Final Minutes of the 45th Pesticides Forum Meeting: 19 October 2011
Conference Rooms 1 and 2, Foss House, Kings Pool, York, YO1 7PX

Those present are listed at Annex A.

Item 1: Introductions and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 45th meeting and the 15th Anniversary of the Forum including the teleconference attendee, Dave Thomas (Welsh Government), and introduced the following new members and visitors:

- Richard Butler, new Chair of the Voluntary Initiative (VI), replacing Professor Barry Dent.
- Adrian Barker, replacing Angela Rabess as the BIS representative, and
- Rob Mason, who is the new Director of Regulatory Policy at CRD.

The Chairman recognised the contributions to the Forum’s work from Professor Jon Ayres (ACP). Jon had sent apologies for today’s meeting and his best wishes to members for their work in the future as he will step down after 6 years as ACP Chair at the end of the year. Jon’s successor will be Professor Gay Hawksworth, and the Forum looked forward to welcoming her to a future meeting. The Chairman also noted that Charles Sadler was the Fresh Produce Consortium and British Retail Consortium’s joint new representative, replacing Tony Palmer.

The Chairman asked everyone to pause and remember the late Paul Chambers (NFU), whose recent death had been a great loss to the industry. He recognised the contributions Paul had made to several Pesticides Forum meetings as a guest speaker.

1.2 The Secretary recorded apologies for absence from the following members: Professor Jon Ayres (ACP); Peter Hall (ACOS); Vicky Kindemba (WCL); Nick Mole (PAN(UK)); Jeanette Longfield (SUSTAIN); Professor John Moverley (Amenity Forum); Jo Oborn (FWAG); and Charles Sadler (FPC/BRC). The following observers also sent apologies for absence: Nigel Crane (EA); Deborah Currie (DARDNI); Arwyn Davies (Defra CN); Mike Green (NE); and Aattifah Teladia (FSA).

Item 2: Minutes and matters arising from the 44th meeting: 22nd June 2011

2.1 The minutes had been circulated, and all comments received had been incorporated into the final version which had been accepted as an accurate record. The final version has been placed on the Forum website.

2.2 James Clarke noted that the Secretariat had yet to draft the programme for the February 2012 meeting on ‘Integrated Approaches’.
2.3 **James Clarke** reported the following completed actions against issues identified from the June Forum meeting:

- Letters had been sent to all the outgoing Forum member’s representatives to thank them for their contributions.

- A letter had been sent to Defra’s R&D coordinator regarding priorities for research in areas not covered by the Technology Strategy Board. The Secretariat would circulate the letter to members and place it on the Forums website.

2.4 **Dave Bench** suggested that, on the basis that Ministers are changing, the Forum might wish to write again to the new Minister in a similar vein as their recent correspondence with Lord Henley. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to recast the letter from the Forum for sending to the new Minister and to circulate the new Minister’s details to Forum members, once it is announced.

**Actions: Secretariat**

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**Item 3: “Pesticides Forum – Past, Present and Future”**

3.1 **Dave Bench** gave members an overview of the Pesticides Forum past and present, and the Government perspective for the future. When the Pesticides Forum first met in May 1996 it could not be envisaged that the Group would last for 15 years, and it was a credit to the Forum members and officials that it has remained active. He summarised the functions of the Forum and noted that the original terms of reference were as valid today as when they had been written. One of the Forum’s strengths was the range of relevant knowledge of its individual member organisations, and the wide range of perspectives on the industry as a whole. Membership had grown from an original 16 organisations to 24 which, along with advisors from the Government Departments, had all helped to maintain the effectiveness of the Forum.

3.2 Dave congratulated James Clarke on his long service both as a member and Chairman for the greater part of its existence, and his skilful chairing of the Forum’s disparate interests. He acknowledged James’ inputs to the work of the Outcomes and Indicators Group; some measures existed at the outset of the Forum but the modern suite of indicators ‘paints a picture’ of the position in respect of the use and impacts of pesticides over time, to help identify relevant trends. Dave recorded his appreciation for this sensible, rational approach to Indicators which had made a significant contribution to Government understanding as a whole.

