

Committee Name: East Midlands Regional Combinable Crops Board

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Meeting Date: 9 June 2016

Location: British Growers Association, Louth and AHDB Monitor farm, Swaby

Chairman: Mark Leggott

Secretary: Simon Fisher

Tel: 07803 204507

Present: Mark Leggott (Chairman) Charles Anyan, Paul Barnes, James Casswell, Peter Gadd, Richard Harvey, Mark Ireland, Phil Jarvis, James Robinson,

By Invitation: Emma Hamer, Senior NFU Plant Health Adviser; Harry Henderson, AHDB, James Langley

In Attendance: Simon Fisher

Apologies: Edward Gent, Joe Greenfield, Charles Matts, Ed Hammond, Robert Parker, William Renner, Rad Thomas, Chris Wray.

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2016 were confirmed and signed.

Matters arising

There was no feedback on Lincolnshire County Council inspections and farm assurance to report. The expected NVZ consultation is in purdah during the EU Referendum, but the board will be consulted once Defra publish the details. An update on the apprenticeship levy was tabled and noted. On the NSTS £25 administration charge representations for a reduced fee on multiple tests for equipment had been rejected by the NSTS board.

BPS

If members have any particular points to improve the BPS application process then these should be made to their County Adviser as we engage with RPA on the review for 2017. A briefing on RPA issues that have been raised with MPs would be circulated to the board for future meetings. Lincolnshire members had praised the helpful Lincoln RPA drop in centre. On outstanding 2015 payments clarification sought on whether interest would be paid on payments post 30 June following the recent announcement by the EU to allow member states to extend the payments deadline to 15 October. For those with outstanding 2015 payments the "Post Payment Process has yet to be clearly defined. Members need to apply for hedge cutting derogations as soon as possible to allow the granting of them. Check carefully the RPA allocates the right fields!

Emma Hamer, Senior NFU Plant Health Adviser

Emma Hamer was welcomed to the board. A copy of her overheads is appended to the minutes. She updated the meeting on:

- a) **Glyphosate** – use will expire unless re-authorised. NFU continue to push at Commission doors on the re-authorisation impasse as a decision has to be made by 30 June. Four UK NFUs have submitted joint letter on behalf 70,000 farmer members in UK. The board asked that members in the region lobby Health and Food Safety Commissioner Andriukaitis's -



vytenis.andriukaitis@ec.europa.eu Board members stressed that our representations focus on the environmental impact of this product loss.

- b) **Diquat** – Despite safe use for past 40 years a new assessment model has questioned issues with birds, operator and bystander safety. Authorisation runs out on 30m June 2017. Commission are proposing to withdraw approval
- c) **Neonicotinoids** – a second emergency application has been made by NFU on 120,000ha targeted to counties where greatest levels of pyrethroid resistance is present and 9 other counties, including Lincs, Leic and Notts. Decision expected on 14 June from the Expert Committee on Pesticides. NFU lobby on neonicotinoids and bees continues. Bee decline started before neonics introduced and pyrethroid is 10 times worse.
- d) **Promar Report – Healthy harvest 2** – The report commissioned by NFU, AIC and CPA is likely to be launched in the autumn and focuses on how the loss of actives will affect price, availability, quality, imports etc. of potatoes, peas and beer. Board members asked that focus on environmental impact also be given more importance.
- e) **Future NFU work** – In addition to the above items this includes defending active ingredients (huge number of re-authorisations coming up); Healthy Harvest campaign; Sprayer testing and Red Tractor; Metaldehyde stewardship; OSR herbicides stewardship
- f) **Chemical containers** – Emma thanked the board for raising the issue of containers looking similar due to corporate branding but containing different formulations. HQ has recommended that members draw this to the attention of manufacturers to address. Wider publicity would draw attention to possibly illegal practices so this route was more appropriate. The responsibility to apply the correct product still lies with the operator and/or farmer.
- g) **Buffer zone guidance** – Emma is developing a one stop shop fact sheet to clarify different buffer zone requirements
- h) **Sprayer testing** – A fact sheet was circulated on testing requirements for non-exempt pesticide application equipment in use, including slug pelleters and granular applicators. Testing by 26 November 2016 is required.
- i) Emma was thanked by the board for all that she is doing across the enormous workload that is the plant health brief. Board fully supported additional resource at Stoneleigh to support Emma.

