

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RL PROJECT BOARD MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2015  
HGCA REGIONAL OFFICE, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3EH**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

**Chairman**

Susannah Bolton (HGCA)  
David Houghton (Chairman cc)  
Penny Maplestone (BSPB)  
Jonathan Tipples (HGCA)

**Peter Gregory**

David Cranstoun (HGCA)  
Mark Ineson (MAGB)  
Heather Peck (Chairman cc)  
Andrew Ward (Chairman cc)

Geoff Hall (BSPB)  
Thomas Jolliffe (BSPB)  
Paul Taylor (AIC)  
Alex Waugh (nabim)

**In attendance:**

Will Hamilton (Observer)                      Simon Oxley (RL Manager)                      Denise Lawson (minutes)

**Apologies:**

Richard Summers (BSPB)

**Minute**

**Action**

**01/22      ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked them for coming. Mr Hall was attending on behalf of Dr Summers, who had sent his apologies. Mr Hamilton was attending his first Board meeting as an observer in his role as chairman designate of the Wheat Crop Committee. Mrs Sarah Mann will be joining the meeting later to make two presentations.

**02/22      CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

**03/22      MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**a) CONFIDENTIAL**

The minutes were checked by page.

Item 07/21(c), paragraph 4: Following the sentence starting '*However, it was agreed that these varied...*', the following will be added '*The Board also discussed one of the major differences was that the one protocol was designed to protect the whole range of varieties and this was the driver for the robust application of fungicides. Discussions also resolved that the purpose of the protocol was to elucidate the genetic potential of the wheat varieties*'.

Item 07/21(c), paragraph 5: Amend the sentence to read '*The Board agreed that the value of the trials was clearly recognised internationally*'.

With the corrections detailed, a revised copy of the minutes will be produced and signed. **Ms Lawson**

**b) NON-CONFIDENTIAL**

The Board agreed with the proposed deletions and a final copy also including the amendments as detailed under 03/22(a) would be prepared and signed. **Ms Lawson**

Arrangements would be made to make the non-confidential minutes available on the HGCA website. **Ms Lawson**

**04/22 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

**a) CHANGES TO DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST**

Everybody had re-signed their declarations of business interest for the 2015 season. There were no variety conflicts of interest

**05/22 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE**

**a) ITEMS ON ACTION LIST FROM LAST MEETING**

A paper had been circulated with details of actions from the last meeting.

Item 08/20(b): Feedback on low input varieties had been included in the paper supplied (Paper 11).

Item 11/20: the paper had been circulated to nabim and MAGB for comment with the deadline of approving the final procedure at the Board meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015. **nabim/MAGB**

Item 07/21(a): there had been problems identifying a mutually convenient date for the meeting with the linseed breeders so it had been deferred to later in the year. The Board recommended that the meeting should take place before the spring sowing date for linseed to enable the procedures to be adjusted in the trials this year. **Mr Handley/  
Dr Oxley**

07/21(c): Suggestions for some draft wording to address the seed area had been sent to Dr Bolton. This will be discussed further at the Board meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March. **Dr Oxley**

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS:**

The number of trials would be reviewed in April.

The cost of the forthcoming RL Project would be identified in the new project proposal.

**06/22 RL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Paper 6 had been supplied for information.

Seed stats: It was proposed that the RL team would identify the varieties

that needed to be discussed and information on those varieties would be provided by NIAB, who would also approve the Committee papers prior to presentation. Dr Oxley confirmed that the seed stats provided would be based on UK sowings. Dr Cranstoun stated that the figures from Scotland, supplied by SASA were publicly available. Dr Oxley confirmed that both sets of data would be used in producing the reports and would be clearly labelled. Dr Jolliffe was concerned that the full dataset would not be supplied to the crop committees. It was confirmed that the full set of figures were made available for use by MAGB. It was proposed that HGCA should discuss this further with the director of NIAB. Mr Tipples confirmed that this had been raised before but that HGCA would be happy to raise it again if so requested by the Board. The Board agreed that this was desirable, and Dr Bolton agreed that she would contact NIAB and report back at the next Board meeting.

**Dr Bolton/  
Mr Tipples**

Vernalisation protocol: Dr Summers had submitted some feedback on the paper supplied, stating that vernalisation was a complex trait and that although interesting, the genetic approach may not represent good value for money. The Board agreed that it was positive that Dr Griffiths had been consulted and provided such a helpful response. They further agreed to note the paper and watch for future developments.

High Nitrogen Spring Barley trials: there were two suitable incoming varieties this year so these trials would be sown with appropriate varieties included for comparison purposes.

**07/22**

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

### **a) PROTOCOLS COMMITTEE MEETING**

The notes from the Protocols Committee meeting had been circulated for information.

The PGR and fungicide protocols were circulated to a wide number of agronomists for comment each year.

