

Committee Name:	NFU Livestock Board	Meeting Date:	16 th July 2019
Circulation:	NFU Livestock Board	Location:	NFU HQ
		Chairman:	Michael Oaks
		Secretary:	Harriet Henrick
		Tel:	02476858550
		Ref:	

Present: The National Livestock and Dairy Boards plus appointees and co-opted members.

By Invitation: Ceris Jones (NFU), Cat McLaughlin (NFU), Stuart Roberts (NFU), Tom Dracup (NFU), Simon Hall (Defra), Geraint Thomas & Jason Lonsdale (NFCU), Dr Gama Kahn, Phil Hambling (NFU), Ruth Edge (NFU), Helen Hunt (NFU)

In Attendance: Richard Findlay, Colin Rowland, Richard Yates, Julia Camp, Hugh Broom, Bill Mellor, Will Terry, Stuart Hammond, David Barton, Thomas Binns, Dave Morgan, Will Jackson.

Apologies: Mark Jelley, Wyn Evans, Phillip Abbot, Andrew Loftus. **Dairy;** John Torrance, Phil Latham

Morning Session: Joint Dairy and Livestock Board

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions:

The Dairy Board Chairman Michael Oakes welcomed everyone to the 2019 joint dairy and livestock board and highlighted the opportunity it presented to form a consensus of opinion on issues challenging both sectors.

Item 2: NFU Skills Strategy

NFU Skills and Employment Adviser Tamara Hill and Next Generation Chairman Simon Gadd outlined the NFUs involvement in the creation of a new agricultural framework aimed at creating career opportunities in the sector, boosting employment and improving skills and training.

Discussion: There was a general feeling that this is something the industry has needed for a while and should be available to all. It was questioned why the framework focussed on aligning agriculture with STEM rather than advocating an agricultural GCSE. TH responded that only a few colleges would be equipped to offer a GCSE in agriculture, but all can implement agriculture into STEM lessons. There was wide support for the work stream, as well as the opportunities it offers to students

Outcome: It was agreed that TH would bring this back to the sector board when looking to build the competencies and requirements of the programme to ensure they are right for industry.

Item 3: Dairy Bull Calves

NFU Dairy Adviser Verity Richards ran through the latest data and industry action on dairy bull calves

Discussion: The conversation highlighted the difficulties facing farmers who do not have outlets for their bull calves, are down with TB or do not have the space or labour capacity to rear additional calves

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on farm. However, the board recognised the reputation risk this issue poses and the need to align the industry with the demands of consumers. It was agreed that as a board they would want to phase out euthanasia and that they would support the position that no viable calf should be shot on farm. It was suggested that an industry workshop be set up to help achieve this which would need to set some hard short-term goals. There was not support for an outright ban at this time to allow industry time to tackle this difficult issue. RF commented that we must fully understand the impact on the UK beef price of an additional 150,000 entering the UK supply chain. It was hoped that any extra product would displace imported product.

Item 4: Environmental Sustainability

NFU Climate Change Adviser Ceris Jones provided an update on the NFUs net-zero ambition and how the government have focused their targets around three pillars; productivity, carbon storage and boosting renewables. Michelle Cain, Research Associate at Oxford University, presented the latest research on methane emissions metric systems. She explained that carbon dioxide (CO₂) has a much long life cycle compared with methane (CH₄) (10years), therefore by changing the levels of methane we see a quicker temperature response. This demonstrated how stable or reducing missions can result in global cooling not warming without the need to reach total net-zero.

Discussion: The board were widely supportive of the net-zero plan and commented that many farmers were already participating in sustainable practices. Communications are important as there is a lot of negative media coverage around farming and greenhouse gasses, but by understanding the benefits farmers bring to the environment through sequestrations and grazing we can inform consumers. There was also discussion over the need to accurately assess the warming implications of all emissions to understand the impact actions to lower one GHG could have on other gases. Concerns were raised about the accuracy and acceptance of using GPW* instead of GPW100 however it is being discussed at the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and is generally accepted by scientists.

Item 5: Animal Health and Welfare Update

Chief Animal Health and Welfare Adviser Cat McLaughlin Chief provided an update and background detail to the proposal for a Ruminant Health and Welfare Group ahead of the consulted later this year. The group would not at current include TB but would aim to reduce duplication by agreeing general principles across the UK, learn from success in each sector and raise the profile of AH&W under this umbrella company. Five consultation recommendations were made around membership, funding, priorities of the group, team and CVO involvement.

