

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RL PROJECT BOARD
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2014
PGRO, THORNHAUGH, PETERBOROUGH**

MINUTES

Present:

Chairman

Susannah Bolton (HGCA)
Mark Ineson (MAGB)
Heather Peck (Chairman cc)
Jonathan Tipples (HGCA)

Graham Jellis

David Cranstoun (HGCA)
Thomas Jolliffe (BSPB)
Richard Summers (BSPB)
Alex Waugh (nabim)

David Houghton (Chairman cc)
Penny Maplestone (BSPB)
Paul Taylor (AIC)

In attendance:

Peter Gregory (Chairman Elect) Simon Oxley (RL Manager) Denise Lawson (minutes)

Apologies:

Andrew Ward (Chairman cc)

Minute

Action

01/20 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

Apologies were received from Mr Andrew Ward.

Mr Waugh was welcomed to his first meeting.

02/20 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The main items for consideration at this meeting were the candidate selection proposals and the re-sowing proposals for varieties which would be considered for recommendation in November.

03/20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

a) CONFIDENTIAL

The minutes were checked by page.

With the amendment of the meeting date which had been recorded incorrectly, the minutes were signed as correct.

An amended copy of the minutes will be produced and sent out for signature.

Ms Lawson

Item 19/06: It was clarified that it was not unusual for unlisted varieties to

be sown in RL trials, but it was rarer for them to remain unlisted at recommendation stage. A procedure had now been put in place to ensure that all varieties which are considered for recommendation have been listed in the Plant Varieties and Seeds Gazette and the variety status confirmed before the recommendation meetings.

b) NON-CONFIDENTIAL

The Board agreed with the proposed deletions and a final copy of the minutes with the correct date would be prepared and signed.

Ms Lawson

04/20 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

a) CHANGES TO DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST

Variety declarations of interest had been declared by Dr Summers, Dr Jolliffe and Mr Taylor.

A full copy of the variety declarations of interest will be attached as Appendix 1.

Ms Lawson

05/20 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

There were no other items highlighted for discussion which were not already included on the agenda.

b) RAMULARIA RATINGS FOR WINTER BARLEY

Dr Oxley summarised the paper which had been supplied.

The information supplied referred to winter barley. It showed the available data which covered four years – a total of 20 sites. The ratings supplied had been calculated in line with how other diseases were scored and validated by NIAB.

The Protocols Committee had earlier indicated that *Ramularia* ratings would be useful when sufficient information was available. The Board were asked to consider whether this information should be released to the industry and whether it should be used in the RL

The variability of the ratings across seasons compared favourably with those for spring barley (for which *Ramularia* ratings were already published). After discussion, the Board agreed that HGCA may use the information in a Topic/Information Sheet. . This could include information from previous research and should be prepared in consultation with barley breeders. The Board agreed that HGCA may also use the information for research purposes. However it did not agree to publication on the RL or to use as part of the RL decision-making process.

06/20 RL MANAGER'S REPORT

Crop Committee candidate selection meetings had now been held, including pre-meetings with the breeders to review the data. . Disease

ratings were produced as the data became available. Seed orders were prepared and trials plans sent out following each meeting.

Two issues were discussed relating to the timing of data publication: publication of harvest results on the HGCA web site and release of data in confidence to breeders.

HGCA had received some criticism for slow publication of harvest results. The Board discussed whether procedures should change but confirmed that the current policy that data should not be published until validated should continue. However it did agree that the results could be published as and when available and validated, with no obligation to wait until there was a certain minimum data set before publication, as had been previous HGCA policy.

Delays in the release of data to the breeders had also given some cause for concern, particularly for winter wheat where data had been made available to breeders very close to the time of the committee meeting, despite an early harvest. Dr Maplestone suggested that, where data were unavoidably delayed, non-validated information could be sent out to the breeders as long as it was clearly labelled as such, as this would help them to start preparing for the committee meeting. The Board agreed that every effort should be made to release validated data to breeders as soon as possible and that if there were delays, the release of non-validated data should be considered. Dr Cranstoun asked that breeders wait to contact the RL team with questions about the data until the validated data had been released as pressure to respond to queries would slow the validation process.

Dr Bolton acknowledged that there had been some problems in 2014 with the availability of data and criticisms from breeders were noted, Ways of overcoming these issues were constantly being reviewed, including the how data were validated and the automation of some aspects, including a direct way of loading data from the database directly to the Extranet..

07/20 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

a) OILSEEDS CROP COMMITTEE MEETING

Dr Oxley reported.

The Crop Committee had expressed some ongoing concern about the minimum standard for light leaf spot, despite the decision which had been taken by the Board.

