

Minutes of the Technical Committee held on Thursday 7th June 2018 Farmers Fayre Meeting Room, Stoneleigh.



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1. Apologies:

Adlam, John
Edwards, Graeme
Fuller, Andrew
Key, Georgina (AHDB)
Lisher, James
Lloyd, Luke
MacMillan, Ewan (Chairman)
McPherson, Martin
Opperman, Ollie
Pearson, Simon
Satterthwaite, Jamie

Brough, Wayne (AHDB)
England, Jill (ADAS)
Gray, Amy (NFU)
Kitchener, Harry
Mason, Lyndon (Meeting Chair)
Need, Chris
Richardson, Fay
Shove, Caroline (co-opted BPPC)
Smith, Michael
Swain, Jon (FEC)
Woodcock, Russ

Davenport, Simon (Sec)
Collins, Spencer (AHDB)

Present:

Bragg, Neil
Braime, Howard

2. Approval of the minutes 11th January 2018 and matters arising:

- b. No report from HK available on Air Movement. Wayne asked if Jon Swain would speak about the smoke bomb demonstrations of air movement in glasshouses and Jon said he would under his report later.
- c. Neil Bragg reported that a meeting with the Minister of State was being organised to discuss the review of the AHDB. Included in the agenda for this meeting would be consideration of plastics usage; labour issues and automation. He will brief the committee.
- d. Bollette Palle Neve had not been invited to attend the meeting.
- e. Phil Davies should be invited to attend to give a report on the lighting work at STC.
- f. Carl Otto was not invited to attend the meeting
- g. An invitation had been issued to the BPOA to attend a meeting on drought measures and NB said that he could attend on our behalf.
- h. WB had asked Bolette to use the idea to further the EAMU application on Terpal which is progressing.
- i. The action point for Chirs Need will be covered under the Topic of Interest section.
- j. It was noted that Martin McPherson and Amy Gray were standing down from the committee and it was agreed that we should write and express the thanks of the committee for their contributions.
- k. Due to the large number of absences on the day, it has been proposed that the schedule for next year should take July as the most suitable date for the mid year meeting rather than June. The minutes were approved.

ACTION

Invite Phil Davies to attend a meeting and speak to the committee. SD

ACTION

NB to receive information on the drought measures meeting. SD

ACTION

Write letter of thanks to Martin and Amy. SD

3. Topics of interest:

- a. Pest & Disease. Howard reported that thrips and, in particular, the EFT were causing problems affecting Phalaenopsis causing leaf distortion and damaging the flowers. They had tried a number of measures including Tracker, Amblyseius (not Swirskii) and would be trying Orius. It is affected by Conserve and is polyphagous. It has caused a lot of damage because they were not expecting it. The pest is non-indigenous but not notifiable at present. Howard clarified his comments post meeting: "*we are using a mix of Attacker and Conserve as a spray, or a mix of Attacker & Clayton Abba.*"

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We are using amblyseius cucumeris. Also trying the Orius now as well. It should be ok in the 28 degree hot area. CN noted that there had been a large flush of Aphids on Fuchsia. WB commented that there would be an Aphid plant clinic after the BPPC open day so that samples of troublesome aphids could be sent for identification. In relation to Xylella, CN said that there has been a high number of Spittle Bugs seen this year which can be a vector for the disease. LM said that there has been a bad outbreak of Downy Mildew in Stocks crops caused by a resistant/ aggressive strain which has been seen in Holland in the last month. Some crops have been rotovated in and the main treatment so far has been limited to Fubol sprays at 5 day intervals.