Discussion: CM clarified that the proposal was to streamline the current animal health and welfare groups to coordinate and focus industry drive on endemic diseases and work with government to secure collective action and funding. It was stressed that disease has no borders and so the Group would include representatives from the devolved regions. The board had a number of questions



regarding funding streams, the structure of the Group e.g. who would Chair it, the need for industry oversight and how it could demonstrate that it would be outcome led. CM explained the proposal is for all members to have an equal voice and the chair will be appointed independently but funded by AHDB.

Outcome: The board supported the concept of the proposal but agreed to wait for the consultation to be released before lending their full support to the project.

Item 5: TB Strategy

NFU Vice President Stuart Roberts and Food and Farming Adviser Tom Dracup discussed the NFUs work on a TB Strategy and Tom set out how he would be gathering member views to help inform the NFUs response to the Godfrey Report.

Discussion: It was felt that there had been a lack of momentum in this area. The board welcomed the renewed focus on TB following the appointment of Tom to lead on the Godfrey response. A comment was made regarding the need for all cattle owners across the country to take ownership and collective responsibility for this issue and work together to eradicate the disease, whether in a High Risk, Edge or Low Risk area.

Outcome: Tom promised to keep the board updated with developments and aware of engagement opportunities in their regions. Those on the TB Advisory Group committed to attending as many of the meetings as possible to ensure the boards, their regions and the individual sectors were represented.

Item 6: LIP Update

Defra Livestock Information Programme Director Simon Hall provided the latest on the new traceability framework for their multi species traceability platform. The new LIP system that will replace all current movement services, i.e. CTS, ARAMS and the pig service operated by AHDB. Simon set out the working timeline for the Programme which is expected to launch in the mid- 2020s with cattle being launched first followed by sheep and then pigs. Each system will go through a testing period with people who have been identified as having unusual movements to help test the system. Once this has been concluded they will be looking into ways in which the system can include additional value add services such as abattoir feedback, genetic, medicine history, assurance status, RBT, health and welfare.

Discussion: There was a question over how well the system would talk to other software programmes, SH responded that they anticipated that the system would mostly be used via third party platforms, so Defra were talking to software companies now, well ahead of the launch date, to ensure all systems were compatible. A question was asked around the structure and funding of the program, currently the statutory services will be paid for by DEFRA and any additional value added services will be covered by AHDB. These services are yet to be decided and there is not a clear answer regarding who would then own that data.



Afternoon Session: Livestock Board

Item 7: Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising

- The board signed off the minutes from the last meeting.
- Sheep splitting, there is a call on Thursday to discuss age declarations, it was agreed by the board it is better to have an industry declarations form (not with exact date) and no dentition. Plans remain on track for Defra to consult soon and to ensure the necessary legislation is in place by October.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) are holding their final evidence session into small abattoirs, looking at the commercial challenges and welfare. NFU members have attended and given evidence and Harriet will be attending on the 24th July and will report back to the group.

Item 8: Market Update

AHDB has recently released its Beef and Lamb watch results showing that retailers mostly have a high facing for British products, Aldi and Co-Op continuing to sell 100% beef and lamb. However beef price is continuing to drop and reaching an all-time low over the past 5 years. Total production is up slightly (1%), with number of cattle slaughtered down but weights up.

Discussion: board members suggested that a lack of promotion from across the supply chain was a major issue. WJ explained that AHDB thought lamb was going to be a bigger risk and so concentrated promotion around this. WJ also commented that manufacturing beef that usually goes into the EU was down on previous years and much of it had been taken up by Irish beef. Alongside this with the good weather more cattle were coming forward earlier at a heavier weight. The topic had been discussed between retailers and the NFU and the message was given that they were already discounting products heavily. It was raised that the majority of processors were now Irish (80% of kill) and should we be going to the competition and markets authority (CMA) and ask for an investigation into this. The Irish Beef Aid package was also discussed as having an impact on current prices although the board agreed instead of seeing something similar for the British market they would prefer to see better marketing and promotion of our products. RY asked what the ministers views were on the situation, RF had met with him at the Yorkshire show and took the time to explain the situation followed up by an email (attached to your briefing) urging the minister to understand the issue and how unsustainable it is for British farmers followed up by our asks. The constant fight around red meat was also raised with the board showing their frustration around lack of promotion throughout industry and the set-up of AHDB limiting their ability to react quickly to issues.

Outcome: we will continue to take our asks (details on the beef price briefing) higher up within the NFU and encourage promotion of red meat. Further proposals following DEFRA's consultation around AHDB to be brought to the board.

