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**PPA Primary Production Technical Committee (PPTC)  
Minutes of the meeting, 30 October 2024,  
Red Tractor Offices, Assured Food Standards,  
20 St Dunstan's Hill, London  
EC3R 8HL**

**Participants**

Richard Baines	Lamb Weston (Deputy Chair)	Andrew Curtis	PPA (Secretary)
		Vanessa Richardson	PPA (Online)
Gary Collins	PepsiCo		
Gemma Chope	PepsiCo (online)	<b><u>Guest Speakers</u></b>	
Amanda Ayres	KP Snacks	Steve Moncaster (WFF, Online)	
Phil Rivas	KP Snacks	Adrian Cunnington (PSI, online)	
Ben Firth	KP Snacks	Gareth Thomas (Rothamsted Research)	
Ian Pennock	McCain	Jozsef Vuts (Rothamsted Research)	
Colin Ross	McCain (Online)	Anusha Mohan-Kumar (Rothamsted Research)	

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>1. Chair's Business</b></p> <p><b><u>Welcome and observance of Competition Law</u></b> Members were reminded of the PPA anti-trust statement as practised in meetings.</p> <p><b><u>Apologies for absence</u></b> Apologies were received from Craig Stephen (Valeo) and Sam Trevey (Red Tractor).</p> <p><b><u>Minutes and actions arising from the PPTC meeting held 26 March 2024</u></b> The minutes of the PPA PPTC Committee meeting held on 26 March 2024 were reviewed and confirmed as correct. It was noted that most items from the last meeting had been actioned, were ongoing (mainly watching briefs), or would be covered elsewhere under the agenda.</p> <p>Additionally, the meeting that had been scheduled for 12 August 2024 had been postponed. The slide deck that had been prepared for the meeting had been circulated for information.</p>	

<p>Two ongoing items were highlighted:</p> <p><b>PPA to maintain good communication with CUPGRA, with the possibility of a future PPTC meeting at the NIAB facilities in Cambridge.</b></p> <p>It was proposed that PPA visit the NIAB facilities either in summer 2025 or as part of the proposed November 2025 meeting.</p> <p><b>PPA to maintain a watching brief on developments relating to RT.</b></p> <p>It was noted Sam Trevey (RT) had been due to speak and had kindly provided the meeting room for the day. Unfortunately, had been struck ill at the last moment and was unable to attend. The invite would be re-extended for the first PPTC meeting in 2025. If required a standalone meeting would also be arranged (particularly on the 'Safe Haven' scheme).</p>	
<p><b>2. Wireworm research</b>  <b>Invited speakers: Gareth Thomas, Jozsef Vuts, Anusha Mohan-Kumar (BBSRC Rothamsted)</b></p> <p>The three presenters gave an overview of wireworm research at Rothamsted, noting the ongoing costs of global food production losses caused by pests and diseases, and the various emerging challenges presented and exacerbated by climate change. They highlighted the increased interest in bio-pest management solutions, and the transition towards regenerative agricultural farming practices.</p> <p>They gave an overview of the Rothamsted Chemical Ecology group, and their focus on soil-dwelling pest insects. They noted that control was becoming more difficult due to the increased non-renewal of soil insecticides, and in some cases increase resistance to specific actives.</p> <p>In terms of wireworm, these are the soil-dwelling larvae of click beetles, which consume a range of crops, including potatoes, wheat, root vegetables and maize. In their view IPM approaches are needed that rely on larval monitoring and damage forecast. Soil traps formulated using attractive, plant-derived semiochemicals (naturally occurring, behaviour- and development-modifying compounds) could offer feasible targets for pest management and crop stress tolerance.</p> <p>They talked through the development of attractant tools for wireworm monitoring, and the next phases of their projects. The presenters were keen to access sites, particularly in the south of England, and work in collaboration with growers.</p> <p>In discussion it was agreed that they would put together a short paper summarising their asks for PPA members, and they would provide a shortened version of their presentation for circulation to the group.</p>	<p><b>Summary/Communication paper for wireworm activity to be shared with PPTC.</b></p> <p><b>Rothamsted Research presentation(s) to be shared with PPTC.</b></p>
<p><b>3. Update on Water for Food (WFF) Group activities.</b>  <b>Invited speaker: Steve Moncaster</b></p> <p>Steve gave an overview of the BAWAG and how its work was seen as a template for other water abstraction groups (WAGs) across the UK.</p>	

