



## **August 2022 Newsletter**

Welcome to this August 2022 Edition of the AFCP newsletter which includes

- Details of a seminar in September to learn about progress in our dairy production systems project.
- Announcement of a Forum at NIAB in October to learn about the research there and opportunities for collaboration
- News from Claire Hoarau, our student working on cabbage stem flea beetle
- Completion of a project to digitise the proceedings of the BCPC Crop Protection conferences and an opportunity to fund further digitisation work
- Information about our newest member, The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture
- Additions to the AFCP Board and appointment of a new administrator.

AFCP exists to inspire closer collaboration between charities and organisations in order to drive greater impacts from the charitable donations being made in food and farming.

**Dates for your diaries**

## Seminar via Zoom

20 September 2022 at 14.00

Modelling net carbon emissions from dairy production systems

Fern Baker, a PhD student funded by a number of AFCP member charities and AHDB will talk her project and introduce a discussion on the subject.

Everyone welcome to participate, please register with [Elizabeth Stephens](#) who will provide a Zoom link.

## Eastern Region Forum

11 October 2022 at NIAB, Cambridge

The programme will include speakers from NIAB discussing their projects and a talk from Dr Steve Rawsthorne (Morley Agricultural Foundation) on opportunities for collaboration in research funding. More details will be provided later. To ensure you receive these please [let us know](#) you are interested.

## **AFCP/AHDB joint studentship on cabbage stem flea beetle at Harper Adams University**

Claire Hoarau is approaching the end of her PhD investigating the potential of biopesticides to control the cabbage stem flea beetle (CSFB) in oilseed rape crops.

Entomopathogens such as entomopathogenic nematodes, bacteria and fungi; physically-acting products such as fatty acids, and the botanical insecticide azadirachtin, were tested in mortality bioassays in the laboratory against adult CSFB. Fatty acids, two species of entomopathogenic nematodes *Steinernema feltiae* and *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora*, and the entomopathogenic fungus *Beauveria bassiana* strain GHA were particularly effective, and were tested further in the field in autumn 2021, looking at leaf damage by adult CSFB and larval density in plants.

Field results did not show biopesticides to be effective, but the spraying method, biopesticides formulation, the timing of application and damage assessment method could be improved in further studies.

Recently Claire has been using adjuvants to investigate if they improve the persistence and/or survival of fatty acids and nematodes on oilseed rape leaves. Claire has also published (June 2022) an article in Outlooks on Pest Management on control methods against CSFB.

([https://doi.org/10.1564/v33\\_jun\\_05](https://doi.org/10.1564/v33_jun_05)).

We are delighted to hear that Claire has been appointed to work as a Strategic Outreach Officer at Harper Adams University for a year on completion of her PhD.

## **BCPC Digitisation Projects**

The project to digitise over 50 years of BCPC conferences and symposia (part-funded by five of our charities) is now complete and can be access at <https://www.bcpc.org/open-access/knowledge-bank>. This provides easy access to scientific information on control of pests, diseases and weeds, much of which is not easily available elsewhere.

Following the completion of this successful project, BCPC now plans to digitise the annual reports and herbicide screening data of the Weed Research Organization. Despite the WRO closing in the mid-1980s, the reports contain key information on the effect of weather on herbicide activity, the principles of application to maximise herbicide activity, the factors affecting the behaviour of soil-applied herbicides etc., which still apply today. The herbicide screening reports contain the susceptibility of a wide range of weeds to individual herbicides, many of which remain in day-to-day use.

Placing these digitised documents on the BCPC website will prevent such information being forgotten/lost and make it easily accessible free of charge. The cost is expected to be £3K-£5K and BCPC are looking for partners to support them in funding this. Further details will be available shortly.

## **New Institute to support Skills, Careers and Professionalism**

The newest member of the AFCP is The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH).

TIAH is the new home of skills and career support for the agriculture and horticulture industry. Its main goal is to help people develop and businesses succeed, allowing the industry to thrive.

TIAH has been established as a charity, with a commitment of support from Defra.

Tess Howe, TIAH Membership & Business Development Manager explained TIAH's role:

“For agricultural and horticultural businesses to stay profitable and sustainable, contribute positively to the environment and adapt to future challenges, it is vital that individuals in the industry confirm and enhance their existing skills and acquire new ones. But, as many of our collaborators in the industry have acknowledged, the way we approach skills and training in the sector is fragmented, which is difficult for people to navigate.

“For those who own, or work in, an agriculture or horticulture business, we aim to provide tailored advice and practical tools that are needed to help develop skills and lifelong learning. For those who want to work in farming and growing, we will be the gateway to all the advice, support, and training they will need to pursue a rewarding career.”