Item 9: National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)

This is group that is part of the FSA set up to prevent, detect and investigate food crime. They were created after the horse meat scandal to identify serious threats to food and drink. It is made up of 82 officers who are able to gather information and investigate crimes with the hope preventing food being rendered unsafe or inauthentic through dishonesty and disrupting and bringing offenders to justice.

Discussion: There has been an increase in the rise of livestock theft that are either being taken to an abattoir and processed illegally without a trace or butchered in the field where they were taken. The board were keen to know this was being looked into as the meat will be entering the food chain and could cause reputational issues for the meat industry. HB asked to make sure a process when dealing with such cases so that a chain of custody of evidence could be built up to make a case against the perpetrators. Many comments from the board about how the NFCU were not known and so therefore how could they report information to them. A question was also raised were the NFCU speaking to agricultural insurers like the mutual to get figures on the number of livestock thefts in the country.

Outcome: For the NFCU contact information to be circulated to the board (please see email) and for NFU to have continuing conversations and work together to make sure everything is reported and recorded.

Item 10: Halal Centre of Excellence Concept

Dr Gama Khan came and presented to the board the concept of the British Halal Centre of excellence. 23% of the world population are Muslim, there has been a 55% growth in the UK over the last 10 years with large populations in Birmingham and London. The charter principles state they must only source and handle halal products; animals raised to strict standards and explained the background to the slaughtering process. In summary he was concerned there is a lack of transparency within the market, multiple halal standards and interpretations complicating the market resulting in principles of halal not being met. By creating the Halal Centre of Excellence there would be an opportunity to bring together standards, inform consumers and open market opportunities.

Discussion: HB asked how the project is planning on being funded, as it stands the governance of the programme has not been finalised and until this has been done the funding can't be procured but it is assumed it would be from private companies and industry. It is estimated it would cost between £2/3 million to set up the project but a feasibility project is currently being done, this would cover set up costs for a HQ in Blackburn and cover the first 5 years with a hope for it to be self-funded in the long term.

Outcome: The board would be interested to follow the process of this piece of work. The paper and presentation have been circulated with the minutes.

Item 11: Meat Labelling

It was presented to the group that the NFU Food Chain team have been working on a paper for National Policy Board that encouraged only the use of meat based terms for meat based products. By

using the name of primary meat products such as bacon, chicken and pulled pork it can be misleading to consumers. Where the primary ingredients is names then this is not as misleading for example a beetroot burger still allows the consumer to understand what the product is however processed foods with unclear names are not appropriate. If this paper is taken forward it will however affect some older products for example the Glanmorgan sausage which has been around since the 1850's as it would cover all products as it would be impractical to have a policy for each product.

Discussion: The board agreed this is a paper they would support going forward even though it might affect some historical products. Misspelling should also be included in this. A question was raised about why vegan/vegetarian brands thought it was appropriate to use meat terms for advertising, RE explained when talking to Quorn and the Linda McCartney brand they believed they were recognised vegetarian brands and so therefore don't need to make their primary ingredients clear on packaging.

Outcomes: the board support the paper going forward to policy board.

Item 12: Rungis Market Visit

The next board meeting on the 17th and 18th September will be a trip to Rungis International food market. The itinerary will be circulated with the minutes and also includes visits to butchers, a hypermarket and talk from Michèle Boudoin Chair of National French Sheep Association before dinner. The next day we will visit Rungis market with a meeting with Francis Fauchère, Chair of Federation of Rungis meat importers and wholesalers and main UK meat importers. Followed by a visit to a beef farm and then return to the UK.

Outcome: The board were asked to raise their hands if they were not able to attend; Will Terry, Thomas Binns and Will Jackson. Anyone not present has been emailed.

Item 13: AOB - Red Tractor

Cost of membership has been raised within meetings, most other sectors are £45 but Beef and lamb is currently on £27.50 so this will be rising. Some question over if they should have a tiered unit system like in Scotland where they pay a price dependant on the number of food units that go into the system. It was agreed by the board the numbers should be run before giving an opinion on this. Life assurance would be brought in 12 months after the Livestock Information Program has been put in place.

Actions

- VR to draft a joint position on Bull Calves to be approved by both boards
- JR to look at the impact the additional bull calves would have on the beef market and the UKs ability to replace imports with home reared stock
- Livestock board to support the ruminant health and welfare group and meat labelling paper
- NFU to follow up with NFCU on how to report incidents
- NFU to continue working on their asks from beef pricing briefing