3.3 A key area for future policy development is the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive and establishing a National Action Plan (NAP). Dave emphasised that DG SANCO’s only key deadline in the short term is for all Members States to have a National Action Plan in place by the end of 2012. Development of the NAP
will require engagement with all stakeholders. Dave considered that the nature of the Forum, in bringing together such a range of interests, will be crucial in developing the Plan.

3.4 James Clarke thanked Dave for his speech and acknowledged that the Forum’s work and existence owed everything to the contribution of all its members.

Item 4: Forum’s 15th Anniversary – “Focus both on what the Forum has achieved to date and what the future issues might be”

4.1 James Clarke explained that this session would be a relatively light celebration of the Forum’s work, and noted that a number of long serving Forum members were in attendance today and some had been asked to offer their views on what the Forum has achieved so far and what they looked ahead to in terms of the Forum’s future. He invited Helen Bower, who was present at the first Forum meeting on 23 May 1996, to open this section.

4.2 Helen Bower (WFFU) had retained all the original Forum papers, including all the minutes (also available on the Forum website) News and Press Releases, some of which she had brought to the meeting. She reminded everyone that the Forum had been set up in 1995 because the Department of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture had decided that pesticides needed looking at. Following the publication of the Government’s White Paper on “Rural England: A Nation Committed to a Living Countryside” a conference in October 1995 developed the idea of a forum to bring together all aspects of the industry. In February 1996 a MAFF press release announced plans for a ‘Pesticides Forum’ with the Minister - Angela Browning - recognising that pesticides were a ‘complex issue’. Helen remembered that the first meeting discussed the Forum’s Terms of Reference (ToR), and the draft action plan. She noted that although the early press releases referred both to pesticides ‘minimisation’ and also to ‘responsible use of pesticides’, the latter phrase was formally adopted into the ToR.

4.3 Helen explained how her organisation, then the Women’s Farming Union, became involved. At the time it was the only organisation providing the consumer/producer link, consulting with both farmers and consumers, and disseminating information via avenues such as WFU fact sheets distributed at shows. Angela Browning, a WFU member and a junior Minister in MAFF, had nominated Helen as the WFU’s representative for the Pesticides Forum. Reflecting on changes over the past 15 years, Helen considered how the attitude to agrochemicals has altered; although people bought on price then, and still do, more emphasis is now placed on ‘food security’.

4.4 Anne Buckenham (CPA) gave a brief presentation from the manufacturer’s perspective, and noted that her name appeared on the list of members in the Pesticides Forum’s first annual report. In the early days of the Forum the different organisations had devoted much activity to reporting separately on their actions; Anne considered that today’s Forum reports looked much more joined up. A great
deal had been achieved in terms of improving the responsible use of pesticides and, although the Voluntary Initiative (VI) had played a major role in this achievement, the Pesticides Forum should take at least some of the credit for bringing the stakeholders together. Anne emphasised the importance of continuing dialogue. While individual organisations might hold strong views, the Forum offered an opportunity for moderated and constructive dialogue which had, on occasion, led to action that had helped to achieve common goals. She considered that the outcome of the Forum and VI’s joint work on indicators was extremely pragmatic and a great example of the benefits of dialogue, which should be held up as a model for other countries interested in developing a similar approach.

4.5 Anne also celebrated the work of the Container Management Working Group, noting that some companies were beginning to pick up on the group’s discussions and report, and to produce tangible indications of progress in this area. Thinking about the new pesticides national strategy, she agreed that the Pesticides Forum would have an important role to play here, helping to develop a National Action Plan and overseeing its implementation through the Forum’s member organisations. She also suggested that crop protection strategies might become more important in the future, due to the expense of developing new products.

