

Feeding the Future – Innovation Requirements for Primary Food Production in the UK to 2030'

A response by the Society of Biology
31 January 2013

1. In your opinion, does the report reflect the broad Research & Innovation needs of the industry

- Yes.

2. On a scale of 1- 5 How well do you feel that the report has met its key objectives?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all Completely

3. Are there any specific strategic issues that you feel have not been addressed in the report?

- Yes

Pest management – see Question 5

4. Are there any other concerns that you have regarding the reports content or the process by which it was developed?

- No

Overall, the report is well considered; a few comments on content are included in our response to Question 5.

5. Please use the space below to add any further comments you may have regarding the report

- This important report is considered, comprehensive and addresses the main and urgent points of primary food production. We were especially pleased to see that both primary livestock and crop production were included in the report.
- The nutritional content of food (particularly relevant to GM foodstuffs), and integrated disease management and land use with respect to pollinators are mentioned in the report, but could be emphasised given their relevance to food production. Research Priority 4 should also include the integrated management of pests, in light of the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive 2009/128/EC and the decline of research funding in this discipline since 2005.

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- We strongly agree that better integration across the sector in terms of a land use strategy incorporating data sharing and data integration will lead to the delivery of cross sector priorities.
- Data on the distribution of the annual spend on UK agricultural and related research by UK agencies is useful, however it would be constructive to see more detail on the funding for specific research areas within food production.
- The recommendations appear to be sound and logical, and critically, they embrace the key areas of modern research. However, given the emphasis on an integrated approach elsewhere in the document, the recommendations appear to be rather linear (i.e. from producer groups and levy bodies through to Higher Education Institutions via the Research Councils). An emphasis on information flow in all directions is needed, so that all the communities understand each other and are able to take advantage of opportunities. This is particularly relevant for 'improving the provision of advice, training and skilled manpower at a UK level, both in terms of producers and of the skills within the R&D and consultancy base'.