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About AHDB

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It was established on 1 April 2008 under the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board Order 2008.

AHDB is funded through a statutory levy collected from farmers, growers, and parts of the supply chain across four sectors. AHDB's goal is to support these sectors in becoming more competitive and sustainable. It delivers market intelligence, research and development, market access, and knowledge transfer initiatives.

The four sectors AHDB serves are:

- Pig meat (England)
- Beef and lamb (England)
- Milk (Great Britain)
- Cereals and oilseeds (United Kingdom)

AHDB plays a role in providing independent, trusted data and promoting industry collaboration. Some recent highlights include:

- Providing farmers with the tools and resources to measure their environmental impact and support their contributions to achieving net zero.
- Developing international markets and promoting UK products abroad, resulting in significant export value despite market challenges.

Role of the Board

The AHDB Board is responsible for the overall strategic direction and delivery of AHDB's goals. It consists of nine non-executive members, including the Chair, who bring sector expertise, geographical knowledge, and industry experience.

The Board meets approximately six times per year and is supported by two sub-committees: the Remuneration and Nominations Committee, and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Board collaborates closely with the four sector councils ensuring the priorities of levy payers are integrated into AHDB's strategy.

Role of the Sector Councils

The sector councils – representing Pig meat, Beef and Lamb, Milk, and Cereals and Oilseeds – are composed of levy payers who set strategic priorities, recommend funding, and influence levy rates within their sectors. Each council is represented on the AHDB Board by a Sector Council Chair, ensuring a direct line between sector needs and board decision-making.

AHDB's Strategic Focus

Having completed a significant transformation, AHDB is now in a phase of growth, concentrating on serving levy payers and adapting to industry changes. In 2023, the "Funding Your Future" campaign successfully secured additional investment through increased levy rates, highlighting the industry's recognition of AHDB's essential role.

Guided by feedback from levy payers, AHDB's strategic priorities for 2024 and beyond include:

- Defending the reputation of levy paying sectors.
- Developing new markets for high-quality products.
- Enhancing profitability and productivity through expert insights, marketing, and analysis.
- Supporting better business decisions with trusted data, variety testing, and nutrient management.
- Providing practical support to improve farm resilience.

Looking Ahead

AHDB is focused on delivering exceptional value to levy payers through transparency, strategic investment, and active engagement. Its commitment to developing a world-class UK food and farming industry drives its continuous adaptation to industry changes.

The organisation has made the following commitments to:

- **Transparency:** Regularly communicating how levies are spent and the benefits derived to ensure ongoing engagement with levy payers.
- **Modern Levy System:** Collaborating with farmers and the supply chain to design a modern levy system that addresses evolving needs.
- **Performance Enhancement:** Focusing on improving farm performance, marketing, and exports, underpinned by independent evidence.
- **Efficient Structure:** Operating an efficient board and advisory structure that minimises bureaucracy and costs.
- **Engagement and Value:** Conducting regular votes on levy spending priorities and assessing the overall value of AHDB to businesses.

For further information about the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, you may wish to visit its website (www.ahdb.org.uk).

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is seeking to appoint three new board members.

- 1) Independent Board Member with specialist finance experience to chair the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee **(Ref: APPT10-25)**
- 2) Independent Board Member with specialist expertise in Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) **(Ref: APPT11-25)**
- 3) Board Member who is a current or recent levy payer with specific expertise in the Cereals and Oilseeds sector to serve as Cereals & Oilseeds Sector Council Chair **(Ref: APPT12-25)**

Post 1: APPT10-25

Independent Board Member with specialist expertise in Finance to serve as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Role

This role is for Independent Board Member to serve as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The postholder's primary responsibility is to bring audit and risk expertise to the organisation and ensure effective oversight in this critical area. While contributing fully to the wider work of the Board, the focus of the role is on providing assurance, scrutiny, and independent challenge to the Board and Accounting Officer regarding AHDB's governance, risk management, financial management, and internal control.

Role Specification

- Chair the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and ensure it operates effectively, providing clear reports and recommendations to the Board.
- Lead discussions with the Committee on risk, financial management, governance, and internal control.
- Oversee, on behalf of the Board, the internal audit programme — ensuring it is risk-based, proportionate, and delivers value — by reviewing plans agreed between the Head of Internal Audit (outsourced provider) and the Accounting Officer.
- Consider the findings and implications of external audit (NAO) work, together with management responses, and advise the Board on the approval of the Annual Report and Accounts based on assurance gathered throughout the year.
- Provide independent scrutiny of AHDB's governance, risk management, and internal control framework, ensuring issues are raised and addressed appropriately by management.

