
- Maltsters' assessment changed to very high

The Board agreed the Committee's proposals.

***Oats*** – the issue of hullability being published in the RL was raised and it had been agreed that a formal protocol would need to be approved before any results can be included in the RL.

***Yield targets, comparators, and characteristics for winter oats:-***

The Committee proposed that the automatic recommendation level would remain at 2% above the yield target. The comparators were set for the year.

- Weightings - specific weight changed to very high, Kernel content changed to very high

***Yield targets, comparators, and characteristics for spring oats:-***

The Committee proposed that the automatic recommendation level would remain at 2% above the yield target. The comparators were set for the year.

- Weightings - specific weight changed to very high

The Board agreed the Committee's proposals for oats.

***Rye and Triticale*** – the option to use other commercial data, as long as it is validated to RL standards, is being explored. This year one trial has been abandoned to date.

**19/10 CHANGES TO CROP COMMITTEE HANDBOOK (paper 11)**

The proposed changes to the Crop Committee Handbook were agreed.

**19/11 CROP COMMITTEE ROTATION (paper 12)**

The Board discussed how to handle the coming crop committee vacancies.

**19/12 FINANCE (paper 13)**

***5 Year Budget***

SO presented the 5 year finance table. He explained the 11/12 budget was partly CEL "carried over" money at the start of this budget which made it difficult to see where CEL finished and the Consortium started. This should be clearer now. Previously there was no allocation for the Scotland oilseed rape preliminary trials which had been agreed by CEL. This meant proposals for additional money to fund these trials had to be made and approved. A number of trials were lost in 13/14 so costs were reduced, however this was not typical.

DH noted the finance paper gave a good indication of the costs to be considered for the proposal for the next project.

SB highlighted that now is not too early to be planning for the next cycle and to manage the next transition. She explained the current project ends in 2016. New contractors would need to be in place early 2016 as the current contract would end at harvest 2016.

**19/13 APPLICATIONS TO USE DATA/MATERIAL FROM RL TRIALS (paper 13)**

SO explained that this is now being managed by Ellie Marshall who is keeping a list showing applications..

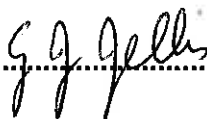
It was agreed this table of requests should be produced at each board meeting. There were conditions given against the different requests to ensure the information would be used correctly and HGCA would need to ensure it is enforced. There should also be a strong caveat that breeders be provided with results from any work done using the data or trials. Use of a standard MTA on grant of access would address this. Such a document was in preparation.

**19/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Wheat candidate selection appeals meeting will be 16<sup>th</sup> not 15<sup>th</sup> September

The Chairman closed the meeting at 14:26.

**Signed:**

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**Date:**

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