



**PPA Primary Production Technical Committee (PPTC)
Minutes of the meeting, 11 March 2025,
Delta Hotels Peterborough,
Peterborough Business Park,
Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6GB.**

Participants

Richard Baines	Lamb Weston (Deputy Chair)	Craig Stephen Andrew Curtis	Valeo PPA (Secretary)
Gary Collins	PepsiCo	<u>Guest Speakers</u>	
Gemma Chope	PepsiCo (online)	George Eustice (Emerald Research Ltd)	
Amanda Ayres	KP Snacks	Iain Meansworth (Emerald Research Ltd)	
Phil Rivas	KP Snacks	Simon Fox (Emerald Research Ltd)	
Ben Firth	KP Snacks	Adrian Cunnington (PSI, online)	
Matt Smallwood	McCain	Sam Trevey (Red Tractor)	
Ian Pennock	McCain		
Kevin Hutchinson	Tayto		

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
<p>1. Chair's Business <u>Welcome and observance of Competition Law</u> Members were reminded of the PPA anti-trust statement as practised in meetings.</p> <p><u>Minutes and actions arising from the PPTC meeting held 28 October 2024</u> The minutes of the PPA PPTC Committee meeting held on 28 October 2024 were reviewed and confirmed as correct.</p> <p>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>2. Update on Bio-stimulants, crop nutrition and soil health Invited speakers: George Eustice, Iain Meansworth, Simon Fox (Emerald Research Ltd)</p> <p>The three presenters gave an overview of the work of Emerald Research. George Eustice gave an overview of the legal status of bio-stimulants (EU and UK) and gave insights into the related political discussions which had taken place while he was the Secretary of State at Defra.</p> <p>Iain Meansworth focused on soil science, crop nutrition and bio-stimulant development. He detailed the OptiYield system which Emerald had developed. This utilised 28 different soil measurements from field and would then make nutrition recommendations based upon those measurements. He gave an overview of the work being undertaken on bio-stimulants as a way of increasing plants defences and thereby reducing reliance on fungicides. He also gave an overview of work being undertaken on wireworm in conjunction with UKRI.</p>	An amended version of the Emerald Research presentation to be shared with PPTC.

<p>In discussion it was agreed that Emerald would provide an amended version of their presentation for circulation to the group.</p>	
<p>3. Update on work of CIPC Residues Management Group (CRMG). Invited speaker: Adrian Cunnington (CRMG Chair, PSI)</p> <p>Adrian gave an overview of the CRMG work, noting that the first annual report had been submitted to HSE, including a total of 102 samples for 2023/24 season (Year 1). The HSE had originally asked for 125 samples. He reported that 78 samples had been at zero or LoD (76.5%). There was a single exceedance (outlier, with technical reasons identified for the exceedance), and 23 samples were over the LoD but below the temporary MRL (tMRL).</p> <p>CRMG had now met with HSE to discuss the report, and an opportunity had been granted to the group to revise/update the text to address HSE comments (by May 2025).</p> <p>HSE had acknowledged that industry had voluntarily taken on the responsibility to support the tMRL through data submissions and was hoping that in Year 2 industry would meet the 125 target. HSE had also asked CRMG to focus on continued cleaning of stores and would like to see a fully representative geographic spread, and stronger statistical foundation in the Year 2 data.</p> <p>In discussion it was agreed that PPA would continue to support CRMG through the submission of data, and it was agreed version of their presentation for circulation to the group.</p>	<p>PPA members to supply data of CIPC levels in store to the CRMG.</p> <p>The CRMG presentation to be shared with PPTC.</p>
<p>4. Update on Red Tractor Invited speaker: Sam Trevey (Red Tractor)</p> <p>Sam gave an update on Red Tractor activities, focusing on the recent UK farm assurance review. This had been commissioned by NFU and AHDB in 2024, with evidence collected from across the supply chain over a period 9 months. The final report had been published on 20 January 2025, and Red Tractor’s public response was due to be published by end of March 2025.</p> <p>Whilst he couldn’t confirm the exact response, Red Tractor was expected to accept all the key points from the review in its public statement. These included that on-farm audits should be reduced in number, simplified, and delivered more consistently. It was hoped that this could be facilitated by using existing technologies and improving collaboration between different farm assurance schemes across the UK. Furthermore, farmers should be at the heart of standards development and Red Tractor would strive to improve its communications and engagement with famers.</p> <p>Sam also outlined some recent changes to the Fresh Produce Standards, which were coming into force to ensure that the standards remained aligned with Global G.A.P. requirements. These included grievance mechanisms to ensure workers can raise concerns, and requirements for a health and safety risk assessment and communication of emergency procedures to protect workers. Additionally, those responsible for IPM plans must have appropriate training or advice, and lastly there was the addition of requirements to document the application of substances which are currently not defined as PPPs (e.g. bio-stimulants) and biological controls.</p> <p>On the ‘Safe Haven’ scheme, Sam confirmed that since the last PPTC meeting</p>	