There was a clear imbalance between the minimum standard set for the North and that set for the East/West region. The policy for the setting of minimum standards had been changed over seasons and further consideration of light leaf spot levels must be given at the 2015 Planning meeting.

East/West region

23 varieties were proposed for re-sowing, plus 9 new candidates, plus

Amalie, which had not been sown in 2013, but was sown in 2014 as a variety with resistance to Turnip Yellow Virus (the latter based on 2013 data).

There was one appeal (Advance), which failed.

North region

22 varieties were proposed for re-sowing, plus 9 new candidates and Amalie (on the same basis as for the East/West region).

The Board considered, and approved all sowing proposals.

b) OILSEEDS CANDIDATE SELECTION APPEALS MEETING

There was one appeal – Advance (DLF Trifolium).

The appeal was based upon variable variety performance across a number of trial sites. Although mentioned by the breeder, there was no clear evidence of excessive seed loss. The Appeals Board had considered the case in depth and concluded that the Crop Committee and trials managers had handled the variety decision correctly. The appeal failed with a vote of 8 against, 0 in favour and 1 abstention.

The Board agreed, based on the report, that the right decision had been made.

c) BARLEY, OATS & OTHER CEREALS COMMITTEE MEETING

Mr Houghton highlighted some errors in the attendance which had been made in the minutes. These will be amended before the next committee meeting.

Ms Sonko

The Committee proposed that 17 winter barley varieties should be re-sown in trials (5 of which were regional proposals) plus 8 new candidates, two of which were hybrid varieties.

12 oat varieties were proposed for re-sowing plus 4 new candidate varieties.

The Board discussed the sowing proposals and ratified them.

d) WHEAT CROP COMMITTEE MEETING

It was noted that the minutes supplied were still in draft format.

A paper produced by Mr Handley concerning the late autumn sowing had been tabled at the meeting. In order to give Crop Committee members the opportunity to consider the proposals this would be added to the agenda at the November meeting. In addition, the draft paper being prepared by Dr Watts about the cost benefit analysis would be presented at the November meeting.

The Committee agreed to review whether Group 1 varieties should be

used to set the target for Group 2 varieties when setting the yield targets in May 2015.

There were several varieties which were above the yield target but not at the level for automatic recommendation, and for which preliminary discussions at the Crop Committee had suggested that they should be sown in trials. The breeders had then been invited to make their presentations. The Board were asked whether these decisions could be made without the presentations – this would only be applied at for re-sowing and candidate selection decisions, not for recommendation and breeders would still be expected to attend with presentations prepared should the Committee need further information. The Board considered this proposal and agreed that, should preliminary discussions indicate a positive outcome, the breeder would not need to make their presentation, noting that this would need to be accompanied by a guarantee to the breeder that the variety would be selected.

Proposals for re-sowing were as detailed in the minutes and the Board ratified them.

e) WHEAT CANDIDATE SELECTION APPEALS MEETING

There were two appeals arising from the Wheat Crop Committee meeting, and both had been made on similar grounds. Both varieties were NL2 varieties which had been presented in the category 'Cheap to Grow' and the appeals were based on the following grounds:

- The Crop Committee failed to apply properly the stated criteria for recommendation or have applied criteria other than those stated;
- The criteria have not been applied equitably across all varieties within a market segment.

The Appeals Board had considered both appeals and, following considerable discussion, ruled as follows:

On the criteria: *'The Crop Committee failed to apply properly the stated criteria for recommendation or have applied criteria other than those stated'*

In both cases the vote was 6 against, 1 in favour and 2 abstentions.

On the criteria: *'The criteria have not been applied equitably across all varieties within a market segment'*.

In both cases the vote was 7 against, 0 in favour and 2 abstentions.

Therefore both appeals failed.

However, discussions at the Appeals meetings had given rise to some issues which required further consideration and these would be discussed under Item 08/20.

08/20

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE APPEALS MEETINGS

a) OILSEED RAPE

TRIAL MANAGERS' DIARY UPDATES

The breeder had raised some concerns about the recording of data and/or relevant information in the trials diaries by the trials managers. It was clarified that the breeder in question had visited the trials site and noted some bird damage, but this had not been recorded in the trials diary. Lack of relevant information in the trials diaries can affect validation of yields. If the breeder had reported the damage to the RL team, it could have been investigated and any relevant issues could have then been added to the trials diary or raised with the Trial Manager, but he had failed to do so. The Board agreed that it was important to distinguish between issues which were included in the trials diary as part of the official record, and additional notes which were not recorded by the Trials Managers. There should not be an automatic assumption that the trials manager was at fault because he failed to record a conversation with the breeder.