- b. **Shelf life** -AF had nothing to report.
- c. **Automation**—No report
- d. **Growing media**.-NB noted that B&Q are asking suppliers to be 100% peat free in 2019 (despite the fact that they are still selling peat based composts to their amateur growers.) He believes that there will be a real problem sourcing the required volumes of material and coir is definitely a problem area due the environmental impact of washing coir in the traditional production areas and the competition for the material from other non-horticultural users. The other route of importing into Europe an unprocessed product and washing it in Holland seems to be a better option. Wood fibre also seems to be in high demand for the existing sources.
- e. **Nutrition**- NB raised the issue of using CRF in poinsettia production and noted that HNS projects 1&3 would be renewing the trials on CRF.
- f. **Audit Scheme**- Nothing further to report at present.
- g. **Grow Save**- JS stated that they were on target for the 'deliverables' in this year; they are working on 'Understanding your energy bill'; they are also planning an 'Air movement Awareness event' which would attempt a review of a wide range of issues including different models of fans and their operation, rules of thumb for air movement. This was planned for WD Smith's nursery in July with a video produced to illustrate the effects of fans. CN & HK proposed that the work be undertaken in autumn to see more relevant affects with the accompanying video being made available at a central location. Next year will be the last one for this current contract and thought should now be given to continuing work.
- h. **Pesticide**- RW said that he is concerned that he will not have Calypso and Chess available for Aphid control. He is waiting for Safari from Fargro. Aphox can still be used and he can move to Mainman and Movento. In relation to Powdery Mildew he is not able to use the Sensation that should have become available; he does not want to use Bumper against Poinsettia Powdery Mildew as there is the unwanted growth regulation in this case.
- i. **News & Views**- Nothing to report.
- j. **PAMS**- Fay, was absent but submitted an email as a report: "*Hi Simon Sorry I can't attend.*"

My specialist subject of pansy mottle.

Steering group had meeting in March, attended by Peter Kamp.

Long discussions but edited highlights: -

Why is PaMS so much more of an issue than in the past. Possibilities - breeding of prettier but more susceptible varieties, growing ayr and discrete small plugs instead of broadcast in a seed tray. Automatic climate control reacting to weather means that conditions are changing all the time and this is leading to stress on plants. Need to use climate control to our advantage and smooth out sharp changes as much as we can.

Agreement that in general plugs are kept too wet and the smaller the plug, the more likely it is to be too wet. We would like to water trays to predetermined weight but not easy with edge effects and other variations in water loss.

Is it a virus causing symptoms? If growing conditions are improved and



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stress avoided or reduced then the virus may not be expressed?

Plan for action

1. *Demo at BPPC or Boxworth and at Growers, comparing planting depths (Peter's pet subject), which would look at microclimate around plants; irrigation regimes; range of plug sizes. Monitoring environment, including leaf temperature and assess root quality.*

2. *Try and have demo in NW to tie in with NW study tour*

Check out presence of virus.

a *Jill will be able to update on progress since then.*

b *We have had some weird impatiens plugs delivered. Apparently Dutch call them 'Headless plugs', (which is self explanatory as they lose the growing point) and is caused by high EC. But could it be another manifestation of whatever causes pansy mottle? I don't remember seeing anything like this before.*

c *Question for AHDB, please. Still having trouble and can't get link to Liaison to work. Is it me??*

d *Hope you have a good day Best regards Fay"* Following this, JE commented on recent developments and noted that the BPPC workplan was being developed at present to include this item. Virus has not been discounted as a causal agent aggravated by other environmental stress factors. Neil raised the following point in response to the draft minutes: *"A couple of points- Fay used PaMs and you have used PAMS- are either correct- it is Pansy Mottle syndrome PMS at best?"*

e **Propagation**— MS was absent and sent in a proposal that we should consider propagation as a theme for the next technical seminar in January.

f **BPOA Strategy**— GK was absent. A brief discussion of the place of the strategy and its ongoing use ensued. During this discussion it was suggested that CN's efforts on coordinating research demand could be incorporated under the BPPC umbrella project.

g **Niche & Novel crops**—No report

h **PGR**— No report

i **Cut Flower Centre**— LM reported that the 5 year contract with AHDB is now agreed. He noted that outdoor conditions have been very challenging for herbicide trials and very short windows of opportunity have been available to do some of this work. The agenda and invitation for the CFC Open Day was now released.[8th August @ CFC Holbeach]

j **Light & Spectral filters**— No report but noted that a presentation from STC on LED lighting is being requested.

k **Poinsettia**— No report

l **Research demands & proposals**— CN reported that the list of proposals from the previous meeting had been reviewed and incorporated in the new work programme. NB suggested that the next meeting should review the use of a decision tree to triage applications, possibly managed by a working group. Agreed to make this an agenda item.

