



Promoting Seed Innovation



**BRITISH SOCIETY OF
PLANT BREEDERS LTD**

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Information from the British Society of Plant Breeders

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PPPS TO BE GIVEN NEW TEMPORARY MEASURES

New BSPB Business Manager Stephanie Spiers has been working closely with a number of organisations to help improve the outlook for maize planting in the UK.

In October Defra announced a breakthrough saying the Plant Protection Products (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2023 legislation had been moved to a parliamentary process that is likely to make it law before the end of 2023.

This should result in legislation that will introduce new temporary measures in Great Britain to enable farmers and growers to have continued access to treated seeds and parallel trade products imported from the EU. This will be particularly important for maize growers as 220,000 hectares is grown in the UK with many farms relying on it as a nutritious animal feed and maize is also the highest energy yield feedstock for anaerobic digestion.

The measures will allow seeds treated with plant protection products (PPPs) authorised for use in an EU or EEA Member State before the end of the implementation period to be imported, marketed and used in GB until to 1 July 2027. This will apply as long as the PPPs remain authorised in at least one EU or EEA Member State.

Should this be passed through parliament, it will ensure that farmers and growers have access to treated seeds for the 2024 growing season.



■ Stephanie Spiers

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BSPB 75TH AGM

On October 13th the BSPB held its 75th annual general meeting. Chairman, Robin Wood of Elsoms, explained that following the departure of CEO Samantha Brooke, Stephanie Spiers and Anthony Hopkins would share the organisation's leadership, with Anthony joining from NFU in the coming months.

Food security and shortages were repeatedly mentioned during the event, with Robin citing how important member's research and development is to help prevent the empty salad fridges seen earlier in the year. He went on to say that the Precision Breeding Bill was a triumph for the plant breeding sector and one that with the support of the FSA could help bring further food security to the UK.

Whilst buoyant about members' efforts and the successes of the year, it was evident that post Brexit challenges still remain. Robin explained 200 variety applications had or were still experiencing delays, and that this was causing frustration at the potential lost income caused by vital time being lost to market new varieties.

Robin appealed to members to feedback thoughts and ideas to the BSPB team and closed the AGM by announcing the election of Richard Summers and Will Compson to the board.

MINOR CROPS UPDATE

We spoke to Nigel Padbury from Premium Crops about the Minor Crops Group (MCG) and how it intends to help encourage more companion and cover crops to help farmers meet both agronomic and environmental challenges.

"Minor crops are those not defined as major UK crops by the HSE Crop Definitions List. The MCG was formed to promote the development and commercialisation of arable minor crops and bring a voice to support minor crops within agriculture," explained Nigel.

He suggested that there are two key areas for the MCG. The first is linked to PPPs, where the group has joined forces with the Horticultural Crop Protection Ltd (HCP) to identify areas of common interest for Extension of Approvals for Minor Use (EAMUs) and assist with EAMU applications.

"We are setting up a Black Box database for members to register their interest in specific minor crops and receive notification of others with a similar interest, to share EAMU application administration and costs."

The second is helping to govern regulatory processes such as Variety Registration and the evaluation of crops prior to National Listing.

EUROSEEDS 2023

Stephanie Spiers attended the Euroseeds Congress in Malta to help continue post Brexit communications and good relations with other European nations. The BSPB is aware of the various concerns farmers face with trade to EU nations and how passage of imports and exports has been compromised since Brexit.

Stephanie said: It is so important that we align with Europe to keep imports and exports flowing through our borders but also to bring varieties and technologies through from Europe to the UK. Phytosanitary requirements, seed treatments and the recent Precision Breeding Bill are all areas that demonstrate how important it is that we persevere with communications to improve import and export for farmers, growers and our members."



■ Nigel Padbury

"We are working with Defra and others to have regulations that consider the effect on minor crops. Currently there are requirements for full DUS and VCU tests and trials even when there are no pre-existing varieties of a given species or type. There is also no provision for largescale commercial evaluation of crops prior to UK National Listing."

The MCG is continuing its work and we will bring you any significant updates in future issues.

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