

**MEETING OF FARMER AND GROWER BOARD
TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2013
10.00 AM FOR 10.30 AM START
at
South Plaza, Marlborough Street, Bristol BS1 3NX**

Present: Guy Dibble, Oliver Dowding, Kate Edwards, Haydn Evans (Chair), Pete Richardson, Tom Rigby, Alan Schofield, Nick Walton and Charles Weston.

In attendance: Lee Abbey (observer), Sandra Bartolomeu-Rook (minutes), Tim Bevan, Janet Blikmans, Helen Browning (part), Finn Cottle (part), Tom MacMillan, Louise Payton, Ben Raskin and Astrid Toner (part).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gillian Butler, Pauline Dixon, Graeme Matravers, Alan Smith and Chris Walton.

Haydn Evans expressed his sincere gratitude to Graeme matravers for his valued contribution as Chair of the Farmer and Grower Board since 2007.

Tom MacMillan was pleased to report that Liz Bowles, an agricultural consultant with hands-on experience of organic farming, had been appointed Head of Farming.

2. GOVERNANCE

Farmer & Grower Board elections

Three elected and two co-opted places available on the board.

2014 Farmer & Grower Board meeting dates

26th February; 13th May; 9th September; 18th November.

Proposal to make best use of Board's time and expertise

The board welcomed and, in principle, **approved** Ben Raskin's proposal which should help address the lack of clout farmer and growers sometimes have.

3. FARMER AND GROWER BOARD MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Farmer and Grower Board meeting on 15 May 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were **agreed**.

There was some discussion about the change to regulations on seasonal agricultural workers as the current scheme was ending. The board asked the SA, not included in the original consultation, to take growers problems to the next level and be a champion for all growers.

4. ISSUES, TRENDS AND IDEAS - FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS

Haydn welcomed Lee Abbey, NFU observer to his first meeting.

Quick round up on veg

Alan reported on his discussions with a dozen growers and also raised questions about:

- The fee structure currently in place for growers in less favoured areas.
- Heavy metal content in compost from household waste and from source separated green waste (discrepancy in SA standards).

Defra consultation on bTB

Tom Rigby spoke to his presentation, deadline for responses to the DEFRA consultation end of September (<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/farming/tb/>).

Oliver Dowding stressed that maize, a prevalent crop for badgers and cows, was also highly selenium-deficient and suggested more work should be done in this area.

There was some discussion about looking at the health of badgers and the need for targeted culling of infected sets which was seen by some board members as the only positive way forward.

Helen felt that the organic perspective was the sensible middleground and agreed more research should be encouraged

CAP update

Helen reported that she had written to the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food regarding the transitional arrangements for the organic farming support scheme post 2013 and raised concerns about the proposed hiatus between the end of the existing organic support scheme at some point in 2014 and the beginning of the new scheme which is scheduled to start making payments from 1st January 2016.

Haydn's trip to Australia and New Zealand

Haydn gave an inspiring presentation which will be circulated with these minutes (also available to other members if interested).

5. UPDATE ON SA ACTIVITIES

Market update

Finn Cottle, Trade Consultant for Soil Association Certification, provided a market update. There was also some discussion about global organic markets.

Branding work/research presentation

Georgina McLeod joined the meeting and gave an update on the brand review currently underway and views from licensees as reported to us by the agency.

Main messages to farming and growing community

Sally Morgan asked for the key messages the board would like us to deliver. There was some discussion about the need to use the right communication channels and look at our audiences as well as make better use of social media for driving campaigns.

Q&A on updates previously circulated

Alan reported that he had some great feedback about how good the focus of Organic September was which resulted in a couple of growers who had never taken part before doing so this year.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

House of commons

Oliver and Tom reported on an All Party Parliamentary Group on Agroecology meeting on dealing with new evidence on GMO safety (<http://agroecologygroup.org.uk>).

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 26th November, South Plaza.