4. **Management Committee update:** SD gave a brief update on the last meeting in March and noted that Finances were in good order and that some items were coming up eg Technical Seminar, later in the meeting.

5. **Technical Secretary Contract 2018-2020** (commencing November 2018) will shortly be open for tendering and papers will be published in the next weeks. It was agreed that LM should act as a representative of the TC on the selection committee.

6. **Study Tours**— HK proposed that in addition to the North West tour being organised by BPPC that there would be a poinsettia growers tour in Südtirol/ Alto Adige. NB noted that there were plans for UK involvement with the Beijing 2019 horticulture exhibition and conference and that there are hopes that this will include the visit of a party of growers. Elizabeth Wareham of CHA is liaising.

7. **Defra statistics**— HK queried if the figures for vegetables grown for garden planting were now included with ornamental plants in the statistics; which they are apparently.



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ACTION

Add decision tree proposal to next meeting agenda—SD

ACTION

Publish the contract as widely as possible and in addition to former applicants, British Growers was proposed. Include LM as a representative of the TC in the selection committee.—SD

8. **Innovative Growers presentation**– The committee had a skype conference with Kate Pressland and Ben Raskin of the IF group, which is a supported system giving growers the opportunity to bid for a small fund to engage in collaborative trials work with other growers. The central plank of the organisation is that there is funding and support for group learning in ‘field labs’ which could include something like a study into plastics reduction on the nursery. This raised a number of questions (after the online Q&A) and it was agreed to pursue these further with the organisation.
9. **Conference and Technical Seminar 2019**– The Management committee had come to the conclusion that the event should be one day with a dinner if feasible. It was agreed that there should be a technical event during the day on Tuesday 15th January and an informal dinner on the evening before for those wanting to stay overnight, speakers etc. It was agreed to form a sub-committee to formulate the agenda focussed on Propagation of rooted cuttings and seedling material. The committee will consist of MS, CN, WB & SD. The following were proposed as headings for the talks:
- ⇒ Water management
 - ⇒ Fertiliser
 - ⇒ Lighting on propagation and mother stock
 - ⇒ PGR usage
 - ⇒ Machinery and automation
 - ⇒ Raw material supply
 - ⇒ The possibility of splitting the afternoon sessions was raised.

The object was to agree an agenda and speakers before the October committee meeting.

10. **Crop protection update** was given by Spencer Collins (there is a report already distributed)
11. **Residue analysis**– CN noted that we have received a copy of an analysis of a large number of chemical residue analyses run on ornamental plants in Germany in the last two years. Following a discussion it was proposed that plants in the current poinsettia trials should be sent for analysis to see what a.i. is present in young plants at the point of delivery and after cropping. *Wayne also noted that “I believe there may also have been interest in seeking Innovative Farmers funding to fund the residue analysis work.”*
12. BPPC update– JE gave her update and a written report was circulated. The next Open Day on 19th June will be an opportunity to review progress.
13. Pesticide update– JE gave her update and circulated a written report.
14. AHDB Communication update– WB gave his update supported by a written report that had been circulated earlier.
15. Closed Session– WB gathered the grower members of the committee to canvass opinion on the operation of the BPPC prior to the publication of the tender documents for the contract for the next portion of work due to be allocated in March 2019.
16. Date of the next Technical Committee meeting:

Tuesday 16th October 2018– Stoneleigh



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ACTION

Write to ask IF for details of their working practices and costs– SD.

ACTION

Plastics reduction to be an agenda item for the next meeting– SD .

ACTION

Arrange a skype meeting to discuss the Technical Seminar agenda– SD .