

# UK ministers appoint new members to Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

Cereals levy payers Sarah Bell and Stephen Briggs, Beef and Lamb levy payer Colin Bateman and Dairy levy payer Lyndon Edwards bring experience in each of the organisation's main cropping sectors.

The organisation will also benefit from added legal expertise with the appointment of Dr Catherine Mackenzie, a lawyer with a background in agriculture and digital development, as well as Stephen Briggs' agroforestry expertise.

The new appointees will help to broaden the organisation's skill base as part of a commitment to modernising the main board.

All five appointees began their three-year terms on 13 September 2021.

## **Farming minister Victoria Prentis said:**

The new board members bring with them impressive expertise and a wealth of experience from across the agriculture sector.

I'd like to congratulate them all on their appointments and I'm confident that they'll help us to achieve our objectives of modernising the AHDB and building an organisation that delivers for farmers and growers.

## **AHDB chair Nicholas Saphir said:**

These new appointments reflect our ambition to build a modern, fresh governance structure that puts levy payers right at the heart of everything we do.

This will enable AHDB to deliver an organisation for British farmers, growers and processors while acknowledging the challenges farming faces in the coming years.

Along with the arrival of our new CEO Tim Rycroft on the 31 August, the focus on additional levy payers and skills-based appointments to our board will help AHDB to reduce bureaucracy and deliver

better value and outcomes for levy payers.

The five new main board members will receive a non-pensionable remuneration of £11,808 per annum, based on a minimum time commitment of 36 days per year. Reasonable travel expenses are also paid.

These are Ministerial appointments, made jointly by Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive.

The appointments have been made in accordance with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments published by the Cabinet Office. All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. All five appointees have declared that they have not taken part in any significant political activity in the past five years.

## **Biographical details**

### **Sarah Bell**

- Alongside working on her family mixed farm in Rutland, Sarah runs her own consultancy business S E Bell Agri Food Ltd, driving and delivering positive change in food supply chains.
- Sarah has worked closely with academia and business developing practical solutions incorporating data use to demonstrate sustainable farming.
- Prior to consultancy Sarah worked for Openfield as Head of Supply Chain.

### **Colin Bateman**

- Colin is a commercial upland livestock producer, with more than 25 years' experience in the beef and lamb sector following postgraduate studies at Durham University.
- He has been an AHDB Beef and Lamb sector board member since 2019.
- His farming business runs to 340Ha and has an on-farm glamping and experiential photo-tourism venture.
- Colin has a particular interest in cross sectoral integration to build future proof, resilient livestock systems.
- From 1983 to 2010 he was the Member of Parliament (MP) for Penrith and The Border, England's largest rural constituency.

### **Lyndon Edwards**

- Lyndon is an experienced organic dairy, beef and arable farmer with more than 40 years' experience in the agricultural industry.
- He holds numerous industry roles and has a passion for sustainable agriculture and developing initiatives to ensure the successful future of the UK agriculture industry.

## **Dr Catherine Mackenzie**

- Catherine is a lawyer with a background in digital transformation, environment and sustainability and audit/risk management.
- A Governing Master of the Inner Temple and member of the Bar in five jurisdictions, Catherine has worked with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and United Nations throughout Africa, Asia, Middle East and North America.
- As Chair of Audit & Risk Management of the UK Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, Chair of Education of the Inns of Court College of Advocacy, and formerly Chair of the Board of Scrutiny of Cambridge University, Catherine has led major digital/IT projects and large international audits.
- Catherine lectures at Oxford University, directs studies in Land Economy at Magdalene College and Homerton College Cambridge, and is a Council Member of the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester.

## **Stephen Briggs**

- Stephen is farmer, farm shop retailer and lead consultant at AbacusAgri, providing farm business consultancy throughout the UK and internationally for over 20 years.
- He is head of Soil & Water at Innovation for Agriculture and has previously worked for the Department for International Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank, and private companies in Africa, India & China.
- He has an MSc in Soil Science and more than 25 years' experience of developing and implementing effective knowledge exchange – bringing together research, farmer engagement and training, consultancy, policy development work and practical farming.
- Stephen is also Nuffield Farming Scholar and was awarded the prestigious Bullock Award in 2020 as the Scholar who has most influenced the agricultural industry in the 10 years since his scholarship.

## **Background:**

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain.

Their purpose is to inspire farmers, growers and industry to succeed in a rapidly changing world. They equip the industry with easy to use, practical know-how which they can apply straight away to make better decisions and improve their performance.

Established in 2008 and classified as a Non-Departmental Public Body, it supports the following industries: meat and livestock (cattle, sheep and pigs) in England; horticulture, milk and potatoes in Great Britain; and cereals and oilseeds in the UK. AHDB's remit covers 72 per cent of total UK agricultural output. Further information on AHDB can be found at [www.ahdb.org.uk](http://www.ahdb.org.uk).