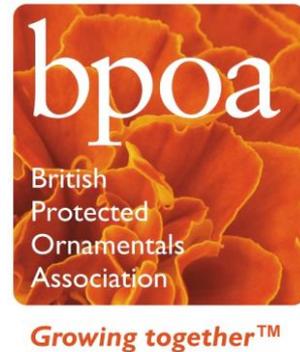


BPOA Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

STC, Cawood
15 October 2015



Present

Howard Braime (Chair), Martin McPherson, Debbie Wilson (AHDB), Wayne Brough (AHDB), Harry Kitchener, Lyndon Mason, Caroline Shove, Amy Gray (NFU), Ewan MacMillan, Simon Davenport, Fay Richardson, Andrew Fuller, Ollie Opperman, Russ Woodcock, Simon Pearson and Jill England (ADAS, Secretary).

1) Apologies

Neil Bragg, Ian Mills, Nigel Crosby, Colin Frampton and Mike Smith.

2) Minutes of the last meeting

BPOA Strategy

This was an agenda item for discussion later in the meeting.

Control of aphids – efficacy of biocontrols

There had been limited response to a call for information on this subject, but few aphid problems (other than black aphids) had been experienced during this season. A project looking at the control of aphids in pepper crops using biocontrols would come to an end at the end of November and could be reported on at the next meeting.

ACTION: J. England to include efficacy of biocontrols in controlling aphids on the agenda of next meeting.

AGM and Technical Seminars 2015 and 2016

70-80 people attended the 2015 event, with some companies sending 2-4 people. Introduction of a reduced rate for multiple delegates from the same company attending had been proposed, but had not been progressed. Discussion revealed factors affecting the number of attendees per company included time of year and the necessity for an overnight stay. S. Davenport proposed taking this discussion to the Management Committee; seconded by Howard Braime.

Action: S. Davenport to table discussion of reduced rates for multiple attendees from a single business at the BPOA AGM and Technical Seminar for the next Management Committee meeting.

Defra valuations for the Bedding and Pot Plant sectors

J. England reported that Defra had now given go ahead to collect industry data, and they could be invited to the next meeting. The Committee was keen to discuss data collection with the Defra team. A list of relevant questions needed to be compiled.

Action: S. Davenport to compile list of questions/concerns to put to Defra.

Action: J. England to invite representatives of the Defra statistics team to the next meeting

Proposals on the redesign of the CC trolley

Subsequent to the June meeting, S. Davenport had reported that the new design trolley shelf would be lighter than the existing wood/metal version; he had also written and spoken to Container Centralen with the Committee's concerns, including the proposal for an amnesty for the return of old shelves to bring them back into the scheme prior to the introduction of the new shelves.

***Impatiens* downy mildew**

W. Brough reported that Fera had received two *Impatiens* downy mildew samples during the 2015 monitoring, both of which were metalaxyl-M sensitive.

3) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

The Committee approved the minutes of the 18th June 2015 meeting.

4. BPOA Strategy

Crop protection. New pests and diseases entering the country were a concern. The Animal and Plant Health Agency had recently introduced an update email service (issue 1 attached), which could be arranged by contacting Edward Birchall (edward.birchall@apha.gsi.gov.uk) or local APHA officers.

D. Wilson reported that the two AHDB ornamentals panels had reviewed crop protection in June, including scoping work to follow the MOPs programme which was coming to an end. This had included consideration of upcoming risks for ornamentals (including invasive pests and diseases) and key pests and diseases as the first set of priorities. AHDB would feed information on invasive pests and diseases into the core crop protection programme which was now led by Joe Martin. Any new problems that arise should be fed back to D. Wilson.

Western Flower Thrips remained difficult to control. H. Braime had found Botaniguard effective in reducing the number of thrips on a rose crop when mixed with Eradicoat (label rate) and applied during late afternoon, using screens to maintain humidity and exclude UV light. Low level whitefly numbers were also reduced, but aphids weren't affected by the treatments, and red spider mite populations may have increased. Use of Eradicoat alone did not provide effective control of WFT.

