

# Press statement

## LEVY FUNDING OF NEAR MARKET R&D

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James Alcaraz, chair of the association, has written on behalf of BPOA members to urge the Secretary of State to make a radical reform of the AHDB and would be supportive of a new structure to carry forward levy funded R&D provision by other means.

The BPOA is concerned that the continuation of the levy for near market research has been called into question by the successful application for a ballot by a significant, but localised, number of levy payers. There is a real possibility that there may be enough support for a 'no' vote, in no small part a response to the poor management of this levy spend by the AHDB.

The BPOA supports the continuation of the levy for near market research and has responded to Defra surveys, most recently in November 2018, with a request to continue levy funding and renew the focus on research and development.

There are a number of vital tasks currently funded by the levy such as managing the applications for EAMU's and assisting the transfer of knowledge from research projects but there are a number of areas of unnecessary expenditure that require radical reform. Most importantly, BPOA grower members feel that they been removed from a central role in the management of their levy fund.

Despite this situation and the action of a vociferous minority of growers, there are many growers that believe in the statutory levy but may feel that voting 'yes' to the ballot would lead to a continuation of the same pattern of behaviour within AHDB that has marked their past performance.

BPOA urges all growers to vote and campaign for a better structure for the levy funded research.