<p>He also informed that since the March 2024 PPTC, WFF had been incorporated as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It had been set up to help abstractors in the food and farming sector deal with changes to abstraction licences that are expected over the next few years. He noted that preliminary data from EA suggests that hundreds of agricultural abstractors will be affected by these processes.</p> <p>As part of the National Framework, WFF will be working with each of the regional planning groups, WAGs and the NFU to make sure that the interests of food and farming abstractors are protected.</p> <p>Steve proposed that there were a couple of opportunities for PPA to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting delivery of the governance Toolkit project.</li> <li>• Helping WFF to set up the priority WAGs.</li> <li>• Helping WFF to promote its successes.</li> </ul> <p>PPTC members were asked if they can support, particularly with the setting up of the regional WAGs. Steve agreed to put together a simple communication paper that could be used to engage growers.</p>	<p><b>Summary/Communication paper on WFF/WAG activity to be developed and shared with PPTC.</b></p>
<p><b>4. Update on CRMG Group activities.</b> <b>Invited Speaker: Adrian Cunnington</b></p> <p>Adrian reported that the last CRMG meeting had been held 19 August 2024, at which the report for 2023/2024 had been finalised. This was then submitted to CRD on 20 August.</p> <p>The target number of samples for CRD in 2023/24 was 125 total (100 box stores and 25 bulk). However, the actual submission this year was 102 total (69 box, 33 bulk). It was noted that most results reported were non-detects, and that the mean value aligned with European (Potato Value Chain [PVC]) figures, suggesting that further reduction is possible (0.25 - 0.20 mg/kg). CRD has now prepared a confidential response for CRMG, and this would be discussed on 5 November 2024.</p> <p>At an EU Level it was noted that the current tMRL was discussed at the Standing Committee (SCoPAFF) on Pesticide Residues (23-24 September 2024). The proposal is to move the tMRL to 0.20mg/kg, and a vote was expected as early as 25-26 November 2024. The PVC would also be expected to report data every two years instead of annually. A draft of the PVC's report for 2023/2024 has yet to be issued by ARVALIS.</p>	<p><b>ARVALIS CIPC report to be issued to PPTC when available.</b></p>
<p><b>5. Plant protection products</b></p> <p><b><u>Metribuzin</u></b></p> <p>The secretary reported that the Commission intends to proceed with non-renewal of metribuzin. A draft non-renewal proposal was discussed at the SCoPAFF meeting on 10-11 July, and a WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) notification was issued on 24 July, with a deadline for comments of 22 September 2024. MS had then voted for non-renewal at the SCoPAFF meeting on 2-3 October 2024. Final publication of the non-renewal regulation was expected within 2 months of the SCoPAFF meeting, and entry into force is 20 days after that. GB authorisation is theoretically in place until 31 July 2028 (assuming CRD does not trigger an Article 21 review).</p> <p><b><u>Mancozeb</u></b></p>	<p>-</p>

<p>It was noted that despite ongoing industry pressure, CRD had proceeded with the withdrawal of the authorisation in GB. PPA had drafted a statement in support of continued use of mancozeb over the next two seasons for use by members (8 May).</p> <p>A follow-up letter to Steve Barclay on the importance of mancozeb (again co-signed by PPA) had also been submitted on 17 May. However, the general election had intervened. A response was received from Rachel Irving, Defra Deputy Director, Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste only on 1 July.</p> <p>It was noted that there was a possibility to implement an Article 4.7 authorisation after November 2025 (where an active substance is necessary to control a serious danger to plant health which cannot be contained by other available means including non-chemical methods). UPL would investigate nearer the date.</p> <p>The secretary also reported that in UPL Europe Ltd and Indofil Industries (Netherlands) BV had successfully appealed against the Commissions' removal of mancozeb from the EU approved list. One of the key issues identified was the Commission's failure to consider the more recent scientific evaluations provided by Greece, the new RMS following the UK's departure from the EU. The case has been referred to the General Court, which must now re-examine the evidence based on updated scientific data and decide whether the Commission's decision to refuse renewal still stands.</p> <p><b><u>1,4-DMN</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that the existing EU MRL in potatoes had been amended from 15 mg/kg to 20 mg/kg from April 2025, which will allow for WHP to be reduced from 30 to 3 days. France had already granted this in August 2024. Work on obtaining a GB 20mg/ml MRL and 3-day WHP was ongoing.</p> <p><b><u>Risk matrix</u></b></p> <p>Recent amends to the matrix were noted.</p>	
<p><b>6. Plant health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>EU SPS equivalency audit</b></p> <p>The secretary reported that an EU delegation was currently visiting the UK for an SPS equivalency audit. The EU audit team was in Scotland on 24-28 October, inspecting SASA facilities as well as local farm inspections including storage. The same team was then due carry out similar visits in England on the 29-30 October. A wash up meeting was planned for 5 November, but no quick outcomes were anticipated.</p> <p>As part of the preparations for the audit, it was reported that 'ware' potato growers were being reminded that they must register with APHA in England and Wales. Previously this was managed by AHDB Potatoes.</p> <p>Form for registration published on 13 October 2024 LINK: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-become-a-plant-health-professional-operator">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-become-a-plant-health-professional-operator</a></p> </li> <li> <p><b>Fight Against Blight (FAB)</b></p> <p>It was noted that on 3 September a sample was collected from a late blight 'strike' (an area where a new naturally occurring infection has appeared) in Lampeter, Wales. Genotyping proved it to be caused by the EU-46 genotype.</p> </li> </ul>	-

