

could do better, such as the speed of delivering harvest results from the RL trials — we need that information to make informed seed choices.

“But this isn’t about having a gripe – it’s about positive engagement and we should be challenging AHDB to improve things. It’s also important that as many growers as possible take this opportunity, as it’ll have a significant bearing on how the industry fares post Brexit.”

One area Tom believes the sector does particular well is the Monitor farm activity. “This area

has really come on and it’s incredibly beneficial — I’d strongly recommend all growers get involved. It’s a great example of true knowledge exchange and good use of research — rather than sitting on a shelf at Stoneleigh Park, it comes out onto farms to be shaped and put into practice by growers, where it belongs. It shines as an example to the industry demonstrating how knowledge exchange works in practice and something the AHDB can learn from.”

One area of improvement is in integrated pest management,

he believes. “As a sector, we’re very exposed to the loss of neonicotinoids, glyphosate and other active ingredients because we haven’t done enough to research non-chemical alternatives. We also need a good scientific base to ensure we have a strong independent voice in this area as we face regulatory challenges.”

Suffolk grower and member of the NFU Organic Forum John Pawsey believes the online webinars are a particularly good use of levy funds. “Many of them are really informative, especially the ones that include real farmer engagement — it’s a great way to get easy access to quality, practical information.

“My frustration is with the RL — there needs to be more information that’s not related to inputs, and less emphasis on yield. This wouldn’t just be of benefit to organic growers. All progressive growers understand the value of tillering, rooting and crop architecture. If varieties were scored on these criteria, it would drive breeders towards real improvements and diversity



Tom Bradshaw would like to see more made of the Monitor farm network.

in the available gene pool.”

As a mixed farmer, John feels Cereals could also learn from Beef and Lamb. “Some of the information available on sheep is absolutely fantastic, and has been invaluable as we’ve introduced the flock into the business. It’s delivered in a way that allows you to set ambitious but achievable targets, with guidance on practice that’ll get you there.”

The online survey is hosted on the Defra website <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/farming/viws-on-ahdb> ■

## AHDB levy income

	2017/18 levy income (million)	Estimated no of levy payers	Average contribution per levy payer
Beef and lamb in England	£16.7	85,000	£200
Cereals and oilseeds in the UK	£12.7	61,600	£210
Pork in England	£9.2	21,600	£420
Dairy in GB	£7.7	11,700	£660
Potatoes in GB	£6.1	2400	£2500
Horticulture in GB	£7.9	1300	£5940

Source: Defra

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## Crop protection conference joins with congress



Simon Kightley will reveal the geographical spread and intensity of cabbage stem flea beetle infestations and explore strategies for improving crop establishment.

The Crop Protection in Southern Britain conference takes place this year in Brighton on 12-13 Nov, and has a focus on dissemination to advisers and practitioners. What’s more, for the first time it runs alongside the BCPC Congress (13-14 Nov), so anyone with an interest crop

protection, and looking to find out how the UK Agriculture Bill, the threat of glyphosate withdrawal and Brexit will play out will likely find registering for both well worthwhile.

Papers range in content from those with a high biological science focus, to those that report new options for chemical or non-chemical control approaches to weed, pest and disease management in crops. Highlights of a packed programme include:

**Focusing on fungicides** — an insight into what’s set to come to commercial crops over the next 18 months, and control of ramularia in barley. Looking below ground, papers will also explore clubroot and Rhizoctonia solani.

**Grappling with grassweeds** — the conference has a tradition of breaking new ground on blackgrass control. This year, papers will look at the impact of stubble cultivations and changes in blackgrass populations. The presence and distribution of brome is featured.

**Post-neonic pest control** — arguably one of the greatest challenges facing oilseed rape growers, with resistance and non-chemical

control methods high on the agenda. Implications for non-flowering crops are also explored.

**Non-chemical crop protection** — Integrated pest management takes centre stage, with what’s set to be a fascinating insight into allelopathy and the competitive ability of hybrid barley. There’s also a paper on the latest findings on verticillium wilt.

The AAB conference, sponsored by Adama, will have four sessions on Mon 12 Nov at the Mercure Brighton Seafront hotel, and then share two plenary sessions with the BCPC Congress on the morning of Tues 13 Nov at the nearby Brighton Hilton Metropole hotel. The AAB conference dinner takes place on Mon with a complimentary pre-drinks reception.

[www.aab.org.uk/conferences](http://www.aab.org.uk/conferences)