- Challenge and scrutinise compliance information presented by management in relation to statutory, regulatory, and internal control obligations, including financial propriety and value for money.
- Ensure that AHDB's use of levy-funded resources is transparent, responsible, and consistent with the principles of good governance and Managing Public Money.
- Maintain independence of judgment and ensure that the Committee provides robust, evidence-based challenge to the Executive where necessary.
- Contribute as a Board member to the wider governance of AHDB, including constructive challenge to fellow Board members and support for AHDB's strategic direction and statutory objectives.

Essential Criteria

- A professional qualification in accountancy (e.g. CIPFA, ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA) or significant senior-level financial and audit experience and a strong understanding of assurance and risk frameworks and how they support organisational accountability.
- Significant expertise in accounting and audit functions, with a strong understanding of how internal and external audit functions operate in a complex organisation.
- Sound judgment, analysis and decision-making skills, and the ability to provide strategic advice to the organisation and challenge in the management of risk and prioritisation of limited resource.
- Board-level experience, including experience chairing, or contributing to, an Audit and Risk Committee (in an NDPB, public sector or regulated environment) and ability to communicate clearly and convincingly within the organisation and with stakeholders, the media and a range of public and private sector organisations.

Desirable Criteria

- Knowledge of corporate governance frameworks (HM Treasury's Orange Book, Managing Public Money, the Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance in Arm's Length Bodies).
- Experience of current corporate governance best practice
- An engaging and collaborative working style, with the ability to adapt to different partners whilst demonstrating leadership and influencing skills.

Post 2: APPT11-25

Independent Board Member with specialist expertise in Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT)

Role

This role is for an Independent Board Member with expertise in Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT). The postholder will provide strategic insight and oversight on digital transformation, data strategy, and technology initiatives, while contributing to the wider work of the Board. This is an opportunity to help shape the governance and direction of a UK-wide public body at a pivotal time for AHDB and the agricultural sector.

Role Specification

- Provide inspirational leadership and constructive challenge as an effective Board member.
- Monitor and scrutinise organisational performance, holding the Executive to account for the achievement of strategic goals and service outcomes.
- Ensure high standards of governance by providing independent challenge and assurance on risk management, internal controls, and DDaT-related risks (e.g. cyber security, data quality, resilience, supplier risk, ethical data use).
- Contribute to the development of AHDB's strategy including in each sector.
- Support the organisation in identifying efficiencies, growth opportunities, and new ways of working.
- Promote responsible, transparent and accountable data use, ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory and ethical standards.
- Advise on opportunities for collaboration across sectors and across the UK using digital platforms, data sharing, and knowledge exchange.

Essential Criteria

- Proven ability to develop and lead overarching strategy across an organisation, particularly in the context of digital transformation and innovation.
- A proven track record in leading and implementing large-scale digitally enabled transformation initiatives within similar complex public or private sector environments, to deliver service improvements and cost savings for customers, including impacts on people, process and technology.
- Leadership experience of overcoming - at an enterprise level - the technical and delivery challenges in implementing data governance, advanced analytics capabilities and cybersecurity programmes as well as the associated data and security cultural change.
- Strong ability to critically assess and advise across all stages of digital delivery, from new service design to continuous improvement, with experience of embedding digital and data into organisational strategy, planning, and service delivery.
- Skill at communicating complex digital strategy to inform clear decision making.
- Able to provide assurance that digital investments deliver measurable value for money, align with policy objectives, and achieve meaningful outcomes.

Desirable Criteria

- Familiarity with public and private sector digital frameworks, cyber security and AI.
- Relevant sector knowledge, professional insight, and a strong network to enhance collaboration across the wider digital ecosystem.
- Awareness of the Government Digital Service Standard and/or other examples of benchmarking good practice in digital service delivery.
- Awareness of governance, risk, and assurance frameworks relevant to digital transformation in public and private sector contexts.

Post 3: APPT12-25

Cereals & Oilseeds Sector Council Chair

Role

This role is for a Board Member who will also serve as Chair of the Cereals & Oilseeds Sector Council. The postholder should be a current or recent levy payer with specific expertise in the cereals and oilseeds sector, along with the other essential skills defined in the Essential Criteria. The Chair provides leadership and strategic direction to the Council, ensuring its activities deliver measurable value to levy payers, including farmers, growers, and the wider supply chain. Acting as a key liaison between levy payers, industry stakeholders, government, and AHDB's executive leadership, the Chair supports initiatives such as market development, research, innovation, sustainability, and knowledge exchange. The role involves overseeing delivery of the 2022–2027 sector plan and playing a central role in shaping the next five-year plan to reflect future priorities and the evolving needs of the industry.

