



HGCA BOARD MEETING

25 January 2012 at Woodside Conference Centre, Kenilworth, Warwickshire
SUMMARY MINUTES

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 26 October 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Discussions on 'Fed on farm' were continuing at MICC meetings and contact with the NAAC had been made. Discussions were also ongoing with Defra to determine changes to terms of reference for MICC.

The grant had been withdrawn from East Midland Food and Drink, leaving no funding options to be developed.

Chairman's Report

Interviews had taken place to fill HGCA Board vacancies. Board membership would decrease by one with two farmers being replaced by just one new member.

AHDB had taken possession of the Eastwood building on Stoneleigh Park and work was currently underway to make it habitable for AHDB staff. Plans for alternative accommodation that would house all staff in one building were being actively pursued.

Sector Director's Report

A tender would go out in April for a project to replace the current contaminants monitoring work due to end in July.

A good response had been received for the first major call for research focusing on soil.

Over 200 growers had attended the Meet the Processor events in late 2011 and a third of growers had given feedback – 100% described the initiative as worthwhile.

Changes to the 'uks' and 'ukp' logos had been made in line with legal requirements and they had been agreed by Defra.

Finance and Strategy

The figures for levy income for Q3, due by mid-February, would be necessary to undertake an accurate reforecast.

The Chairman confirmed that HMRC was currently undertaking an audit of AHDB.

The largest contributor to Q3 procurement savings had been from the print and property and workplace categories.

Fixed fee arrangements for Barnett Waddingham for pension plan costs had worked well for 2011/12 and costs for DLA Piper were expected to be under budget.

Operational priorities for 2012

The Senior Management team had met to discuss areas to focus on during 2012 and invited comments on the content of this paper. Challenges were arising from the appearance of ad hoc work such as the Green Food Project.

Engaging banks

Work was underway to develop relationships with banks and agricultural bank managers. Efforts were currently being made to arrange meetings with Barclays, AMC/Lloyds, NatWest and HSBC to identify current activities including newsletters, conferences, regional meetings and breakfast meetings and regional managers had been invited to attend the Grain Market Workshops in their areas. A best practice proposal was expected by late 2012.

AHDB Ballot process

The AHDB ballot protocol was detailed in the Statutory Instrument. Discussions had been undertaken during the last quarter within AHDB and there was a legal requirement to have a process in place by April 2012; to this end, a proposal paper would be taken to the AHDB Board on 31 January. Guidance notes for levy payers were being developed and input was required from Defra lawyers.

HGCA Grower communications strategy

The Noesis work to date had focused on growers, the information they required and the format they preferred to receive that information in. Details were given of the comments made by participants who composed the 6 grower profiles, and the differences between them that had been produced as a result of work to date.

The HGCA satisfaction survey 2012, a phone survey of 200 growers, had been carried out in December 2011. Results showed an overall satisfaction rate of 68%.

A data cleanse operation, expected to take around 18 months, would be undertaken and included the purchase of *Precision Prospecting* data containing 16,500 arable contacts.

Board approval process for funding

A process for formal approval of R&KT project funding was agreed. A negative response from four or more Board members would trigger a need to bring the proposal to a Board meeting for discussion and approval.

Approval of committee expenditure

The Board approved project funding for Critical soil P levels work and an extension to support work for the HGCA Recommended Lists 2012-2016.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the HGCA Board would be held on 14 March 2012 at the AIC offices, Peterborough. The meeting was closed at 12:50.