4.6 Julian Hasler (NFU) observed that one of the Forum’s strengths was its ability to help develop useful policies and, on behalf of the NFU, he was glad to note it was still doing so. He drew attention to the 1998 OECD report on Integrated Pest Management and the early work of the Pesticides Forum’s Integrated Farm Management group, and emphasised that this was an important area in which the UK and Europe still need to develop further. Julian highlighted the work of the Forum’s Knowledge Transfer Group, and its importance in identifying and communicating key messages and analysing outcomes across a wide range of topics. He also noted a continuing requirement for more work on the issue of pesticides in water.

4.7 Nick Mole (PAN UK) was unable to attend the meeting but had emailed a contribution. He highlighted that PAN UK had been a member since the start of the Forum and, although they had not always agreed with other members over some issues, they believe that the Forum is invaluable in allowing all those involved in pesticide issues to meet and discuss key issues. He also praised the Annual Report for giving the public access to information on key pesticide issues and the effectiveness of the Forum acting as a group – such as the reaction to proposed changes to the training regime in the SUD. Nick believed that the strength of the Forum lies in the depth of knowledge of its membership.

4.8 PAN UK hoped the Forum could introduce a sub-Group to look into the issue of IPM and how it could be developed and promoted in the UK although this might require additional support for farmers and advisers. Any work by the Forum could help in ensuring the UK remains at the forefront in Europe in innovative and sustainable non-chemical pest management strategies in the future.

4.9 Lastly, Nick was concerned that, as the current economic climate was affecting the
operation of many NGOs, the Forum should look into ways to allow those groups to continue to play an active role in future Forum meetings. The Chairman thanked Nick for his report and reminded members that the Conference Call facility offered anyone unable to travel to York an alternative method of attending the meeting. He asked the Secretariat to remind members about this facility and encourage its use.

**Action: Secretariat**

4.10 Peter Pitkin (SNH) agreed with the effectiveness of developing short-term working groups to look into particular issues including the development of the SUD and the National Action Plan. Dave Bench supported the idea of the working group model but only where it could deliver added value. He believed the Forum was the appropriate group to take on this work.

4.11 Richard Butler (VI) said that the Voluntary Initiative was also celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year and this included a celebratory dinner and some other events involving Defra Ministers. He believes the VI has a crucial role to play in the implementation of the SUD and that communication of ‘best practice’ was a key issue. He believes the Forum and the VI should continue to work closely to ensure that a ‘silo mentality’ does not take over and that all those involved in the food production process gets the correct information in the most effective way.

4.12 James Clarke summarised the session by highlighting some key outcomes and achievements such as the groups that looked into knowledge transfer, IPM and container management. He believed a significant achievement was a better understanding of what is going on within all the member organisations and that the Forum offered opportunities for improved relationships, or partnerships, between other fora such as the VI, Amenity Forum and the National Action Plan Implementation Groups. He also thought that more needed to be done to evolve and improve the indicators on the impacts and use of pesticides. Finally, he thought that the agenda needed to integrate the pesticides issues with those arising from major changes such as climate change and the need to increase food production to feed a growing population. The Forum could have an important role in linking these initiatives and providing a greater balance between crop, or plant, protection and wider environmental, economic and social demands.

**Item 5: Update on the Container Management Group**

5.1 **Alastair Leake (GWCT)** introduced this item by updating members on progress on the work of the Group. He reminded members that the Group had produced its report with a number of recommendations. Since then he had heard that another major manufacturer had announced its intention to replace its entire range of containers over the next two years to meet the recommendations. Alastair thought this was a further sign of the success of the report and that a voluntary approach could work. However he noted that one of the recommendations required the Environment Agency to develop some rules to help spray operators using continuous stream rinsing of containers was still outstanding. The Secretariat
agreed to speak to EA for a progress report on this work. Overall, Alastair thought that the Forum should revisit the CMG Report in a few years to see how well the recommendations had been taken up by industry.

**Action: Secretariat**

5.2 At the June Forum meeting the working group had been asked to look into the issues of both returnable containers and developments with closed transfer systems. The Group had met on 30th September and hoped to be able to report back to the Forum on this work at the February meeting.