Role Specification

- Chair the Cereals & Oilseeds Sector Council and ensure it operates effectively, providing clear reports and recommendations to the Board.
- Provide inspirational strategic leadership as an AHDB board member, including providing constructive challenge to other board members;
- Actively support AHDB's strategic direction and collaborate with other board members to ensure that AHDB delivers on its commitments to levy payers;
- Ensure that the values of good governance are upheld, particularly with regard to levy-funded activities;
- Ensure delivery of AHDB's aims and objectives, as set out in legislation and AHDB's strategy and business plan;
- Maintain strong, credible and visible relationships with Defra, governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, sector stakeholders and levy payers;
- Deliver outstanding value for money for AHDB levy payers

Essential criteria

- Proven track-record in thinking strategically and contributing to a long-term organisational vision, with the ability to support levy payer engagement and ensure value for money;
- Proven ability to provide influential leadership, build strong, collaborative relationships with executive functions and support organisational change, to include increased efficiency in marketing and community-based services including sustainability and digital innovation;
- The skills and ability to communicate and champion AHDB clearly and convincingly within the organisation and with stakeholders, the media and a range of public- and private-sector organisations
- Ability to engage and inspire levy payers to build consensus and drive progress on complex industry challenges such as assurance and digitalisation, championing a progressive, confident and profitable Sector
- An understanding of the wider food and farming industry
- Current or recent levy payer with proven understanding of the technical and strategic challenges and opportunities facing the Cereals & Oilseeds sector and its levy payers

For further information on these roles, please email Rebecca.Loveday@ahdb.org.uk

The Recruitment Process

The closing date for applications is 12.00pm on 02 December 2025. The shortlisting process is expected to have been completed by late December 2025. Panel interviews anticipated to take place in late January 2026.

The shortlisting process and interviews will be conducted by an Advisory Assessment Panel, chaired by Gill Laishley, Deputy Director in Defra's Agri-Food Chain Directorate. The panel will include one independent member, to be confirmed, and AHDB Chair, Emily Norton. At the shortlist meeting, the panel will assess each application against the essential criteria and decide which candidates to invite for the final interview.

Interviews are expected to take place at AHDB's, Middlemarch Business Park, Siskin Parkway, East Coventry, CV3 4PE and will last for approximately 45 minutes (including a 10-minute presentation - the title of which will be notified in advance). Further details about the format will be provided to shortlisted candidates in advance.

This is a Ministerial appointment and thus a final decision will be made by the Minister. Appointable candidates may be invited to meet with the Secretary of State before Ministers make final decision on the successful candidate.

How to apply and submit your application

To apply you will need to:

- Create an account or sign in to Apply for Public Appointment Service at [https://: apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles](https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles);
- Once logged onto your account, click on Apply for this role and follow the on-screen instructions.

You are required to provide:

- A CV of no more than two sides of A4 with the e-mail addresses of two referees
- A supporting statement of suitability of no more than 1,000 words which gives full but concise information relevant to the post; and which clearly provides specific examples of how you meet the essential criteria;
- Equality information; and
- Information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues.

If you have any questions about the appointments process, please contact Public Appointments Team, at publicappts@defra.gov.uk

Completed applications should be submitted online at <https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles> by 12.00pm on the closing date of 08 December 2025.

Please quote the reference relevant to the position you are applying for e.g. APPT12-25.

Additional Information

Time commitment and remuneration

For the two independent Board member posts (Reference: APPT10-25 and APPT11-25), a non-pensionable remuneration of £12,600 per annum is payable, subject to deductions for PAYE and National Insurance contributions. This is based on a minimum time commitment of 36 days per year. For the third Board member post (Reference: APPT12-25) who will also serve as a Sector Council Chair, remuneration will be £25,200 per annum, based on a minimum time commitment of 72 days per year.

The time commitment includes attendance at AHDB Board meetings (which are held in person approximately six times a year), as well as preparation, travel, and other AHDB business. Remuneration will be paid in equal monthly instalments, and reasonable travel and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed in line with AHDB policy. It is anticipated that all three board members will be expected to work at the AHDB HQ at Coventry (please note these offices are all open plan with easy access), as well as from home.

Period of appointment

All three posts become vacant on 1 April 2026, and we will therefore be looking for the successful candidates to take up the position on that date. The appointment will initially be for up to three years from the commencement date. A further appointment of up to three years may be made subject to satisfactory performance assessment and will be at the discretion of Ministers.