The trials contractors review had highlighted the number and type of trials across the regions which were required to provide a robust data set, and had highlighted gaps in spring wheat and winter and spring oats.

More information about soil was required in the site data from the trials managers.

BSPB was asked to give an opinion on whether the data on hullability of oats should be published; this will be discussed at the Barley & Oats Planning meeting.

**Dr  
Maplestone/  
Mr Houghton**

The Protocols Committee had agreed that the trialling system disadvantageded early maturing varieties. A paper was included under Item 8 addressing the issues.

The Protocols Committee had confirmed that they wished to continue with separate lists for oilseed rape for the East/West and the North regions.

It had been noted that additional trials may be required with and without PGR's for oilseed rape.

The notes from the protocols meeting had indicated that several members had failed to attend the meeting. Mr Tipples suggested that there may be a need to revert to an agreed committee membership. However, members who had been unable to attend had submitted comments and it was felt that there was value in keeping the group open and flexible.

Mr Tipples advised the Board that a statement made at the Ulster Arable Farm Conference had indicated that there may be significant cuts to AFBI in Northern Ireland and that this may impact on their capacity to run RL trials

All winter triticale and winter rye trials were now treated due to the issues with yellow rust.

The Board approved the fungicide and PGR proposals, as outlined in the paper.

## **08/22 EARLY MATURITY**

Dr Oxley summarised the paper.

Discussions were structured around the three parts outlined in the paper:

- Current maturity protocol
- Proposals for new trials
- Suggestions for the proposed methodology and whether they could be incorporated into the protocols.

Dr Cranstoun suggested that part of the problem with the current protocol was that the trials' managers do not judge the crops using the same criteria or at the same time. He further suggested that it might be better to conduct the observations in the same way that visiting breeders completed their observations, with an earlier visual assessment followed by more detailed dry-matter analysis from specific sites. However, Mr Hamilton suggested that visual observations may be very subjective and that additional training in making the observations would be of value. A grain-moisture rating at harvest was taken at each trial site but this did not serve the purpose of identifying early varieties. There was general agreement in the Board that the current protocols were not fit for purpose so an improved protocol must be developed. Dr Oxley proposed that the protocol outlined by Mr Vincent in the paper would identify trials sites where a wide range of variation was identified. This information could then complement a more general assessment that would happen at all sites. It was pointed out that it was more important that the chosen trial sites represented the majority of the growing area.

Prof Gregory summarised that there was a general agreement in the Board that some drying and weighing should take place at a limited number of sites. It was important to identify the varieties which mature

sufficiently early to offer an advantage to the growers. Any proposed protocol must be economically viable.

Following some further discussions, the Board proposed the following:

- Dr Oxley should seek feedback from the breeders about the methods they used to determine earliness (via Mr Widdowson);
- Following this feedback, the paper would be re-worked for presentation to each of the crop committees;
- Feedback from the crop committees would be presented at the RL Board meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015.




**Dr Oxley**

**Dr Oxley**

**Dr Oxley**

**09/22      PROGRESS OF RL REVIEWS**

Dr Oxley led on this item, and summarised the supplied paper which included the following table:

Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3
New (provisional?) RL varieties under trial but <u>not yet fully recommended</u>		Core of <u>Recommended List</u> varieties		Other (subsidiary?) varieties not in trial
Aimed at quality sectors, malting barley, quality wheat's where industry requires lead in information but quality testing is not complete, so we cannot recommend levy payers grow them. Would delay recommendation process but not disadvantage any breeder		Reduced list of best varieties which have a full recommendation		Varieties that are outclassed in terms of yield (set point e.g. 8% below highest yielding variety) are retained for a set number of years (e.g. 2), would also include varieties which retain a significant crop area beyond 2 years, perhaps in a certain region only, e.g. Westminster. Varieties with small seed area. Failed candidates?
Partial dataset in booklet Full dataset on website		Full dataset in booklet and on website		Partial dataset in booklet Full dataset on website
		 Core List		

The Board generally agreed that the 3-stage process would make it easier for growers to understand recommendations.

The Board agreed that progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2 was clear but that movement from Stage 2 to Stage 3 was more complicated. This would be discussed further at the crop committees and feedback would be supplied at the July Board meeting. The Board agreed that failed candidate varieties should not be included at Stage 3. The Board were reminded that this was similar to the P1, P2 classification which had been

**CC Chairs/  
Dr Oxley**

used in earlier Recommended Lists.

The Board requested that a mock-up of the Recommended List tables using this layout should be prepared.

**Dr Oxley**

Mr Taylor advised the Board that feedback from the AIC had indicated that a variety could be removed from the list after one year out of trial but that it was important that the system did not become too formulaic and the role of the crop committees to discuss varieties must be preserved. Opportunity for breeders to present a case for their variety to remain on the Recommended List should be maintained.

