

MINUTES

Meeting of	Combinable Crop Committee
Held at	Malmaison, York
Date and time	29 September 2025 13.00 – 15.30
In attendance	Name and Company Tom Wood, Robin Appel (Chair) Mark Worrell, Openfield Angela Gibson, Bunge Chris McCallum, Cefetra Sarah Hynes, Simpsons Westly Garner, Frontier Will Ringrose, ADM (Pulses Rep.) Sarah Mann, GAFTA Jonathan Lane, ADM Ben Schadla-Hall, Dewing Grain Rose Riby, AIC (secretariat) Ed Barker, AIC
Apologies	Robert Sheasby, AIC

Summary of Actions	
1.	

1.	Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements Apologies for Absence Health and Safety & Competition Law Compliance A reminder was issued covering health and safety obligations, competition law compliance, and GDPR requirements. Members were asked to avoid straying into sensitive areas of discussion. Any topic of concern should be flagged immediately for appropriate handling during the meeting. Conflicts of Interest – none raised
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated in advance alongside the agenda. The Chair invited comments or amendments. None were raised, and the minutes were approved as a fair and accurate reflection of proceedings.
3.	Matters arising

MINUTES

	No additional items were raised beyond those already captured on the current agenda.
4.	<p>GAFTA UK trade engagement - Sarah Mann</p> <p>It was noted that GAFTA-related matters would be addressed within broader trade discussions. JA gave over view.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>RR to share COCERAL information in relation to possible Copper MRL changes in the EU AIC/GAFTA to write to FSA for clarity on GMO approvals – AG to raise at Feed supply committee.</p> <p>RR to share ergot WG meeting papers</p> <p>All to report back on any future issues affecting UK grain movement.</p>
5.	<p>Trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ US/UK ethanol trade deal <p>It was discussed regards ongoing policy uncertainty impacting the domestic bioethanol sector. The Government has reportedly stepped back from providing support once expected by producers, raising concerns about competitiveness versus US imports. A Government consultation is anticipated later in the autumn. The Committee agreed that the industry must respond swiftly once it is launched.</p> <p>Key considerations included the slow pace of potential moves from E10 to E15 petrol blends and the regulatory stance on using crop-based feedstocks for sustainable aviation fuel. Investment appetite exists but is constrained by political ambiguity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fosetyl Aluminium MRL application <p>AIC, GAFTA AND GPC Presented latest trends on pulses, exports and prospects and general issue on exceedances, was agreed trade concerns cannot be solved in GB by increasing the MRL from 2 to 3 ppb to align with EU MRL of 3 ppb. Technically there may not be a trade barrier as EU MRL is higher than GB but residues found in beans exceeds these levels. Need to raise MRLs in both GB and EU for long term solution. Noting level for wheat and fresh beans is set at 150 ppb. Both increases were to support an authorisation for a product use. Unlikely that we can use data provided for authorisation on fresh beans as we are not looking to authorise a product but to increase MRL. Reminded that there are no safety concerns and likely route cause is biostimulant, fertilisers and other external factors.</p> <p>Clarified that different definitions in GB and EU are not the issue. The fact that EU compliance is based on phosphonic acid MRLs found, and UK based on fosetyl al is only how the residue is expressed, and EU change is not significant. Both check main metabolite phosphonic acid. Devolved issue in UK but HSE coordinates for other administrations in Scotland and Wales</p> <p>Process: Need to provide 59 samples or more, showing which analytical methods were used and how samples taken and labs used – company monitoring data is accepted. Field trials are not required. Application details online.</p> <p>Timeframe from 12-18 months for full authorisation of pesticide use and expect it to be less in this case to evaluate monitoring data and to carry out consumer risk assessment but would not expect an issue here as no safety concerns.</p> <p>Likely a temporary MRL would be granted, and further data would need to be collected to have a more robust MRL set over following 3-5 yrs.</p> <p>Would need to work in same vain on application to EU and together with other exporters including Canada. Fee in UK =/- £3000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EU/UK SPS veterinary agreement

