

The future for Horticulture crop protection

Following the demise of AHDB Horticulture, the industry has been obliged to take on the task of processing EAMUs and Emergency Authorisations to ensure the necessary pipeline of plant protection products for the future. The service, currently provided by AHDB, ends at the end of March. Over the last 12 months various people from the industry have been working hard to put in place a new system to continue this vital work once the commitment from AHDB ends.

This work has resulted in the creation of Horticultural Crop Protection Ltd. This is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and owned by its members who are the crop associations. The ownership model is like the model used by British Growers. This ensures the industry has complete control over all its activities.

On 7 February 2023, HCP held its first AGM to elect the following Board of Directors :-

Ali Capper nominated by the Top Fruit sector.

Louise Sutherland nominated by the Berry sector.

Sam Rix nominated by the Onion sector.

Rob Parker nominated by the Salads sector.

Keston Williams nominated from the Field Veg sector.

Derek Wilkinson nominated by the Field Veg sector.

Robin Squance nominated by the Ornamentals sector.

Rob James nominated by the Protected Edibles sector.

Funding the EAMU and EA work will be via a voluntary subscription. This will be collected on a crop-by-crop basis through the network of crop associations and other crop / industry specific groups. The cost per business, if everyone pays, will be less than in the past. Each Association is being given the choice of how to collect these funds. Some are opting for an area-based charge while others are looking at a value-based charge. Details of the suggested rates should be available shortly once they are agreed by each crop association. Some crop associations have already reached agreement with their members.

Control of the work undertaken by HCP, the EAMUs and EAs applied for, will rest with the Crop Association. In conjunction with HCP, each Association will be asked to identify its crop protection priorities. This is the model used by Horticulture historically and has worked successfully for many years.

Historically, AHDB Horticulture processed between 80 and 90 applications each year which represents a significant level of activity.

After a year of hard work, we now have the basis of an alternative service. If this is to succeed it needs the commitment of all growers, large and small, and across the full spectrum of the crops grown here in the UK.

Further details of subscription rates have been and will be published by each crop association as they are agreed.

Jack Ward

CEO British Gowers

February 2023