Equal opportunities

UK government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

Diversity

We positively welcome applicants from all backgrounds. All public appointments are made on merit following a fair and open competition as regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By 'minimum criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you generally meet the level of competence required for each criterion, as well as meeting any of the qualifications, skills or experience defined as essential. The Cabinet Office is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. To show this we use the Disability Symbol awarded by Job Centre Plus.

If an applicant with a disability considers that they may be at a disadvantage compared with a person without disability, we have a duty to make reasonable changes to our processes where possible. Please inform us if you need a change to be made so that you can make your application.

Ineligibility Criteria

You cannot be considered for a public appointment if:

- you become bankrupt or make an arrangement with creditors;
- your estate has been sequestrated in Scotland or you enter into a debt arrangement

programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors;

- you are disqualified from acting as a company director under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- you have been convicted of a criminal offence, the conviction not being spent for the purposes of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (c. 53);
- you become subject to a debt relief order or a bankruptcy restrictions order;
- you fail to declare any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of Interest and Due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of AHDB, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your application. If you have queries about this and would like to discuss further, please contact the Public Appointments Team at publicappts@defra.gov.uk quoting the relevant job reference number.

Given the nature of public appointments, it is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of Parliament and the public. If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention of the Advisory Assessment Panel and provide details of the issue(s) in your application. In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media.

As part of our due diligence checks we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This will include our undertaking searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. This information may be made available to the Advisory Assessment Panel who may wish to explore issues with you should you be invited to interview. The information may also be shared with Ministers and Cabinet Office.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments

This appointment is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, to ensure that it is made on merit after fair and open competition. More information about the role of the Commissioner and the Governance Code on Public Appointments can be seen at: <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>

For full details of the complaints process for public appointments, please click on the following link which will take you to the Commissioner for Public Appointments website:

<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/regulating-appointments/investigating-complaints/>

Alternatively, please contact the Commissioner's office on 020 7271 0831 for a printed copy.

Data Protection

Defra is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information and does so in accordance with data protection law including the General Data Protection Regulation

(GDPR). All the information you provide will be used to proceed with the public appointment listed in this information pack and in the case of diversity monitoring information may be anonymised and used solely for monitoring purposes.

For more information about the way we collect and hold your information, please read our Privacy Notice, accessible through the Cabinet Office website:

<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk> Or by requesting a copy from: publicappts@defra.gov.uk

ANNEX A: THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

ANNEX B: TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE FOR ALL PUBLIC BODY NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Expertise

1. Consider and act in the best interests of your organisation and its objectives, delivering the outcomes expected by your sponsor department, Ministers and ultimately the public.
2. Consider the broader mission and duties of your sponsoring Secretary of State, his or her department and the Government.
3. Ensure compliance with statutory duties and the organisation's Framework Document and act within its powers.
4. Exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence in the exercise of your authority and judgement.

Scrutiny and challenge

5. Maintain independence from the executive to allow scrutiny of management. In meetings, agree goals and objectives and monitor performance and the reporting of performance so that the public who use your organisation receive a high-quality service.
6. Satisfy yourself on the integrity of budget setting to deliver objectives, financial information and reporting against budgets, and that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible. Meet the requirements of Managing Public Money, including supporting the Accounting Officer in fulfilling their duties to provide propriety and value for money in the use of public funds.
7. Champion high standards of risk management by ensuring your organisation has effective risk reporting, controls and governance, risk expertise and risk tolerances to effectively manage risk.
8. Represent your organisation to the department and to Ministers, as well as ensuring Ministers' views are considered by the executive team of the organisation, as appropriate.

Support

9. Support the board in succession planning and be prepared to put yourself up for re-appointment, as well as promoting the need for a diverse board.
10. Participate in and promote regular reviews of your organisation, as well as the board's own effectiveness, with particular focus on the organisation's purposes and its efficiency in meeting these purposes. Engage in the appraisal process, including self-reflection on your own abilities.
11. Listen carefully to, ask appropriate questions of and support management to encourage discussion in a manner that promotes a culture where all perspectives are listened to, while fulfilling the individual director's duties and responsibilities and respecting and valuing the expertise of the executive team.
12. Promote the success of the entity having regard to the interests of all members and stakeholders, and all risks

ANNEX C: CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE AHDB BOARD

Emily Norton

Independent – Chair of AHDB

Sarah Pumfrett

Board Member

Catherine MacKenzie

Board Member

Stephen Briggs

Board member

Graeme Jack

Board Member

Colin Bateman

Sector Council Chair – Beef & Lamb

Tom Clarke

Sector Council Chair – Cereals & Oilseeds

Lyndon Edwards

Sector Council Chair – Dairy

Glen Nimmo

Sector Council Chair – Pork