**Action: Alastair Leake**

5.3 James Clarke thought it was important to understand the different roles of both returnable and recyclable containers, Alastair agreed but he thought that the role of returnable containers would probably reduce as more containers were made recyclable. David Williams (Defra) highlighted the need to increase publicity on the new Waste Hierarchy but Alastair pointed out that the volume of plastic being used in the manufacture of containers was already decreasing significantly and this trend was likely to continue which together with the increase in recycling meant the industry was in a very good position to meet whatever targets the Government might set. Finally, James asked whether there was any data on the percentage of products in the new low-plastic packaging. Anne Buckenham was unsure but agreed to look at the data of products placed on the market. Alastair Leake suggested that around 40% of all agricultural plastics are currently recycled and that plastics used in agricultural pesticide containers was likely to be higher than other agricultural plastics.

**Action: Anne Buckenham**

**Item 6: Update on the Sustainable Use Directive**

6.1 Grant Stark set out the background to SUD implementation. As expected there was a large range of views in the response to the 2010 consultation. Officials were now in discussion with Ministers regarding the next steps following the consultation. The Government favours an approach that relies on existing control measures and only introducing legislation if absolutely necessary. It was important not to hamper business efficiency and economic growth through unnecessary controls.

6.2 The Directive does not create a legal obligation for users to be trained, the implications of this change was of concern to many stakeholders and a number met with the Minister – Lord Henley – to lobby for retention of existing arrangements. Since then there had been a change of Ministerial responsibilities and, given the sensitivities around this issue CRD has decided to go back and check with the appropriate Minister.

6.3 Overall, the provisions currently in force are likely to meet most of the provisions required by the SUD so although the transposition may not be in place by the end of November 2011 as required, the UK is generally well placed. An announcement on the timescales for taking forward the provisions of the SUD was expected
shortly. Mike Storey (AHDB) pointed out that the SUD has had a lot of publicity recently in the technical press and this might result in them raising ‘difficult to answer’ questions. He believed this issue needed to be managed carefully. Grant agreed that the longer it takes for Ministers to make an announcement the more likely it was that stakeholders might start to believe something was amiss. However this was always likely given the need for agreement across all Government Departments before an announcement can be made.

6.4 Peter Pitkin asked whether SUD requirements for implementation of IPM might be made part of the cross compliance regime. Grant said it wasn’t clear at this stage whether such an approach would be taken. James Clarke asked Dave Thomas (WAG) about the approach the Welsh were taking to implementation of the SUD. Dave said that his Department was working closely with colleagues in UK on implementation. He hoped that the introduction of the SUD would be approached consistently by all the devolved administrations.

**Item 7: Possible items from Members/Chair/Secretariat for future meetings**

7.1 James Clarke said that it would be important to discuss the development of the National Action Plan at the February 2012. At the same meeting he asked Richard Butler whether he would give a presentation on the future work of the VI and how he saw the relationship with the Forum on progressing actions from the NAP.

*Action: Richard Butler*

7.2 Robert Campbell (LEAF) mentioned that there had been a meeting in Newcastle to discuss pollution in rivers and that it had emerged that the Rivers Trusts are now taking a much important role in both monitoring and dealing with such incidents. He wasn’t sure whether there was an independent or central organisation to speak on behalf of the Trusts but this was an area worth investigating. James agreed and asked the Secretariat to consider how this could be covered in a future meeting.

*Action: Secretariat*

7.3 Alastair Leake said that the lack of clarity in the process for getting an active such as asulam onto Annex I was very worrying and asked whether this process would be made more transparent by the new legislation. It was also important to understand how the new emergency authorisations procedures would be enacted. As actives drop off the Annex I list he expected to see more emergency authorisations applications coming through. Rob Mason (CRD) agreed this was an important issue and suggested that CRD could give a presentation to explain how the new processes would operate. James Clarke agreed this was an important issue but there needed to be discussion with the ACP over who should look into this matter. He asked the Secretariat to liaise with colleagues in ACP.

