

Annual GMO Meeting
Wednesday 16th May 2018, 2pm
SASA, Room A28

Meeting attended by officials from the CAP Reform and Crop Policy team and the SASA GM team.

1. Matters arising

Last year's bid for Contract Research Fund funding for work to look at public attitudes to sustainable agriculture, including new plant breeding techniques, was rejected due to budgetary pressure. It was agreed that a similar proposal should be entered this year, and that the Agricultural Champions reports could be a useful source of sustainable agriculture challenges for inclusion.

It was discussed that the testing expertise at SASA would allow expansion into food and feed testing. As responsibility for food and feed testing lies with Food Standards Scotland this would be as a contracted testing laboratory.

The guest blog from Elspeth Macdonald (deputy chief executive of FSS) published on Saltire 2/5/18 was discussed as a possible introduction to closer working between SASA, SG policy & FSS over GM issues approaching the UK's exit from the EU.

2. Petunia incident 2017

The UK level wash-up meeting to discuss the 2017 finding of GM petunias on sale across Europe (and worldwide) was held on Wednesday 16th August 2017, and Ivy Wellman produced the UK report on the incident for the European Commission in September.

Awareness letters were sent to the industry from Scottish and UK authorities over the winter. It was agreed at the wash-up meeting that any scheme to look at other species of ornamental plants would need to be initiated by the European Commission.

This incident, and subsequent recording of affected varieties (i.e. the inclusion of a seed mix on the list of positive varieties), demonstrates the difficulty with traceability and identification in this sector.

3. Update on work at SASA

- Proficiency in testing and UKAS accreditation for DNA extraction and screening for GM elements has been maintained. Accreditation for quantification of MON88017 maize was gained last year, and this year GT73 oilseed rape was also accredited. It is hoped that these accreditations will provide evidence to allow GM testing at SASA to be accredited under flexible scope, meaning that all tests performed in a certain way would be accredited.
- 2017 was a quiet year for Contained Use notifications, with 13 received. So far in 2018 20 notifications have been received.
- No Part B applications have been received since administrative responsibility was transferred from the policy team to SASA in 2016.
- Over the past years officials had attended several meetings: an ENGL (European Network of GMO Laboratories) meeting, an EEP (European Enforcement Project) meeting, several ACRE (Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment) meetings and a plant genomics and gene editing conference.

5. Update on work in policy and brexit issues

- Policy have been undertaking a lot of work for the Brexit Hub on legislative deficiencies including deliberate release, transboundary movement, contained use, risk assessment and the relevant sections of the Environmental Protection Act. They have also been asked to suggest appropriate amendments to the legislation. FSS are carrying out similar work on the food and feed regs.
- Policy colleagues had a teleconference scheduled with Defra on 17/5/18 to compare the deficiencies noted.
- The GM deep dive (UK and devolved administrations meeting) was discussed, including the EFSA equivalent and how it would work as a shared resource between administrations with different policy positions.
- The transposition of the cultivation opt out has been delayed again.

6. AOB

SASA presented some of the results of the recent SG internal audit of official food and feed controls which was deemed to include the GMI. The findings all of which were accepted related to provision of a GM Risk Register, succession planning, and ensuring that current policy measures on control for GMOs remain effective.

By correspondence 30th May 2018

Summary for the Autumn 2017 GMI Seed Monitoring Programme - there were no declarations of direct imports into Scotland of seed at risk of containing GM material.