**Growers’ Better Levy group Manifesto**

The Growers’ Better Levy Group is a voluntary group of business operators in the horticulture and potato sectors that believe in a future with a collaborative approach to innovation, research and development, as well as knowledge exchange and connecting researchers to growers.

The aim of the group is to ensure a healthy and sustainable UK horticultural industry within which businesses can thrive. The mission of the group is to create a structure of collaborative innovation which supports the needs of the industry in an efficient manner.

The priority areas of R&D required by the UK’s horticulture and potato sectors have been identified by the GBLG.

**About the group**

The GBLG is made up of 36 highly influential, independent and representative businesses and organisations in the horticulture and potato sectors (top fruit, soft fruit, potatoes, protected edibles, mushrooms, field vegetables, ornamentals), crop associations and research organisations. This representation includes businesses in the devolved nations.

The GBLG is group of concerned levy payers, not a democratically elected board.

The group was rapidly formed in light of the AHDB ballot on the statutory levy for the horticulture and potato levy payers.

GBLG believes that:

1. An independent, grower-managed research agency is formed and funded by a statutory levy. This Agency would be directed by an elected, independent board of representative growers, this board would decide on research priorities and projects in consultation with the wider industry, including businesses and grower associations. These models exist in both New Zealand and Australia.
2. R&D provision will be competitively tendered for.
3. Key AHDB staff must not be lost from the industry and halted projects deemed vital by the sectors must be completed.
4. The continuation of a small Statutory Levy is necessary to fund critical work.
5. A larger voluntary levy will be necessary for agreed programmes of work and that growers should have the ability to vote for this by sector on a regular basis.
6. Within Crop sectors voluntary funds will be raised for the whole sector to fund projects that benefit all or they will be raised on an individual crop basis for crop specific projects. The option will be there to fund longer term projects.
7. In order to fund programmes of work, crop specific investment funds will be created, accessing investment funds. tax relief and match funding by Defra will be sought.
8. The overhead costs should not exceed 15% of levies paid.