

## **UK Minor Crops Group – Inaugural Meeting : Meeting Notes**

26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at NIAB, Sophi Taylor Building, Cambridge. with the kind support of NIABTAG.

Meeting sponsors – Premium Crops

Attendees: See attached List

### **Aims of the Meeting**

- To establish the desire for, and explore any opportunities for, industry collaboration to promote and support the development of minor arable crops for UK agriculture.
- To identify the issues and opportunities for potential collaboration

Crops noted as being represented by the attendees (and others who could not attend but expressed an interest) are: linseed, lupins, canary seed, sunflower, peas & beans, chickpeas, sorghum, lentils, quinoa, stewardship, borage, ahiflower & soya. (Note: This list is not exhaustive)

The meeting then divided into three groups and each group discussed three session group subjects in turn. The following is an amalgamated summary of those discussions :

#### **1. Plant Protection and Agronomy**

CRD

- Clarification on EAMU applications:
  - o Can we share a list of who is applying for what?
  - o Are there opportunities for applications to be shared across two or more crops?
  - o What is the rationale behind CRD's product hierarchy and crop classification?
  - o Clarification on which actives are likely to be reviewed, MAPP numbers and MAPP number changes, product withdrawals, so that replacement products/applications can be activated in a timely manner
- Promotion of seed treatments as a positive use of chemistry
- Extended 'use-up' periods
- Experimental Use of pesticides – clarification and simplification of rules and regulations
- Enhance awareness of and contact with CRD 'Grower Champion' at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/pesticides-registration/general/g-sb-bio-champions.htm>

Manufacturers

Greater collaboration with PPP manufacturers regarding:

- Notification of changes in MAPP numbers
- Product withdrawals
- Data to support EAMU applications
- Greater understanding of the use of Biologicals and Biobased products on minor crops

Other

Explore opportunities for working with Horticulture Crop Protection Ltd. (Note: Following the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup>, contact has already been made with Jack Ward at HCP and he has confirmed they are very willing to work with the MCG)

## 2. Variety Registration and Crop Marketing

### DEFRA/APHA – National Listing and Variety Registration

- Cost of U.K. national listing currently is preventing the introduction of novel crops.
- Clarification required on size (market/ area or seed volume) of a minor crop so that it requires a U.K. NL registration.
- New Varieties can't be commercially tested until they appear on the national list, are there opportunities to introduce a pre-NL test and trials facility?
- Introduction of novel crops via orange label when listed in Europe, as no crop is currently in the U.K. how much can we bring in? The current formulas don't work when none is here currently
- Full National List DUS and VCU testing seems superfluous, lengthy, and expensive for some minor crops, are there opportunities to operate an NL 'lite' system e.g. similar to plant registration operating in horticulture?

### Action Notes:

- I. Ask NIAB DUS come up with a vastly streamlined down version for novel crops, to dramatically cut cost until the novel crops are not novel anymore and are viable in the U.K.
- II. Seek a definition of minor crop maximum area over a 3 year period of less than a 1000 ha don't need U.K. listing
- III. Seek ability to introduce novel crops via orange label when listed in Europe, as no crop is currently in the U.K. i.e. how much can we bring in? The current formulas don't work when none is here currently

### Crop Marketing

- Can we set up a point of contact for end users looking for plant based alternatives, but who currently don't know where to look?
- Can we promote the value of UK produced Minor Crops to end users and to growers?
  - o What is the USP? What could the MCG promote?
    - Local Marketing e.g. reduced road miles, etc.
    - Growers know where the produce of their labours is going and can see the benefit to the end users.
    - Visibility, Traceability, clear environmental and quality standards
    - 'One voice' to represent all minor crops, thereby reducing the time end-users and regulators need to spend to get answers and improving our chance of being heard.
  - o Creation of an MCG brand to enhance recognition and promotion of UK produced Minor Crops
  - o Opportunities to educate stakeholders

## 3. Seed Certification and Plant Health Regulations

### Plant Health

- New seed import scheme currently up for review, will designate different crops in either High Medium or Low risk categories, will then create different rules for each.

Stakeholders for minor crops need to be aware of this now to ensure crops aren't categorised in the wrong category if their perceived risk is low.

- Customs clearance; new post Brexit systems being introduced and minor crops need to be represented

#### Seed Certification

- Linseed Certification requirements for seed borne disease are unnecessary, unreliable and expensive – need to explore way to reduce e.g. define disease thresholds, or remove this regulation e.g. move to an advisory category as per Ascochyta in peas. For Certified seed
- Why can't UK growers buy UK produced OECD Certified Seed?
- Improved management of RPA/stewardship where this runs into conflict with seed production e.g. isolation distances, etc. – will grower lose payments if stewardship schemes have to be adapted to accommodate neighbouring seed crops?

#### **Feedback Session**

A short feedback session followed the above breakout sessions.

Key conclusions were:

- Minor Crops do require a more cohesive and effective voice to influence end-users, policy makers and growers
- Within the bounds of commercial sensitivity, there is a need for knowledge exchange in several areas (e.g. EAMU's, end user opportunities, research, etc) between interested parties; and to enhance collaboration and remove duplication of effort when promoting minor crops
- There is a desire among the participants to create a collaborative organisation that could deliver a platform for knowledge exchange, promote minor crops and influence policy makers and stakeholders.

Meeting closed at 3.30pm

Date of Next Meeting to be decided by MCG membership

#### **Actions arising (Nigel Padbury)**

1. Circulate Participant list and contact details to all participants
2. Create a proposed structure for a Minor Crops Group (MCG) i.e. how it might work (a Constitution) and what would be involved (Organisational structure) i.e. a management committee?, working groups, etc?
3. Circulate the above proposal to all participants for comment, amendment and ultimate agreement
4. If/Once agreed, invite volunteers for MCG membership and engagement in management/administration of the organisation and any working groups.