



HGCA BOARD MEETING

29 May 2013 at AHDB offices Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2TL
SUMMARY MINUTES

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2013 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman with two amendments noted.

MATTERS ARISING

Jack Watts' Price and Value paper would be circulated once final.

The Chairman and Head of R&KT had met with ADAS to discuss their feedback on the Corporate Plan.

The NFU had reviewed the neonicotinoids paper and sent in comments. The final version would be sent to the Secretary of State as a well-referenced and impartial document.

A proposed R&KT questionnaire including a question on levy rates would be circulated for agreement and the survey would be conducted at Cereals in June. Data from the survey would be used at the July Strategy Day.

A new grain sampling publication detailing our research and key messages for sampling would be ready for harvest.

A review of crop development reporting was currently underway with the MICC. HGCA were looking at different systems in use around the world including the USDA, Agrimer and EU MARS systems.

CEO's REPORT

More cross sector work was now taking place with 39 research projects having more than one sector involved. AHDB were now on 6 government committees, including Scotland Food and Drink, CAP reform, the Green Food Project and the Agri Export forum with David Heath.

The AHDB accounts for 2012/13 were now complete and the Audit Committee on 4 June would recommend them to the Board for approval.

The triennial review was due to start in October but was expected to be delayed until January 2014. A steering group had been set up and the notes from the group's first meeting would be circulated.

A 15-year lease with 5-year break clauses and rent reviews and one year free had been signed last week on a new building on Stoneleigh Park to house AHDB. Work on the completely open plan building was expected to start during June and take 12 months. LaSalle were the managing agents.

SECTOR DIRECTOR REPORT

Some RL trials were struggling due to weather impact. The RL team were working closely with BLOSS and it was thought that we still had enough valid trials for data to produce a Recommended List.

The AHDB Crop Research conference organised by HGCA takes place on 25 September at the QE2 centre in London. Peter Gregory would chair the full day event and would also be taking on the Chairmanship of the RL over the next year. The conference was aimed at the research community.

The satisfaction survey with growers had shown a fall in both importance and satisfaction levels last

year. This data would be a key part of the strategy day in July. The results of the survey undertaken on the RL were very good. The challenge was to get recognition for HGCA services.

FINANCE AND STRATEGY

Pre audited accounts to year end showed levy income total was just short of £11.8m, 1.4% up on budget. Direct expenditure was under spent, mainly as a result of weather delays on R&KT projects. There were also under spends on International, MI and Communications. People had also been encouraged to be prudent given the difficult growing season. End of year closing reserves were just short of £3.2m: the optimum reserve was £3,517K.

The accruals process for levy income meant that the actual levy income figure for 2012/13 would not be known until mid-August due to the 6 monthly collection of oilseeds income.

AHDB's auditor had undertaken 36 audits since January resulting in substantial additional income.

Negotiations were continuing with Derbyshire County Council, with Pinsent Masons representing HGCA, regarding the dispute over the cost of replacing the air conditioning in Caledonia House.

ANIMAL FEED STRATEGY

The purpose of this piece of work was to pull together all activities undertaken by HGCA that affect the animal feed sector. Key messages had emerged from this work including feed sector percentages of grain produced and regional production splits. 11 actions were recommended to the Board to take the work forward. It was suggested that HGCA collaborated with the AIC Feed Executive about developing the strategy.

REGIONAL TEAM

A full complement of team members had now been appointed to the Regional Team, although some had not yet started. The implementation of the team would assist in the delivery of HGCA projects in the regions, manage the Business Improvement programme and create a 2-way communication platform, raising and maintaining HGCA's profile at a regional level.

R&KT STRATEGY

A review of the R&KT Strategy had begun and work was underway to demonstrate the cost benefit analysis of all work being undertaken across AHDB. DTZ had been chosen as part of a tender exercise back in 2010: one of the reasons being that they had been commissioned by the Research Councils to undertake similar work and they came with very high credentials and experience of evaluating the cost v benefit of spending public money. A priority matrix had been produced, industry gaps and needs had been identified leading to targeted calls for proposals and evaluation work would constitute a key part of the process. Further discussions would be part of July's Strategy Day.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE

The Board approved expenditure for the following project:

- Improved modelling of Fusarium to aid mycotoxin prediction in UK wheat (project no. RD-2008-3573)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was confirmed that the John Innes Centre were very keen to work with industry to gain a greater voice in government.

A training presentation on competition law, presented by Eversheds, followed the meeting.

The next meeting of the HGCA Board would be held on 17 July 2013 in Kenilworth. A Strategy Day would precede the meeting on 16 July.