**10/22 PREPARATION OF NEW RL RESEARCH PROJECT AND RENEWAL OF CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT**

Dr Oxley led on this item, and summarised the paper.

The Expression of Interest would be presented to the HGCA R&KT Committee at their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March and this would contain the budget proposal for the next project. Mr Houghton confirmed that the HGCA R&KT Committee would discuss the proposal and then either recommend or not to the HGCA Board whether the project should be approved. It was clarified that the role of the RL Project Board was the governance of how the funds were spent, once approved. Dr Jolliffe stated that the Consortium agreement was between the four parties (i.e. HGCA, BSPB, MAGB and nabim), and this determined the role of each party in the project. It was made clear in the consortium agreement that the RL Project Manager was responsible for procuring and managing the trials and it was the concern of the RL Project Board to establish the most appropriate trials programme.

The Consortium parties were requested to feed back any information on whether the levels of their in-kind contributions would change, so that this could be built into the proposal.

**BSPB/  
nabim/  
MAGB**

The Expression of Interest would be circulated by e-mail to the RL Project Board before the presentation was made to the HGCA R&KT Committee, followed by presentation of the full paper at the RL Project Board meeting scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> March.

**Dr Oxley**

**11/22 CLARIFICATION OF 'CHEAP TO GROW'/LOW INPUT VARIETIES**

Dr Bolton led this item with a presentation based on the paper supplied

The intention was not to publish the information but allow its use by the crop committees when debating the variety proposals. There was some concern that it could be confusing to the crop committees and Dr Cranstoun proposed that the evaluation of risk could be shown as a numerical scale. There was also some concern about the assumptions underpinning the results, but it was generally felt that the information could offer additional information for the crop committees to take into account.

The Board generally agreed that the approach proposed did not support a continuation of the 'Cheap to Grow' category, but did provide an alternative

way of assessing the relative risks of varieties with varying degrees of reliance on fungicide applications.

Mrs Peck suggested that varieties with stronger disease resistance were not usually competitive in yield. However, if they were considered as 'low risk varieties' this could be an additional positive attribute.

Mr Tipples stated that, from a strategic point of view, HGCA must be seen to be exploring varieties which required lower levels of fungicides. Mr Taylor suggested that there was a role for the risk management approach but it was not relevant for the cheap to grow category.

Prof Gregory suggested that graphic representation of untreated yield against the agronomic merit may be useful. Risk assessment methodology generally used a combination of an identified hazard with its probability of occurrence, but this required additional narrative to define the risk.

Dr Bolton was requested to re-work the paper and define the parts which may be considered useful to re-present to the Board at their meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March, before it was taken to the crop committees.

**Dr Bolton**

**12/22 CROP COMMITTEE ROTATION**

A paper had been supplied for information

**13/22 MATERIAL TRANSFER REQUESTS**

The draft material transfer agreement had been supplied for information. The next step would be approval from MAGB and nabim to provide feedback and raise any concerns before the March Board meeting.

**Mr Waugh/  
Mr Ineson**

A list of approved applications had been supplied for information.

**14/22 FINANCE UPDATE**

A paper was supplied for information.

Dr Oxley led on this item.

There was an underspend in the current year due to fewer milling tests but the budget should balance out before the end of the project. Dr Oxley confirmed that the budget for 2016/17 only included the work which took place until the end of harvest 2016.

**15/22 PRESENTATION ON SELECTION CRITERIA FOR EXPORT WHEAT VARIETIES**

Mrs Sarah Mann joined the meeting to make a presentation

It was clarified that ukp and uks were brands and that varieties which fell outside of the specification were still exported.

**16/22 PROGRESS OF ISO9001 APPLICATION**

Mrs Sarah Mann made a presentation

She highlighted that her previous roles had included work in quality management systems.

Dr Bolton confirmed that the key motivation in acquiring the ISO certification was to ensure that all systems were properly documented and managed.

The Board encourage completion of this project

14/18

**AOB**

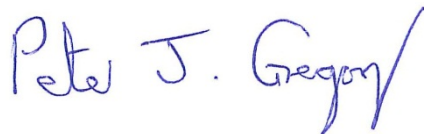
**a) LATE CHANGES TO RL DATA**

Mr Taylor had raised this item so that procedures might be clarified.

Following the recommendation meeting for oilseed rape and subsequent appeal and approval by the board, the data had been recalculated and this had affected the ranking of two of the varieties. However, it had not affected the variety which had been the subject of an appeal. Dr Oxley confirmed that an e-mail had been received from a trials manager which had indicated that re-analysis of the data was appropriate. He further confirmed that the papers presented to the Board at their November meeting had not changed, beyond those changes which he had outlined at the meeting. The Board requested that information about any future changes to data after approval should be circulated for information.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 14:30

**Signed:**



**Date:** .....

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