<p>(which he had been unable to attend due to illness), PPA had arranged a one-to-one meeting with Colin Ross (McCain) to discuss how the scheme was used in practice. Safe Haven had been originally developed in conjunction with industry to control disease risk in seed. Feedback was that it remains valued by growers and supply chain and that standards content was still relevant, although there were some opportunities to streamline assessment delivery and these would be reviewed.</p>	<p>RT presentation to be shared with PPTC.</p>
<p>5. New Genomic Technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UK legislation update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Consultation on Plant Varieties and Seeds Framework for Precision Bred Plant Varieties.</u> <p>The secretariat informed that Defra had launched a consultation on plans to make amendments to legislation applying to the National Listing of PB plant varieties (closes 14 April 2025). These included a Precision Bred Plant Variety List for England, in addition to the existing variety lists, to facilitate the marketing of seeds of PB plant varieties. Defra was also exploring various methods and tools to communicate information on the PB status of plant varieties that do not require legislative changes, such as industry-led PB plant variety registers, existing industry lists of recommended varieties, and the official Plant Varieties and Seeds Gazette. Defra was also exploring the mandatory inclusion of PB status in labels for PB seed and other plant reproductive material and understanding what impact this would have on businesses.</p> <p>It was also reported that Scottish Government planned to hold a meeting on precision breeding, and that BPTA would attend and report back.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Precision Breeding - laying of secondary legislation. <p>It was noted that the Draft Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Regulations 2025 had been laid in Parliament on 25 February 2025. These were expected to come into force in Autumn 2025.</p> <p>It was noted that the legislation covers the release and marketing of PB plants; Revocation of a PB authorisation (by SOS); Review and appeals processes; Defra’s register of PB plants authorised for food and feed; Enforcement; and Consequential amendments to other legislation (e.g., GMO Traceability and Labelling Regulations will not apply to PB plants).</p> <p>The secretariat also informed that the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) had issued draft guidance on release notices for precision bred organisms (PBOs), and that FSA had also issued draft guidance to applicants for the authorisation of PBOs. The ACRE notice covers release notices that allow the PBO to be grown, whereas FSA’s guidance covers safety and nutritional aspects of PBOs when seeking marketing authorisation for use in the production of food and feed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EU Legislation for plants produced by certain new genomic techniques (status update). <p>The secretariat reported that EUPPA had developed its position paper last year. This had been approved by the Agricultural Sustainability Committee in October 2024 and finalised by the EUPPA Board in February 2025. It was noted that the positions aligned with (and was to an extent informed by) PPA’s own</p>	

<p>position on PBs. EUPPA did not plan to proactively engage on this topic, but it maintained a watching brief on EU developments.</p>	
<p>6. Plant protection products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPL Mancozeb event <p>Members noted that UPL had called a two-day workshop on 3-4 June 2025, at Rothamsted Research, Harpenden. This was intended to focus on the agricultural benefits and importance of mancozeb. Vanessa Richardson would attend on behalf of PPTC and would be briefed before participation.</p> <p>It was noted that that there was still the possibility in GB to implement an Article 4.7 authorisation after November 2025: this is 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.</p> <p>It was also noted that at an EU level there had been a successful appeal against the Commissions’ removal of mancozeb from the approved list. UPL was still awaiting the general court’s decision on whether the Commission’s decision to refuse renewal still stands. A hearing was expected later in the year. It was noted that UPL had issued a holding statement in December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Pesticide authorisations, extensions and MRL amendments. <p>Since the last meeting the Commission Regulation removing the approval for metribuzin had been issued: <i>Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2806 of 31 October 2024 concerning the non-renewal of the approval of the active substance metribuzin, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/408.</i></p> <p>Additionally, the EU Standing Committee meeting (4-5 December 2024) had held an exchange of views on a draft Regulation concerning the non-renewal of flutolanil and had also started discussion on Fludioxonil: both seemed likely to be lost in the near future.</p> <p>Lastly the secretariat highlighted recent media coverage of Glyphosate resistance in the UK (reported in a single field of Italian Ryegrass). Whereas in the EU the authorisation had been extended until 15 December 2033, with additional conditions applied, the UK authorisation was due to expire on 15 December 2025. There was a concern that this coverage may influence the UK renewal discussions.</p> <p><u>Risk matrix</u> Recent amends to the matrix were noted.</p>	<p>Maintain a watching brief on any GB decisions on Mancozeb.</p> <p>Maintain a watching brief on the EU General Court’s decision on Mancozeb.</p>
<p>7. Defra land use consultation</p> <p>It was noted that Government had launched a consultation on land use in England. See: https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use-framework/land-use-consultation/</p> <p>This consultation sets out government’s view on the long-term type and scale of land use changes that might be needed to meet its legally binding targets</p>	

