

**MEETING OF FARMER AND GROWER BOARD
TUESDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2013
10.00 AM FOR 10.30 AM START
at
Triodos Bank, Deanery Road BS1 5AS**

Present: Gillian Butler, Guy Dibble, Pauline Dixon, Oliver Dowding, Kate Edwards, Haydn Evans, Graeme Matravers, Pete Richardson, Tom Rigby, Alan Schofield, Chris Walton, Nick Walton and Charles Weston.

In attendance: Sandra Bartolomeu-Rook (minutes), Euan Brierley (part), Helen Browning (part), Martin Davies, Tom MacMillan, Ruth Mason (observer), Ben Raskin, Caroline Sherrott and Jim Twine (part).

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Graeme Matravers welcomed the Board to Triodos Bank HQ. Apologies were received from Ian Noble and Alan Smith.

**FARMER AND GROWER BOARD MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
Farmer and Grower Board meeting on 27 November 2012**

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

GOVERNANCE

Revised Terms of Reference

It was noted that a clause had been added to the Terms of Reference stating that, with effect from February 2013, one third of the elected members should stand down each year.

The Board asked Sandra to check the charity's rules of procedure and whether co-optees could also count towards quorum.

Ruth Mason agreed to circulate an email update on concerns over Clopyralis.

Away Days

. Ben will put forward a proposal for the most effective and efficient use of the Board's time and present some options to the board for consideration at their next meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

Producer Communications needs & plans/Annual conference & AGM

Georgina McLeod spoke of the scope of her current role for the group which included Communications, Development and Membership & Supporters.

There was some discussion about the **Duchy Original Future Farming Programme**.

Georgina explained that a full review of the **Organic Farming Journal** was currently underway. It was generally recognised that technical content was its biggest asset and that we should aim to broaden it in order to reach as many farmers as possible whilst keeping its organic focus. The option of going back to its old name *New Farmer & Grower* had also been raised and, if agreed, we would have to make sure content remained resolutely organic focused. Group membership, online and tablet versions were also under discussion.

In terms of **Building the market**, Georgina explained that we were asking licensees to include the story in the system behind production.

It was also noted that the **SA Annual Conference** would be held on 9th and 10th October at Central Hall in Westminster .

Producer symposium on Soils (November 2013)

Ben reported that we were planning another two day event @Bristol focused on the issue

of fertility.

MAINTAINING PRODUCER NUMBERS

Market update

Jim Twine provided a market update including statistics on producer numbers.

Producer Membership – plans and recruitment

Martin reported that the next step was about numbers, opportunities and associated costs.

There was a discussion around the need to guarantee opportunities for farmers by securing forward contracts and adequate prices.

Seed availability and Fusarium update

Ben reported back on the Potato Seed Working Group. The percentage of non organic seeds used has dropped.

Martin did not know what impact Fusarium levels were going to have and explained that the other issue on the horizon was around grass seeds and pressure from certain organisations to deviate from agreement on certain percentages.

SÁRVÁRI TRUST PRESENTATION

Professor David Shaw joined the board via Skype to talk about the work of the Sárvári Research Trust (<http://www.sarvari-trust.org/>), a not-for-profit company based in North Wales. They breed Sárpo potatoes, resistant to late-blight disease and research the late-blight pathogen, *hytophthora infestans*, and how it manages to evade most methods of control.

POLICY

Antibiotics

Tom reported that we were still campaigning with Sustain and Compassion in World Farming as part of the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics and had recently met with the NFU, Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) and National Pig Association (NPA). In terms of solutions, we need to get the broader industry to think about what the future looks like and will explore areas where there is scope for joint action

TB and proposed cull areas

There was some discussion about the Soil Association's position on bTB and culling.

Action: Emma to forward updated position in due course

Research fund

Graeme introduced Euan Brierley, Research Manager, who spoke to his briefing paper and requested the board's assistance in reviewing proposals to the research fund.

Field Labs

Martin tabled a copy of a provisional list of field labs for next year.

Ben gave an update on horticultural seed variety and breeding trials.

Future Growers Scheme

Ben explained that practical training in organic crop production and horticulture was very limited and existing growers struggled to find suitably skilled staff. It was hoped that the new Future Growers traineeship would reverse this trend by offering a new six-month traineeship to give students a taste of organic growing, as well as a two-year apprenticeship. The traineeship was ideal for growers who were unable to offer a two year placement, allowing them to recruit seasonal staff.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ruth re-iterated her invitation for the Chair of the Farmer and Grower Board to sit as an observer on the **NFU Organic Issues Group**

It was also noted that Ruth would be leaving the NFU to be come Agriculture Manager, Pork & Eggs at Tesco. The Board thanked Ruth for her input and wished her well.

Following a conversation with a licensee in Wales, Pete Richardson raised an issue regarding the use of Klasmanns compost, not currently certified or verified with certification. Klasmann propagation compost is a popular choice for many of our licensees so we have recently requested product specifications so we can check their compliance with SA standards. We will continue to put pressure on Klasmann to get their compost verified as this would make things a lot simpler for our growers.