*Action: Secretariat*

**Item 8: Dates of future Forum meetings**
8.1 Members agreed to the 2012 Forum meeting dates as:

Wednesday, 22\textsuperscript{nd} February 2012  
Wednesday, 20\textsuperscript{th} June 2012  
Wednesday, 17\textsuperscript{th} October 2012

All the meetings would be held in York unless members were otherwise notified by the Secretariat.

**Item 9: Application Technology**

9.1 A number of speakers had been invited to cover areas under this heading and the chairman welcomed them to the meeting.

9.2 **Robert Willey (Househam Sprayers)** thanked the Forum for inviting him to the meeting. He wished to look back at sprayer developments over the last fifteen years. He said there were a number of reasons why change had taken place not least the changes in legislation, the increase in the size of farms and the reduction in labour, the change to minimum tillage cultivation systems, environmental issues such as protection of watercourses and hedgerows, the ban on aviation spraying and of course developments in technology. Robert then emphasised the major improvements in sprayers including use of GPS, telematics to allow the farmer to know where and what each sprayer was doing on the farm and remote diagnostics to allow for much improved service support to reduce downtime. He believed that both GPS and telematics would become ever more important in the drive to improve productivity through better management of spray operations.

9.3 **Duncan Russell (Agricultural Engineers Association and National Sprayers Testing Scheme)** then highlighted the development of sprayer testing in the UK. The initial AEA scheme started in 1997, however it wasn’t until the launch of the National Sprayer Testing Scheme as part of the VI in 2003 that spray testing increased significantly up to current levels of around 15,000 machines each year; accounting for 85\% of the UK area sprayed. The NSTS protocols covered sprayers (both boom and air blast machines), granular applicators and fogging machines. There are approximately 630 qualified examiners operating from over 320 centres or branches with each examiner holding a City & Guilds Certificate of Competence. The benefits of annual spraying testing include: ensuring sprayer efficiency; reducing costly downtime; satisfying crop assurance and supermarket protocols; accurate application; adding residual value to the machines; helping to ensure public confidence in sprayer operations; and lastly helping to ensure the success of the VI. Duncan believes the future of the NSTS lies with increasing sprayer testing in the amenity sector, keeping track of what is happening with EU testing and improvements in electronic data transfer to reduce the need for paper records.

9.3 **Clare Butler Ellis (NIAB/The Arable Group)** then gave a presentation on the outcomes of the Bystanders and Residents Exposure Assessment Model (BREAM). She pointed out that the research was undertaken following public
concern about how spraying might be impacting upon residents and bystanders. This concern was reflected in a report from the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution which highlighted weaknesses in the current exposure assessment. The objectives of BREAM was to develop a model of potential exposure from a single application event, obtain experimental data for model development, conduct field trials for model validation and use the model to explore options to reduce exposure. There were two elements to model: spray drift and droplet transport; and vapour emission and dispersion. Claire summarised the work on vapours by saying that there was huge uncertainty over emission of vapours from treated fields although improvements in the current model are possible by including realistic UK meteorological data. The current model is likely to be very protective for low dose chemicals but there was a need to recognise the potential for high one-off exposures. The proposed new model is based on the applied dose.

9.4 Claire then explained the work on spray drift and the research that has taken place which shows that exposures can be increased by nozzle design, high levels of surfactants in the tank mix, the presence of downwind structures or buildings which can channel the air flow and the movement or activity of the bystander. Direct dermal exposure to spray drift is likely to be the greatest issue, inhalation was relatively negligible and ground deposits are lower than airborne spray. The BREAM model was robust and well validated for conditions close to the standard scenario for spray drift. Further work is being done on the model through funding from CRD and the BROWSE project to add nozzles to the database, to better model buffer zones including the filtration by vegetation, and continued improvement in the description of nozzles.