H. Braime suggested that as **nematode** application techniques markedly affect the efficacy of nematodes, this should be included in the strategy.

S. Pearson suggested that **automation** should be given higher priority within the strategy as it would become increasingly important with the introduction of the living wage, lower unemployment and increased crop production. The AHDB and Reaseheath College had both commissioned automation projects. Following the AHDB SmartAg conference, the AHDB was keen to develop automation projects related to the nursery stock and protected ornamentals sectors. Robust labour statistics would identify immediate areas where automation could benefit businesses, but would need to include a range of products from the lowest to highest price points. It would not be appropriate to benchmark operations due to the range of systems in use. The greatest labour cost was currently concentrated in packing operations, particularly with the trend towards more complex packaging requirements by high end

retailers. Use of automation for packing was not currently considered cost effective. John van de Vegte (Vineland Research, <http://www.vinelandresearch.com>) had been producing packaging machines for ornamentals, providing the potential to utilise reconfigure robotics already available for use in the UK. An EU project on automation for the fresh produce industry was due to be published in February/March 2016.

Action: S. Pearson to update the Committee on the EU project once the report is published.

Action: J. England to invite John van de Vegte (Vineland Research, Ontario) to speak at the BPOA Technical Seminar.

Action: H. Braime to pull together statistics on the proportion of labour use in packing (type of units, packaging element, labour cost per unit) and store waste data for the next meeting.

Shelf life. There was potential for more shelf life work in addition to WickSticks, Chrysal AquaPads and antitranspirants, particularly as some retailers required growers to guarantee shelf life for a set time period e.g. ethylene blockers. S. Pearson mentioned that ethylene scrubbers were a cost effective option that may be trialled as part of the Poinsettia work, but they would not be appropriate for home use. Transport temperature and timing of irrigation prior to despatch were other factors implicated in poor shelf life performance and contributing to nursery waste, although a clearer definition of waste was required.

Action: Grower Committee members to consider a definition of waste and other factors contributing to waste levels (including transport time and temperature).

H. Kitchener reported that **Drones** were being used in outdoor crops, and there was potential to adapt the technology for use in large glasshouse blocks. Drones were used in Europe to help understand the greenhouse environment by mapping out temperature and humidity. There may be potential to use them in pest and disease assessments. Difficulties in previous automation projects had arisen due to the volume of data to be handled rather than data collection. Positive results were being achieved, with infra-red sensing used for real-time imaging and capable of detecting *Verticillium* wilt. The costs of sensors had reduced, and could be boom or roof mounted.

Rothamsted Research had recently launched their Research and Innovation Centre, which aimed to 'promote collaboration and innovation by partnering with commercial agricultural technology businesses and opening up the research process' <http://www.rothamsted.ac.uk/rothamstedcre>.

Production statistics were not included in the strategy. There was an optional question for production data on the AHDB levy form, but the data collected did not adequately describe the industry. S. Davenport was in the process of surveying pansy growers to calculate the value of pansy production.

Action: J. England to include collection of horticulture statistics in the strategy.

5. Technical Committee members

M. Smith had volunteered to Chair the January meeting. There were no volunteers to fill the permanent position of Chair, therefore the rotating Chair format would remain in place in the interim. The lack of continuity was seen as a major weakness in this approach, therefore areas of responsibility were delegated for Committee members to share recent knowledge and experiences with each other at each meeting. Nominations were requested for the Committee member elections due to take place at the January AGM.

