

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the meeting of the Farm Strategy Committee held on 1 February 2018 at 10.30 in the Boardroom.

- Present:** Dr D Llewellyn Chairman
Mr S Kirby
Dr J Donaldson
Mr C Ellis
Mrs C Snell (via conference call)
- In attendance:** Dr C E Baxter Clerk to the Governors
Mrs S Furniss
Mrs Rosie Reeves
- Apologies:** Mrs C Bailey
Mr M Roach
Mr R Hooper
Prof P Mills
Dr A Wilcox

Members were reminded to update their entry in the Register of Interests as necessary.

17/11 Minutes

Approved: the minutes of the Farm Strategy Committee Meeting held on 11 October 2017 (17/01/17/10)

17/12 Matters Arising

Received: a report from the University Secretary.

- Noted:
- i) that Sarah Furniss and Scott Kirby had met to discuss the development of enterprise costing modules. It had been agreed that forage and machinery costs were to be split with percentage costs allocated to other cost pools;
 - ii) that Kate Baker was continuing to chase up John Deere Germany on the overarching agreement. Regarding the procurement of Gatekeeper software, Scott Kirby would provide a briefing for the Vice-Chancellor on progress to date so that further action could be considered; **SK/DGL**
 - iii) that the Farm and CERC Managers had met with HR to discuss issues relating to the attraction and retention of farm staff. Actions relating to addressing specific issues within each team had been agreed. This would remain as a risk in the University's Risk Analysis and Action Plan for 2017/18 and continue to be an important area of focus. Mr Ellis would be following up the same points with Mr Hooper; **CAE/RH**
 - iv) that appropriate signage had been put in place at the Pig Unit on Open Days. The works would be completed by Mid-March 2018;
 - v) that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor had agreed to provide a written report on research projects involving the Farm. This was included on the agenda;

17/13 Risk Management

Considered: i) a report from the University Secretary on risk items monitored by the Committee.

Noted: that the paper had been updated with the addition of staffing related risks and the removal of access to land in accordance with previous discussions.

17/14 **Farm Management Accounts (Grass and Arable)**

Considered:

- i) the Farm Management accounts (Grass and Arable) for the period to 31 December 2017;
- ii) a progress report on the Annual Operating Plans for the University Farm: Dairy Unit, Young Stock/Sheep and Arable Enterprises;

Noted:

- i) that the Farm had made an overall contribution of £50,994 versus a budgeted contribution for the year to date of £13,816 giving a favourable variance of £37,178. Milk sales had been £39k below budget due to price and volume issues. Members of the Committee welcomed the detailed notes provided and confirmed that these continued to be useful;
- ii) that the overall stock adjustment was close to budget and favourable by £14k. A full stock valuation would take place in the January accounts as stock is currently valued quarterly but adjusted in month for material items;
- iii) that staff costs remained below budget as a result of unfilled posts which was an ongoing issue for the farm;
- iv) that there had been some milk quality issues relating to the plant and overstocking in readiness for the new building;
- v) that there were no significant issues to report from the arable enterprise;
- vi) that the Sheep Unit was performing well and supporting a number of research projects;
- vii) that the new land purchase was progressing with the Land Registry. A visit to the land had been offered to Governor Members. The Farm Manager would arrange this following the July 2018 meeting.

17/15 **Pig Unit**

Considered:

- i) the Pig Unit accounts for the period to 31 August 2017;
- ii) a Pig Unit update;
- iii) a progress report on the annual operating plan for the Pig Unit.

Noted:

- i) that the Pig Unit accounts to 31 December 2017 show a net contribution of £26,416 for the first five months versus a budgeted contribution of £60,306 giving an adverse variance of £33,891;
- ii) that the income for the year was in line with budget, however it was anticipated that the income target would over achieve by year end. A reforecast had been completed with the Pig Unit Manager and an adjustment of £39,708 had been completed in line with the change in anticipated income;
- iii) that stock was £37k above budget as a result of increased stock volume, however this was a timing issue and was expected to be in line with the budget by end of the year;
- iv) that the old pig unit had been depopulated by early November with cleaning and repair work continuing. The new weaner building was expected to be completed by March 2018;

Agreed: that the practice of minimal usage of antimicrobials remained excellent and should be widely shared, Carwyn Ellis would work with the relevant staff to ensure the story was included in the farming press. **CAE**

17/16 Animal Production Welfare and Veterinary Science/Crop and Environmental Science Departments - Operating Plans 2017/18

Received: a progress report on the Annual Operating Plans for the APWVS Sheep Unit, APWVS Beef Unit and CERC.

Noted:

- i) that teaching and research within the Sheep Unit was on-going and well ahead of target;
- ii) that Dr Yuri Montanholi had taken up his role of Reader in Beef Science and was establishing his role within the department looking to increase beef research, published papers and technology reports;
- iii) that accessing data and content on the Farm Information System remained an issue. Liz Furey would be asked to discuss this with the IT team to ensure it was addressed as soon as practicable. **LF**

17/17 Research Projects

Noted:

- i) that current research income involving the farm totalled in excess of £149k involving four staff from the APWVS Department;
- ii) that discussions were ongoing about the allocation of land for the proposed Hands Free Farm project.

17/18 Any Other Business

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- i) that it would be of benefit for the Farm Manager to meet with James Lowenberg-DeBoer, Yuri Montanholi and Karl Behrendt to explore their expertise in connection with Farm Information Systems and the adoption of new technologies; **SK**
- ii) that details of the Commonwealth Conference in conjunction with the RASC would be distributed to staff and Governors as soon as possible. **SV**

17/19 Date of Next Meeting: 24 May 2018