eGrain Passports

The board considered the consultation as follows:

- The industry should adopt an electronic passport so long as the system provides rapid feedback of data to the grower at all times. A win-win philosophy. Schemes like Frontier Gold and Weetabix cited as very useful for grower. Feedback from end user right through to grower must be core rationale of the system, irrespective of number of intermediaries.
- Funding – industry should fund it equally (not raised on ratio as her AHDB levy)
- Ownership – Industry consortium across the supply chain. No one sector having control of the data.
- Governance – independent management board including grower members
- Passport scope - scheme should be set up to provide no more than current paper based system. Scope to expand should be allowed for in IT development but industry must be consulted on an additional data requirements
- Aggregated data - As it will have a value and could defray costs then this should be supported. Access to data controlled by management board.
- Individual data – must remain confidential to grower – merchant – and end user. If hauliers could benefit from weight data then possibility to share.
- These views to be forwarded to HQ

Headquarters Board Report

Mark Leggott reported. New appointees to the national board are Robert Law, John Pawsey, James Standen, and Luke Patterson. Defra are not keen to introduce tighter standards on weed content in seed without seed trade agreement. (original issue was from North East concerns about blackgrass



contamination in seed). New RB209 data expected by summer 2017. Planet software is not going to be updated.

The Red Tractor standards biennial review is coming round. Areas of concern include temporary outside storage of grain under pressure from Nabim who want storage on hard surface, under covers and time limited. NFU say storage on sealed surface acceptable with a 5 day max limit unless continuously moved but coverage should not be mandatory. RT proposes all PPP applicators be annually tested – this is not in line with SUD. RT keen to standardise across commodities (Horticulture standards are tighter)

The trade are not interested in changes to grain contracts, however opportunities for farmers to negotiate within the contracts and assert their rights, including better working between farmer and merchant do exist. Better understanding of issues such as sampling procedure, tolerances, and deductions principles. At the current time there is EU focus on alkaloids traceable in grain after ergot contamination. 10% of samples exceed the limit for alkaloids.

The EU Commission response to the President's letter on fertiliser tariffs has been disappointing and could have been written by the EU Fertiliser manufacturers. Further work needed on this cost centre.

Political pressure generated around ILUC on biofuels at EU level remains a concern. A UK consultation on increasing UK biofuel inclusion is delayed by purdah, for implementation April 2017. UK Gov't remains interested in potential ILUC and consumer backlash risk.

The 2016 Cereals Development Programme is set for launch at Cereals 2016. Mark asked that board members looked at potential candidates.

On wayleaves, all the figures that NFU has promoted are now being scrutinized heavily by the power grid companies. They have employed a QC and look set to resist our proposals. They are clearly not going to update 25 year old figures without a fight.

Erucic acid levels in OSR

Some members have experienced elevated levels of erucic acid in oilseed rape and swinging deductions by merchants. An NFU briefing sets out important information for those affected about mitigating losses and challenging penalties which have been imposed. If members are affected by the issue they should contact CallFirst (0370 845 8458) as soon as possible for initial advice.

Pollybell Organic Visit

Arrangements for the 28 June visit were noted. 15 places available. 9 taken up. Chairman will offer others out. Simon Fisher to send out details nearer the time.

Lorry times at mills

Board members raised the increasing length of waiting times at mills and other intakes (illustration was 9hrs at Vivergo). Testing and scheduling seems to be at fault. Agreed we should pass comment to HQ asking for inclusion at the next Cereals Liaison Group, which includes trade and hauliers.

Next Meeting

On 25 October 2016. Bethan Williams, NFU CFE Project Officer, will be attending. Agreed to invite Tori Morgan to talk about seed issues.

Visit to Louth Monitor Farm

In the afternoon the board visited the AHDB Louth Monitor Farm, at Rossville Farm, Swaby, hosted by Simon King.