The BPOA Technical Committee Terms of Reference, attached for reference, state that members that do not attend three meetings in anyone year have to relinquish their position. Those in this situation will be contacted to discuss in the first instance.

| Subject area | Committee member |
|---|--|
| Pests and diseases | Howard Braime, Wayne Brough |
| Shelf life | Andrew Fuller |
| Automation | Simon Pearson |
| Growing media | Neil Bragg (proposed) /Howard Braime |
| Nutrition | Neil Bragg (proposed) |
| Growing media auditing scheme (P4 work) | Simon Davenport, Neil Bragg (proposed), Jill England |
| Energy/GrowSave | Colin Frampton (proposed) |
| Pesticide spray application | Russ Woodcock |
| News and views (collate and report back interesting articles) | Caroline Shove |
| To be decided | Fay Richardson |
| Propagation | Mike Smith (proposed) |
| BPOA Strategy | Nigel Crosby (proposed) |
| Niche and novel crops | Ollie Opperman |
| Plant growth control / manipulation | Ewan MacMillan |
| Cut flower centre update | Lyndon Mason |
| Light/spectral filters | Luke Lloyd (proposed) |

Action: H. Kitchener and S. Davenport to contact current and prospective Committee members regarding subject area responsibility / meeting attendance as appropriate.

Action: Committee member election nominations to S. Davenport prior to the AGM.

Action: J. England to add reports for delegated subject areas to the agenda for the next meeting.

6. AGM and Technical Seminar 2016 (19 - 20 January 2016)

There was a date clash with an AHDB lighting event planned for the 19th January. Options to link the two meetings would need to be discussed.

Action: JE to compile and circulate a draft agenda with the minutes.

Action: S. Davenport and D. Wilson to discuss the timing of the meeting.

7. Study tours:

a. Poinsettia study tour to France. 16-18 November. Currently with 19 participants.

b. BPPC study tours. Three study tours under consideration under the Bedding and Pot Plant Centre were discussed, two to be taken forward.

- Diffused light and its effect on ornamentals (Netherlands). Exploring companies looking at glass diffused light. Mardenkro are generally open to grower visits and would be happy to host a group at their site.

- Hi-tech agronomy (UK). Aimed at young growers. To demonstrate technology such as ebb and flood benches, and commercial use of LED lighting. To include a range of nurseries in the south-east.

- General agronomy (UK). Aimed at young growers. To demonstrate the breadth of production systems used in the bedding and pot plant sector. Based around nurseries in the north-east.

The Committee was supportive of the diffused light and hi-tech agronomy tours; the agronomy tour would need a theme.

Action: H. Kitchener and W. Brough to report back to the Committee on the study tours at the January meeting.

8. LED report availability

D. Wilson confirmed that the LED report was due for publication, and would be made available to levy payers at the AHDB lighting event in January 2016.

9. Commercial use of LEDs / plasma lighting (trials)

The majority of research using LED / plasma lighting on ornamentals to date had been carried out in controlled environment cabinets or sheds, but at some point commercial grower trials would need to be conducted. M. McPherson confirmed that under AHDB project CP 125 treatments would initially be screened in the STC LED facility, and this would be followed by commercial trials in future work packages.

10. Trials help for specialist pot plant growers.

Industry developments in recent years had resulted in crops that were once grown as pot plants now commonly produced as bedding plants. Pot plant growers forced to produce new crops by these changes have to source information from Holland. Achievement of better UK information sources for the pot plant sector was discussed. UK pot plant growers were diverse, with only 1-2 growers of a particular crop e.g. orchids, therefore it was considered impossible to match the level of information available in Holland, and it may be better to concentrate on high level research e.g. LED lighting and adapt to specific crops. When working on a specific crop many growers source detailed information direct from the supplier. Highly specialised growers would be reluctant to share information.

11. Control of aphids – efficacy of biocontrols

This had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

12. MOPS update

J. England presented the MOPS update, details of which were circulated prior to the meeting. The MOPS blog can be accessed via: <https://ahdbmopsblog.wordpress.com>.

13. Bedding and Pot Plant Centre (BPPC) update

J. England presented an update on the BPPC work programme, details of which were circulated prior to the meeting. The BPPC blog can be accessed via: <https://ahdbbppcblog.wordpress.com>.

Verbena nutrition. The maintenance of growing media pH in the various treatments was discussed as it was likely to drift as soft mains water would be applied; pH would be monitored throughout the trial period.