Launching its first membership offering in 2023, TIAH's services will include:

- **Support** – a central hub will bring together existing and new training opportunities from across the industry. It will direct users to relevant training courses and information based on their career goals. TIAH's site will also allow employers and employees to track training and achievements.
- **Signposting** – TIAH will act as a coordinator, sharing new and innovative farming practices and policy updates with the industry.

- **Labour market information** – TIAH will collect reliable data on the labour market, workforce needs and skills gaps from market research.
- **Careers information** – a careers hub will provide information on dozens of careers, the skills needed for each job, and opportunities to help people advance their careers.
- **Professional framework** - this will help individuals identify the skills needed, a competency framework will be available. It will also allow employers to be more involved in the training process.

Find out more about TIAH at [www.tiah.org](http://www.tiah.org).

## The Agricultural Universities Council

The Agricultural Universities Council (AUC-UK, <https://www.auc-uk.org>) , comprises all the Universities in the UK that offer degree programmes in agriculture and related land-based disciplines and was formally founded in early 2022, though its members have been meeting since 2018.

The impetus to form the AUC was in response to the Agriculture Bill, where it was apparent that the University sector was losing visibility with respect to its contributions to training and innovation in the sector. This is in stark contrast to the high profile that Universities typically enjoy in other critical industries and is a probable outcome of the contraction in the size of the respective academic base during the 1990s. After a period of consolidation, the agricultural and related sciences are now undergoing a renaissance and the Universities have a key role in leading the way in related research, innovation and the training of the next generation of farmers and professional practitioners in the sector.

The mission of AUC-UK is to promote a central role for the universities in the Global future of the Agrifood sector in the UK. Its members fully recognise a key part of that ambition is for the related academic community to be more coordinated and to speak with one voice instead of many. During the formation

of the AUC it was apparent from talking to stakeholders in government and industry that the Universities can be a difficult and disjointed community to communicate with and so collective action has been a priority for the Council from the outset.

The primary objectives of AUC-UK are:

- To provide a forum for Agri-food “thought leadership” in the UK and internationally
- To pool resources to enable evidence-based information and commentary in the context of agri-food related policy
- To work together to ensure a “pipeline” of high quality graduates, researchers and leaders in the UK and international agri-food sector
- To work with other organisations to complement and add-value to existing initiatives and groups
- To facilitate the professionalism of Agriculture via evidence-based education and research.

One of our first AUC projects is to develop a joint strategy for agricultural research. Our members have a wealth of expertise and facilities for agricultural education and research across the UK but we can make even more of it, benefiting both farming and the public, if we coordinate our efforts. Farmers, industry, and public interest groups have longstanding concerns about the impact of publicly-funded research. Some of this frustration is shared by scientists, particularly when they find themselves competing for research grants when it would make more sense to collaborate.

The project is being co-ordinated by the Centre for Effective Innovation in Agriculture, which involves several of the AUC members and is funded by the Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust. So far, it has reviewed previous agricultural research strategies to discover a persistent concern with fragmentation in the sector, and polled the priorities of farmers, researchers and other stakeholders. The team is currently analysing data from the Research Excellence Framework on publications, research income and strategic priorities across the AUC. There

will then be series of workshops in the autumn to co-develop recommendations with stakeholders, ahead of publishing the strategy in the new year. We are keen to collaborate closely with the AFCP in this. Other AUC activities in the pipeline include workshops to share best practice in training our undergraduates and being a point of contact in developing doctoral training partnerships with external sponsors including the AFCP.

As with all young organizations we welcome the input from the agricultural community in helping to shape our activities and relationships. If you would like to find out more about AUC-UK please contact its current Chair, Professor Robert Edwards ([Robert.edwards@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Robert.edwards@ncl.ac.uk)).

## **New AFCP Board Members and Administrator/ Company Secretary**

We are delighted to be broadening and deepening the experience of the Board by appointing two new members to be Trustee Directors – Prof. Bob Bansback and Mr Ian Munnery. Both bring of wealth of experience in agriculture to the Board. They will be officially appointed at the AGM on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Further details of the AGM will be sent to members nearer the time.

Mrs Elizabeth Stephens, the AFCP Administrator and Company Secretary, will be retiring at the November Board Meeting, having provided excellent service to the AFCP for the past 14 years.

We are pleased to announce that her role will be filled by Mrs Michaela Canham. Michaela is part-time Finance Manager for The Morley Agricultural Trust (an AFCP member charity) and she will continue in this role as well as working for AFCP.

**[www.afcp.org.uk](http://www.afcp.org.uk)**

## AFCP Contacts

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Elizabeth Stephens (Company Secretary): [elizabeth@iagre.org](mailto:elizabeth@iagre.org)

### BOARD DIRECTORS:

Philip Richardson, Gordon Bennett, Geoff Dodgson  
Alex Payne, Jim Stevens, Jim Orson

AFCP was registered as a company limited by guarantee in February 2008 and became a registered charity in June 2015. The Board and its Directors and advisors represent a range of charities and organisations from across the UK.

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