The importance of accurate recording in the trials diaries would be stressed at the next trials managers' meeting. Dr Jolliffe suggested that completion of the trials diaries was an operational issue and as such, should be dealt with by the RL project manager, rather than by the Project Board.

TIMING OF HARVESTING TRIALS

It had been suggested that early maturing varieties were disadvantaged in trials with harvest date set to suit the majority of varieties. The Board agreed that sequential harvesting of varieties in a trial was impractical and suggested that, instead, maturity dates should be recorded for all varieties and plots checked at an appropriate time for field losses which must be recorded where seen.

Protocols for measuring pod shatter would be added to the agenda for the Protocols meeting.

Dr Oxley

Dr Jolliffe reminded the Board that its responsibility was to establish and publish protocols and it was the responsibility of the RL project manager to ensure their operation.

Dr Oxley confirmed that all of these issues will be raised at the next trials managers' meeting.

Dr Oxley

Following the protocols meeting in December, a report will be made to the January Board meeting.

Dr Oxley

b) WHEAT

DEFINITION OF SPECIFIC CATEGORIES

The wording for the category 'Cheap to Grow' (CTG) can be found on page 69 of the Crop Committee Handbook. This specialist category was

now only used with the wheat crop.

The Appeals Board had expressed some concerns about how varieties were judged when considered under this specialist category.

Mrs Peck summarised that the Committee considered every variety initially using the full criteria as set out in the CCH on page 22, judging the yield levels against the target yield as agreed at the Planning meeting, followed by consideration of the balance of features specified for a specialist category. The wording in the CCH should be clarified to reflect this process.

The Board agreed in general that there was a need for recognition when a breeder presented a variety which offered a good all round package of attributes, such as lower input requirement, good disease resistance, enabling flexibility on timing of agchem applications. . They also agreed that they would need to avoid being too prescriptive in the wording as the flexibility in the system needed to be maintained. They also recognised that the breeders had the opportunity each season to address the Planning meetings and request additional categories which should be included to recognise the needs of a changing market.

Following some further discussions, it was suggested that Dr Bolton and Dr Maplestone should develop some options for recognising low input varieties, and present these to the January Board meeting. In the meantime the current criteria and wording of the CCH would stand for the recommendation meeting in November.

**Dr Bolton/Dr
Maplestone**

09/20 CROP COMMITTEE ROTATION

Dr Bolton summarised the crop committee and board rotations due at the end of this year.

10/20 FINANCE REPORT

Dr Oxley summarised the supplied paper. The forecast included the underspend from last year which will be re-allocated for additional work as required. There was a further underspend forecast in 2014/15 which was due to trial failures and there were still some expenses outstanding from the earlier meetings. The expenditure on consumables would be re-phased to reflect a more accurate picture. The 2014/15 budget should be balanced at the end of the year.

11/20 APPLICATIONS TO USE DATA/MATERIAL FROM RL TRIALS

a) STANDARD MTA

A draft Materials Transfer Agreement had been supplied for information. Dr Bolton stated that discussions with Dr Maplestone had highlighted some areas which require modification/clarification, but the agreement was nearly complete. The Board were requested to feed any comments back to Dr Bolton. Dr Jolliffe was thanked for his input into the initial draft.

All

Mr Houghton confirmed that applications for funding to the R&KT

Committee should now be accompanied by a completed MTA under which access to data, trials or materials would be granted.

Once the MTA had been agreed between HGCA and BSPB it would be sent out to MAGB and nabim for final agreement. Any further requirements from MAGB and nabim would be built into the final agreement.

Dr Bolton

b) TABLE OF REQUESTS

A table of requests had been supplied for information. Dr Ellie Marshall was now managing these requests. Requests now submitted will be sent to BSPB (currently Mr Jeremy Widdowson) who will then circulate them to the breeders for their agreement.

12/20 PROPOSED MEETING DATES FOR 2015

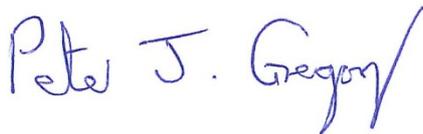
Proposed dates for the 2015 meetings had been supplied for information. Mrs Peck had requested some changes and a revised timetable will be supplied for approval at the November Board meeting.

Ms Lawson

13/20 AOB

Prof Jellis thanked everybody for the dinner and the presentation of the card and glasses which had taken place the previous meeting, to mark his retirement. He was sure that the RL Project Board would flourish under the chairmanship of Prof Gregory, who would be taking the Chair from November onwards.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 13:10



5 December 2015

Signed:

Date: