

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the meeting of the Farm Strategy Committee held on 2 February 2017 in the Boardroom.

Present: Dr D Llewellyn Chairman
Mr M Roach
Mr R Hooper

Noted: i)

- v) that the Dairy Unit had been holding back a number of cows in anticipation of a larger group being needed for Agri-Epi work. In addition to this, there was a peak of calving due to the cycle of trial animals coming through the system. The farm had, therefore, needed to make a number of decisions with regard to the culling of cows to manage numbers appropriately;
- vi) that, in light of veterinary advice and Tesco contract requirements, a number of changes in treatment had been introduced together with new protocols. Staff had been trained on the new approaches. The Farm Manager also confirmed that a range of other training was being put in place and that regular sessions delivered by a range of people including the appointed veterinary surgeons were occurring on a regular basis;
- vii) that it was recognised that there was a need for the Dairy Unit to closely monitor cell count data as this had been erratic over recent months. Startvac had been reintroduced and a conservative approach was currently being taken to dry cow treatments. Further staff training had also been put in place. The new herd manager was being closely monitored by the Farm Manager and, in addition to this, the veterinary surgeons were taking an independent overview of the Unit's performance;
- viii) that the farm sheep had been performing well. The flock had been developing gradually and had now been split into breeding flock and a lamb/meat sales flock. Both flocks were proving useful for nutritional work and some very interesting results had been emerging from work undertaken by Dr Kate Phillips of the Animals Department;
- ix) that the flock was now Cignet recorded and this had also helped support research work;
- x) that a new piece of research would be starting shortly involving the

- iii) that the Unit had continued to buy feed forward as far as possible and was currently covered until April/May 2017. After this, it was recognised that costs were likely to increase due to the weaker pound and a number of other factors;
- iv) that JSR Genetics had developed a new genetic group which had been performing well in the Netherlands. However, JSR wished to have these animals on the ground in the UK so that UK based data would be available to the wider industry. In light of this, JSR had agreed to provide animals at cost and they would also support any downtime costs involved to having a replacement herd across the whole of the Pig Unit;
- v) that the Unit had commitments involving the current stock for the period until November 2017 but would, in agreement with JSR, run a parallel herd off site so that the new stock would be being put in place ;ET;

recognised that it would be helpful for the Unit to progress its plans in relation to publications including in the farming press; **CAE**

- ii) that the Beef Unit was supporting a number of undergraduate projects in particular and Simon Marsh continued to be very successful in getting articles in the farming press. The new Chair in Beef Production, jointly funded by ABP had been advertised. Interviews would take place shortly;
- iii) that, as noted earlier in the meeting, the development of the Farm Information System search engine would be welcome;

iv)

Agreed: that LF/SK and AW would discuss 'Gatekeeper' further and would approach representatives at the Farmers Weekly to explore whether they might be willing negotiate special arrangements for educational use. **AW/LF/SK**

16/18 **Research Projects**

Noted: i) that the Pig Unit had secured a JSR contract for £75k in relation to the new genetic stock as reported earlier in the meeting;
ii) that a bid to the AHDB Knowledge Exchange programme involving Nottingham, Warwick, Rothamsted and HA focusing on beef had recently been submitted;

iii) that it would be important for as soon as possible to agree beef facility using CIEL fundi

16/19 **Any Other Business**

First Foxhole

Noted: i) that, unfortunately, First Foxhole field had been badly affected by contract work to install the green energy system. A pit would be dug to identify the extent of the damaged soil structure. The contractors had already been alerted to this issue;
ii) that the unexpected problems with power caused by contractors earlier in the week had led to a number of challenges for CERC and thanks were expressed to all staff for their understanding. This incident had also led to a further review of whether or not all samples being currently retained in freezers were really needed;

iii)

further students to work within the APWVS Units as well as on the wider University farm. A number of expressions of interest in this special programme had already been received;

- iv) that CERC had achieved a very positive outcome from a recent DEFRA audit and had been invited to bid for a national list of trials.

16/20 **Date of Next Meeting:**

Noted: that the date of the next meeting had been moved to 24 May 2017 at 10.00am.