<p>This was the first report in GB. ADAS determined that EU46 arrived at the site late in the season, as it was not present in earlier samples. The trial site was burnt down on 13 September and the tubers will be disposed of responsibly. A second case of the EU46 genotype had also been reported: this time in North-East Scotland. No further details were available at present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emerging situation in Europe with spread and dominance of EU-43 and emergence of EU-46</b></li> </ul> <p>It was reported that blight was widespread across Europe, due to conducive weather conditions, and new emerging clones (EU-46). It was reported that there had been widespread detection of fungicide resistance to CAA and OSBPI and that earlier in the year the European growers' association, COPA-COGECA, had led the development of a late blight action plan which it had shared with the Commission. The work seemed to have stalled, and it was not clear what COPA-COGECA's next steps would be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Virus</b></li> </ul> <p>It was noted that there would be a summit on 'Addressing the Virus Threat to Scottish Seed and Ware Crops' in Dundee in December, and a National Virus Forum was planned for 20 February 2025.</p>	<p>PPA to maintain a monitoring brief on spread and dominance of EU-43 and emergence of EU-46</p> <p>PPA to maintain a monitoring brief on virus</p>
<p><b>7. Contaminants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acrylamide: Progress of ML and BML proposals</b></li> </ul> <p>The secretary gave an overview of the Commission's presentation at the ACRYRED conference (4-5 September in Brussels). It had been confirmed that a new detailed proposal for (B)MLs was still being worked on, and that the delay had been caused by challenges/difficulties encountered with analysis of data held by EFSA. Another stakeholder forum is anticipated in 2025 to inform of Commission/Member State discussions.</p> <p>(B)MLs will be based on occurrence data, and will be split into two sets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampling years 2016-2017-2018 (ante Regulation (EU) 2017/2158)</li> <li>• Sampling years 2019-2020-2021-2022-2023 (Post Regulation (EU) 2017/2158)</li> </ul> <p>Data from 2016-2018 will only be used in there is limited data available, and MLs will be set for broad categories to minimize the risk of misclassification. This means that the MLs must be set taking into account the food subcategory with the highest acrylamide levels (i.e. higher MLs) and the difference between the BML and the ML, for certain food subcategories, could actually be quite large.</p> <p>The secretary also gave an overview of the ESA presentation delivered as part of the event and agreed to share this with the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Glycoalkaloids Forum – Follow-up statement</b></li> </ul> <p>It was noted that as a follow-up of the meeting earlier in the year, the European Potato Value Chain (PVC) had prepared a draft Statement on Glycoalkaloids in Potatoes and Potato Products. The intention is to share the document with the Commission to inform discussions. The publication had been delayed substantially due to revisions and the EU elections.</p>	<p>ESA presentation on 'Acrylamide mitigation in the European savoury snacks industry' (as presented at ACRYRED conference in September 2024) to be shared with PPTC.</p>

<p><b>8. Meeting dates 2025</b></p> <p>It was agreed that PPTC would try to stick to roughly the same weeks in 2025, and roughly the same days as in 2024 (March, July/August, November).</p>	<p><b>'Doodle poll' for March 2025 PPTC meeting to be issued.</b></p> <p><b>Members to advise on possible venues for future physical PPTC meetings.</b></p>
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