<p>under the Environment Act and the Climate Change Act.</p> <p>The consultation document identifies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9% of existing agricultural land needs to be converted into non-agricultural uses, for environmental and climate benefits. • a further 10% of agricultural land needs to introduce either small changes to use or transition to more substantial changes for both food and environmental / climate benefits. • most changes are about making land more multifunctional alongside food production, rather than taking land out of production entirely. • On agricultural land not subject to specific land use change, Defra still expects that the majority of agricultural land will undertake some land management changes. <p>It was reported that NFU will present at a future meeting of the fortnightly Potato Stakeholder group to discuss the key issues in the consultation and outline the NFU's thinking. Members expressed concern over the potential loss of agricultural land. Members agreed that PPA should draft and submit a response to the consultation.</p>	<p>Secretariat to prepare a draft PPA response to the Government consultation on land use in England.</p>
<p>8. Plant health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Virus forum(s) <p>Members noted the outcomes of the summit on 'Addressing the Virus Threat to Scottish Seed and Ware Crops' held on 3 December in Dundee.</p> <p>The Dundee event had then been followed by the National Virus Forum on 20 February in York. The York meeting had discussed the proposed changes to Scottish seed certification scheme, with strong support for making 'E grade' a fall grade, which would mean restricting the marketing of E grade to outside of Scotland. A majority of attendees had supported a reduction in field generations to 6, with some support for reducing field generation to 5 (and recognition that this would have an impact on supply as it would put a lot of pressure on mini tuber and pre-basic production). A technical working group was expected to be established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UK/EU Seeds trade update. <p>It was noted that Defra still hadn't received the draft audit report from the EU auditors.</p> <p>It was noted that Defra was expected to issue a consultation on import/export inspection fees. Import/Export inspection fees were likely to be increased by 20% (in line with inflation since the last time fees were reviewed). It was reported that there had been some trade kickback, particularly from the fresh produce sector. It was also noted that no changes had been proposed to the fees in Scotland, and this was concerning as they hadn't been amended for some time. As a result, when they are amended, it is expected that they will be substantially higher charges.</p>	<p>PPA to maintain a monitoring brief on virus</p>
<p>9. Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update on items of relevance <p>Members noted the EA Irrigation Prospects 2025 (February), which indicated that 'current irrigation prospects are good across the whole of England for 2025'.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water for Food Group <p>Steve Moncaster had provided a written update for members. Steve had also asked, if possible, if he could have another discussion with secretariat and key PPTC members about support for WAGs from processors and others in the supply chain. The next WFF stakeholder meeting is provisionally scheduled for 11 April 2025, and PPTC volunteers to support this work would be welcomed.</p>	<p>Volunteers from within the PPTC membership to support WFF.</p>
<p>10. Meeting dates 2025</p> <p>As part of the last PPTC meeting, it had been agreed to hold meetings in roughly the same weeks in March, July, October 2025.</p> <p>However, in discussion, members agreed that a summer 2025 meeting could be difficult to arrange, and unless there were any major developments then it was preferable for the secretariat to issue a short slide deck providing updates on issues that are relevant to the PPTC.</p> <p>If there were sufficient developments that required members input, then PPA could still call a summer 2025 PPTC meeting online.</p>	<p>‘Doodle poll’ for Autumn 2025 PPTC meeting to be issued.</p> <p>Secretariat to issue a summer update to PPTC.</p> <p>If required, PPA to call a summer 2025 PPTC meeting.</p> <p>Members to advise on possible venues for future physical PPTC meetings.</p>