9.5 **Professor Paul Miller (NIAB/The Arable Group)** opened his presentation on research developments in spray application by highlighting the increasing importance of the technology to effectively control weeds, pests and diseases in the most cost-effective way. He noted that factors such as resistance were making control more difficult to achieve which, together with limitations on the range and doses of chemicals and pressures to minimise environmental and human health risks require the most effective use of application technology. He highlighted much of the research that was going on with nozzle design, ‘precise application’ using electronic sensors, timeliness of application by use of wider booms and lower volumes at higher speeds, off-target exposure from spray drift, run-off and decontamination and minimised residues through application timing, dose control and uniformity, record keeping and traceability. In conclusion, Paul noted that the UK has been a world leader in pesticide application research to help meet the needs of the UK farmer and that the investment already made to reach this position should be maintained and used effectively to address continuing needs.

9.6 **Tom Bals (AEA)** summarised the common themes in the presentations:
- Productivity/work rate was critical – both for commercial reasons and for optimum timing of applications, with respect to both efficacy and meteorological requirements, which had led to use of larger sprayers and lower volumes;
Environmental concerns have been a key driver (with improved application equipment/techniques having a vital role to play; e.g. see Pesticides Forum paper PF 149); and

Regulation had not kept up with practice – labelling had restricted ‘Reduced Volume’ applications (as previously discussed by the Forum) and did not allow for Variable Rate Application.

He noted that the sprayer industry had made significant advances but regulation needed to be flexible enough not to hinder necessary future innovation, especially for specialist/niche markets where significant costs (e.g. for field testing) could not be recouped due to market size.

9.7 James Clarke thanked all the speakers for their extremely informative presentations and asked the Secretariat to ensure that copies of these were placed on the Forum website.

Action: Secretariat

Item 10: AOB and possible press release

10.1 Anne Buckenham (CPA) wished to bring to the attention of members the new VI booklet ‘Every Drop Counts’ and the revised publication ‘H₂OK? – keep It Clean’. Copies are available from the VI website.

11.2 The Chairman suggested that the Secretariat put together a synopsis of the 15th Anniversary presentations and this could be used to highlight the publication of the forthcoming Pesticides Forum Annual Report including a press release.

Action: Secretariat

Pesticides Forum Secretariat
October 2011
Annex A: Attendees at the Pesticides Forum meeting of 19 October 2011
Conference Rooms 1-3 Foss House, Kings Pool, York YO1 7PX

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<th>Name of attendees</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<td><strong>Members</strong></td>
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<td>James Clarke - Chairman</td>
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<td>Mark Ballingall</td>
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<td>Tom Bals</td>
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<td>Andrew Bauer</td>
<td>NFU Scotland</td>
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<td>Helen Bower</td>
<td>Women’s Food and Farming Union</td>
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<td>Anne Buckenham</td>
<td>Crop Protection Association (CPA)</td>
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<td>Richard Butler</td>
<td>Voluntary Initiative (VI)</td>
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<td>Robert Campbell</td>
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<td>David Edwards</td>
<td>The Co-operative Farms</td>
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<td>John Ford</td>
<td>Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)</td>
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<td>Julian Hasler</td>
<td>National Farmers’ Union (NFU)</td>
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<td>Alastair Leake</td>
<td>Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)</td>
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<td>Jim Egan</td>
<td>Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)</td>
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<td>Peter Pitkin</td>
<td>Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)</td>
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<td>Rob Simpson</td>
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<td>Mike Storey</td>
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<td><strong>Invited Speakers:</strong></td>
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<td>Duncan Russell</td>
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<td>Robert Willey</td>
<td>Househam Sprayers Ltd</td>
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<td>Clare Butler Ellis</td>
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<td>Paul Miller</td>
<td>NIAB / The Arable Group</td>
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<td><strong>Observers:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>David Thomas</td>
<td>Welsh Government (WG) (via teleconference)</td>
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<td>David Williams</td>
<td>Defra</td>
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<td>Adrian Barker</td>
<td>Dept for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)</td>
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<td>Garry Wiles</td>
<td>Health and Safety Executive (HSE)</td>
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<td>Dave Bench</td>
<td>Chemicals Regulation Directorate</td>
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<td><strong>Forum Secretariat:</strong></td>
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<td>Nigel Chadwick</td>
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