

HELPING TO DRIVE POLICY

NFU boards are busy working on vital sector issues; here we take a look at their make-up and who's who regionally

The NFU West Midlands commodity boards remain vital, shaping policy and taking grass roots, county and regional sector issues to the highest level of the union.

Following the NFU annual general meeting, in Birmingham, and a series of county and board meetings, regional posts have now been formalised with new members elected, including new officeholders.

Elected representatives will serve for two years but all farmer and grower members are welcome to attend board meetings or feed in issues to their local representative.

In the West Midlands there is solid board representation and members have a sound understanding of the policy and trade issues affecting their sector; alongside a willingness to connect with the NFU's membership network to ensure regional representation is strong.

Two farmers from each county sit on the boards but any county whose representative is a board chairman is entitled to an additional member.

The NFU regional horticulture and potatoes board and regional poultry board both work slightly differently, with sector representative rather than county ones.

The main changes for 2016/2017 have seen Shropshire farmer Rob Alderson, of Onibury, elected as livestock board chairman, with Staffordshire farmer John

DELIVERING ON DAIRY

David Brookes has become the new regional dairy board chairman after Michael Oakes took up the national dairy board chairman's post.

Mr Brookes, who was deputy chairman, said: "I am very pleased and honoured to be elected, we are facing very difficult times and I want to do everything I can to make sure we have market conditions that don't disadvantage us.

"I want to see the board have a greater impact, for members to come along and feel welcome and engaged and we need to be having conversations from the grass roots right through to the top of the NFU.

"I want members to find out about all of the work that is being done on their behalf, to be inspired and active within the union and I want to bring members along.

"I am looking forward to working with Ed Hemming as deputy chairman and we all want to congratulate Michael Oakes and we wish him well and hope we can support him in his new role at this crucial time for the dairy sector."



Parry, of Albrighton, as deputy, while Staffordshire farmer David Brookes, of Lower Loxley, is the new dairy board chairman with Warwickshire member Ed Hemming, of Hockley Heath, as his deputy.

Other officeholder changes see Shropshire farmer Andrew Williamson, of Bridgnorth, come in as combinable crops board deputy chairman and Herefordshire grower Anthony Snell, of Hereford, as horticulture and potatoes board chairman.

For Anthony's 'Parting Shot' column please see page 106.

While the NFU regional board is made up of county chairmen, county NFU Council representatives and commodity board chairmen.

Warwickshire crops board member Jim Meadows was regional chairman as the *BF&G* went to press ahead of a possible election at the next meeting.

Members were set to meet at the NFU West Midlands office, at Agriculture House, Telford, on 14 April at 11am.

NFU Vice-president Guy Smith was also due to attend as he tours the country meeting regional officeholder teams and hearing about grass roots' issues.

Rob Newbery, NFU regional director, said: "Our board structure is



a vital component of the organisation's democracy.

"Every policy and action of the NFU is ultimately decided upon by members and this requires accountable and workable structures through which to discuss, disseminate and consult.

"I've worked in the NFUs' food and farming department for 10 years, prior to coming to the West Midlands, so I know how important it is to have farmer specialists generating,

discussing and deciding policy at a local as well as national level.

"These structures give the NFU a great deal of weight with government and the supply chain, as we can demonstrate that the points we lobby are genuinely those that effect the majority of farmers and that our positions have been robustly challenged and formed."



MEMBER BOARD DELEGATES

Combinable Crops Board

Chairman

Robert Lockhart, Staffordshire, 01827 282111 or email robert.lockhart@btconnect.com

Deputy chairman

Andrew Williamson, Shropshire, 01746 718227 or email bwc75@hotmail.com

County representatives – Adrian Gorringe and Philip Watkins, Herefordshire; Adrian Joynt, Shropshire; David Lane and Robert Collier, Staffordshire; Jim Meadows and Rupert Inkpen, Warwickshire; Jake Freestone and Michael Edwards, Worcestershire.

Dairy Board

Chairman

David Brookes, Staffordshire, 01889 562546 or email dgbrookes59@yahoo.co.uk

Deputy chairman

Ed Hemming, Warwickshire, 01564 782926 or email obeliskfarm@hotmail.co.uk

County representatives – Simon Brewer and Rob Davies, Herefordshire; Barry Jones and James Chatham, Shropshire; Matthew Weaver, Staffordshire; Michael Sharlot, Warwickshire; Michael Oakes (national dairy board chairman), Terry Hill and Joel Beckett, Worcestershire.

Horticulture and Potatoes Board

Chairman

Anthony Snell, Herefordshire, 01989



730229 or email ant@ajandcissnell.co.uk

Sector delegates – Henry Chinn, Nigel Adams, Martin Boynton, Ali Capper, Tim Edwards, Margaret Herbert, Derek Jarman, Robert Lockhart, Charles Pudge, Anthony Snell, Paul Southall, Stephen Watkins and Richard Wheeler.

Livestock Board

Chairman

Rob Alderson, Shropshire, 01584 856316 or email aldrrobert@aol.com

Deputy chairman

John Parry, Staffordshire, 01902 372314 or email johnparry2@btconnect.com

County representatives – Richard Sparey and Frank Lloyd, Herefordshire; Graham Price and Richard Yates, Shropshire; Richard Spencer, Staffordshire; Julian Douthwaite and Adam Quinney, Warwickshire; Tim Jones and Tony Hall, Worcestershire.

Poultry Board

Chairman

David Mills, Shropshire, 01588 673202 or email david@dinchope.co.uk

Deputy chairman

Richard Corbett, Herefordshire, 01568 708351 or email rcorbett@corbettfarms.co.uk

Sector representatives – Kinsey Hern, Richard Jordan, Peter Moore and John Reed.

Tenants group

Chairman

Graham Clay, Staffordshire, 01785 813038 or email ggjclay@btconnect.com

County representatives – Tony Hall, Herefordshire; Philip Parker, Shropshire; Tom Beatty and Peter Henderson, Warwickshire; James Bakewell and Andrew Baxter, Worcestershire.



LEADING ON LIVESTOCK

Rob Alderson, who was deputy chairman, said he wanted to thank Tim Jones for his work as chairman since 2012.

Mr Jones will remain on the livestock board as a Worcestershire representative and as the *BF&G* went to press continued to sit on the national sheep group.

Rob said: "We would like to thank Tim for all of the time he has given, hard work and commitment he has shown representing the industry as chairman.

"I am delighted to take up the position and with Tim remaining on the board I know his knowledge and experience will continue to be useful and very much valued as we tackle future challenges.

"Jon Parry is my deputy chairman and I look forward to working closely with him and I would like to thank board members for voting me in."

Mr Alderson said there were challenging times ahead but the board's work was valuable and had a real bearing, feeding grass roots and wider issues up the chain to help shape union policy and have an impact on the industry.

"There are certain issues that sometimes do not go our way which is always frustrating but those of us who contribute, who sit in debates and meetings know how much influence we can have shaping future policies within our industry," he added.

JOIN AN NFU COMMODITY BOARD

All members are welcome to attend board meetings although only those on the committee can vote, with the chairman holding the casting vote. Currently an extra Staffordshire delegate is needed for the dairy board with David Brookes as chairman and two further Staffordshire tenant delegates are needed with Graham Clay, remaining as chair.

The tenants group is also after an extra Herefordshire and Shropshire farmer to sit on the committee.