

## HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

### Minutes of the meeting of the Farm Strategy Committee held on 6 February 2019 at 2.30 in the Haydock Room.

<b>Present:</b>	Dr D Llewellyn Mr S Kirby Dr J Donaldson Mr R Hooper Prof P Mills Mr C Ellis Dr A Wilcox Dr G Milburn Mr C Bailey	Chairman
<b>In attendance:</b>	Dr C E Baxter Mrs S Furniss Miss R Reeves Mrs S Vinall	Clerk to the Governors   Minute Secretary
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mr M Roach Mrs C Snell	

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

#### 18/12 Minutes

Approved: the minutes of the Farm Strategy Committee Meeting held on 11 October 2018 (18/01/18/11)

#### 18/13 Matters Arising

Received: a report from the University Secretary.

- Noted:
- i) that as no further progress had been made with John Deere the proposed project would not be pursued further;
  - ii) that following discussions about a possible plan to consolidate the current flocks of sheep into one flock with a single breed type, it had been agreed to continue with a 2 flock system;
  - iii) that following discussions with Halls, it was agreed that no changes were required to the valuation system;
  - iv) that a report on the impact of the Agri-Epi Smart Dairy Project was in progress and would be considered by the Chair; **LF**
  - v) that Richard Hooper would continue to explore options to dispose of slurry off site to see if pressure on slurry management could be reduced; **RH**

#### 18/14 Effectiveness Review

Noted: that Effectiveness Review forms for the Committee had been distributed to all members for completion.

## 18/15 Risk Management

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

- Noted:
- i) that biosecurity on the farm continued to be an area of focus;
  - ii) that plans to remove asbestos from the Farm Workshop were due to be progressed shortly;
  - iii) that nutrient/slurry management arrangements were in place and other farm wastes were recycled or disposed of appropriately;
  - iv) that appropriate signage around the farm continued to be maintained.

## 18/16 Farm Management Accounts (Grass and Arable)

- Considered:
- i) the Farm Management accounts (Grass and Arable) for the period to 31st December 2018;
  - 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 December 2018 farm accounts reported a loss of £47k versus a budgeted contribution for the year to date of £74k giving an adverse variance of £121k;
  - ii) that non-commercial income less costs were favourable to budget due to slightly higher rents compared to budget;
  - iii) that stock adjustment before purchases saw a cost increase of £63k compared to the opening stock at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018;
  - iv) that the report on the impact of the Agri-Epi Smart Dairy project would be circulated by the Chair in due course to enable members to appreciate the legacy problem through to 2018/19; **DGL**
  - vii) that a meeting was to be arranged to discuss the current Farm forecast; **DGL, LF, SK, SF**
  - viii) that herd fertility had shown some signs of improvement since the last report;
  - ix) that more staff time had been devoted to heat detection and an improvement had been seen in all areas;
  - x) that the culling rate had dropped slightly from 28% to 26%;
  - xi) that overall herd health had been reasonable over the past few months;
  - xii) that production had seen a slight decline from 29.4 litres to 28.3 litres. This was due to a low yielding group grazing outside during the day and 18 high yielding cows which were on a feed trial which reduced the overall yield;
  - xiii) that the Dairy Unit had facilitated approximately 20 tutorials covering animal handling and welfare;
  - xiv) that the Precision Dairy Unit was now fully stocked with 60 cows;
  - xv) that there had been very little lameness in the herd and foot health was being maintained by the foot trimmer on a quarterly basis;

## 18/17 Pig Unit

- Considered:
- i) the Pig Unit accounts for the period to 31 December 2018;
  - 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<sup>st</sup> December 2018 showed a contribution before slurry management charges of £63k for the first 5 months of the year. Slurry charges were £6.9k resulting in a net contribution of £56k;
  - ii) that income for the first quarter was slightly ahead of budget;
  - iii) that other operating expenditure for the year to date were close to budget. Feed costs were higher than budget due to fluctuating market conditions;
  - iv) that pig sales were higher than budgeted;

## 18/18 Animal Production Welfare and Veterinary Science/Crop and Environmental Science Departments - Operating Plans 2018/19

- Received: a progress report on the Annual Operating Plans for the APWVS Sheep Unit, APWVS Beef Unit and CERC.
- Noted:
- i) that the Sheep Unit had once again been well used by students for both teaching and research with production of meat for sale being a secondary consideration;
  - ii) that production rates for the Sheep Unit had been 1.5 lambs per ewe;
  - iii) that ewe mortality stood at 2% against a target of 5%;
  - iv) that there had recently been some staff changes within the Beef Unit. Discussions for a replacement were in hand with ABP;
  - v) that provision of land for CERC crop work had been agreed with the Farm Manager;
  - vi) that ready access to farm data remained a challenge due to software limitations. IT was aware of the need to progress this work;
  - vii) that teaching plots had been moved from the rear of CERC to Crabtree to allow the land to rest;

## 18/19 Research Projects

- Received: an oral report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on new/current research projects involving the Farm.
- Noted:
- i) that over 60 examples of staff using the farm had been analysed. It was imperative that all costs were included in funding bids and associated income made available to the farm;
  - ii) that 7 projects totalling £800k had recently been awarded;
  - iii) that there would be an opportunity to bid for a demonstration farm project with a total value of £10million. Further discussions regarding costings would be required before the formal call for bids; **PRM/SK**

- iv) that land would be required for HFF work. The potential to add to this project with farm and CERC plans was noted and it was agreed that HFF was key to the University and needed to be accommodated. Further discussions would take place;
- SK/DGL/AW/GM**

**18/20 Any Other Business**

Noted: there were no other significant items of note.

**18/21 Date of Next Meeting:** 23 May 2019 at 10.00am