Improving cutting success. The selection of zonal pelargoniums for this trial was queried as they are more difficult to root. When designing the trial it had been decided to use a difficult to root subject to ensure differences in the results; with an easy to root / fast rooting subject there may be little or no difference in treatment effects. It was suggested that more than one

batch of cuttings should be used (2 x sticking dates) and the source and transport conditions of the cuttings should be noted as it would influence cutting quality.

Action: J. England to amend the protocol to include two sticking dates

The committee discussed ideas to promote the BPPC more effectively, including use of YouTube videos, attaching the BPPC trial posters to the blog, inclusion of items in the BPOA newsletter. Preliminary results from the *Begonia* and *Calibrachoa* variety trial had been presented at the June open day.

Action: J. England to circulate the BPPC presentation with the minutes.

14. Pesticide update

J. England presented the pesticide update that had been circulated previously.

Stocks of Oberon were reported to be limited following the manufacturers decision to stop manufacturing this product. Movento (spirotetramt) was suggested as an alternative for whitefly control.

Only two chlormequat products (Stabilan 750 - Nufarm UK Ltd, and CCC 750 - Becasane s.r.o.) would be approved for use on ornamentals after 30 November 2015; 3C Chlormequat 750 (BASF) had a last use date of 31 August 2018 for use on Pelargonium, Geranium and Poinsettias. There were no EAMUs in place to cover use in ornamentals.

15. AHDB communications and crop protection updates

W. Brough presented the AHDB communications update that had been circulated previously. The crop protection update would be circulated with the minutes.

16. AHDB funded research update

a. Proposals and updates

D. Wilson presented an update of projects recently approved by the AHDB protected ornamentals panel.

b. Biopesticides call

Applications for the biopesticides call for work had been screened. The purpose of the work was to improve best practice and therefore efficacy.

c. Studentship summary

A list of studentship applications which were due to be assessed by the AHDB had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee was asked to provide feedback on which projects were of greatest priority to the sector. Although these projects were essentially training vehicles, industry involvement would be welcomed. Immediate feedback: 'SPECTRA: Whole plant spectral response models', 'Evolving beneficial insects' and 'Insecticide resistance in the tomato leafminer' were high priority projects.

Action: Committee members to feedback direct to Debbie Wilson by Friday 23 October 2015.

d. AHDB cross sector update

A call had been issued: AHDB Potatoes, Horticulture, Cereals and Oilseeds and Dairy: Research and Development and Knowledge Transfer Soil and Water Call for Tenders: Research Partnership for 'Management of Rotations, Soil Structure and Water'.

17. BPOA review of AHDB proposals

Topic withdrawn.

18. 2016 meeting arrangements

- 13 January 2016. Venue: Lincoln University, Holbeach Chair: Mike Smith. Followed by the Poinsettia open day.
- 16 June 2016. Venue: NFU, Stoneleigh. Chair: Lyndon Mason
- 13 October 2016. Venue: NFU, Stoneleigh. Chair: TBA

Action: H. Kitchener to discuss Chairmanship of the October 2016 meeting with the proposed Chair.

19. AOB

- The date of the Poinsettia trial (PO 021) open day at Delamore's would be changed as the date clashed with the Dummer/Ecke poinsettia open day at Roundstone Nurseries (25th November).
- S. Davenport requested a return to publishing the approved minutes of the Committee meetings on the BPOA website (www.bpoaonline.co.uk) in future. This was agreed.
- Feedback from management meetings to be added as an agenda item.
- Planning was about to start for the 2017 US study tour to North-West USA.

Action: Committee members to forward any suggestions for suitable sites to visit to Wayne Brough.

Action: J. England to include Management Committee meeting feedback (S. Davenport) on the agenda as a standard item for future Technical Committee meetings.

21. Tour of STC

The Committee was given a tour of the work currently under way as part of the MOPS project (powdery mildew on *Asters*; rust on *Bellis*; phototoxicity testing) and within the LED work (CP 085 and CP 125).

H. Braime thanked M. McPherson, P. Davies and A. Ormerod for the tour on behalf of the Committee.