MINUTES

	<p>Government progress was described as slow but ongoing. Much detail remains confidential due to NDAs, although indications suggest a shift toward more operational, product-specific problem-solving. Members emphasised the importance of dynamic alignment where feasible to support frictionless trade.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>EB to seek an updated indicative timeline from Defra once available.</p> <p>Report any new details once cleared for dissemination.</p>
6.	<p>Red Tractor</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the strategic overhaul of Red Tractor's combinable crops scheme. Declining participation was noted, largely influenced by farm consolidation rather than dissatisfaction. Red Tractor is exploring reduced audit burdens and a refreshed value proposition, but members expressed serious concern about proposals suggesting a tiered scheme for feed grain.</p> <p>It was agreed that assurance must remain unified across supply chains to protect traceability, food and feed safety, and commercial practicality. Members highlighted the need for clearer industry messaging to prevent misconceptions about assurance requirements.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>RR to draft a firm letter setting out essential industry principles, particularly opposition to multi-tier feed assurance.</p>
7.	<p>Farm assurance review</p> <p>AIC has responded to the review questionnaire; it was felt it was difficult to answer as posed for the reasons outlined in the written response. AIC has not yet been approached by others in the supply chain to discuss the Commission's proposals. It was highlighted there would be real value in an industry-wide discussion to ensure these proposals are properly understood and assessed.</p> <p>Action: share copy of final response from AIC to Promar</p>
8.	<p>Contractual practice in the UK combinable crop sector.</p> <p>The Government is considering whether regulated contract frameworks are needed for the arable sector, following precedents set in dairy, pork and horticulture. Members agreed that intervention should only occur if clear market failures are demonstrated and stressed that widely used contracts already provide structure and legal certainty.</p> <p>Concerns raised by farmers appear to relate more to individual examples of poor practice rather than systemic issues. Members emphasised the need to identify legitimate improvements while avoiding unnecessary regulation that could undermine commercial negotiations.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>Propose practical improvements (such as clearer sampling guidance) to demonstrate industry leadership.</p> <p>RR to draft letter to AIC services suggesting alignment of testing requirements between UFAS/TASCC/FEMAS to create a balanced approach to intake expectations.</p>
9.	<p>Digital passport Combinable Crops</p> <p>The Leadership Group had submitted the business case and funding request to Defra and continues engagement with government stakeholders.</p>

MINUTES

	<p>The Committee discussed the growing range of sustainability reporting requirements being imposed by different buyers. This variation has led to duplication, confusion and administrative inefficiencies. Members agreed that the industry must lead development of a future-proof digital passport aligned with transparency expectations while proportionate for growers.</p>
10.	<p>AHDB administration fee</p> <p>It has been some time since the last update. AHDB and AIC have continued discussions to resolve the outstanding rebate issue. Following review by the National Audit Office, it was concluded that a single rebate level would not be acceptable, and a banded approach is now being explored. Interim AHDB Chair Janet Swaddling has proposed a new framework, which has recently been discussed further. AIC has requested that the previous rate be reinstated until a fair settlement is reached. We may be asked to contribute up to £5,000 towards audit costs.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>Maintain pressure on AHDB to deliver a clear methodology.</p>
11.	<p>ICE – futures’ store registration</p> <p>Members briefly acknowledged the topic and requested a fuller update at a future meeting to ensure shared understanding of implications for grain handling and storage.</p> <p>Action: MW to speak ICE for next steps and possibly ask to provide a briefing at a future Committee session.</p>
12.	<p>Carbon/Nature reporting in the supply chain</p> <p>Members recognised the rapid rise of environmental reporting requirements and stressed the importance of a co-ordinated and consistent approach. This in theory should be aligned with the digital passport to avoid duplication and excessive paperwork. the following priorities were agreed:</p> <p>Scope 3 -Standardisation – (Nuts2 UK Crops Inventory advocacy would assist with this)</p> <p>Methodology - Framework for Industry and Alignment for reporting</p>
	<p>AOB</p> <p>Invite Jamie Burrows, NFU and Annie Rogers, RT to up coming Committee meetings</p>
	<p>Close and date of next meeting: Monday 24th November, Edinbrugh</p>