Leadership Group agree on the concept of a Digital Passport

Sent on behalf of the Digital Passport Leadership Group

Since the last industry update in June 2024, the Digital Passport Leadership Group have been in discussions with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) Cereals and Oilseeds Sector Council, and with stakeholders in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In a key milestone for the project, all Leadership Group members and the AHDB Cereals and Oilseeds Sector Council are in agreement and are now aligned on the concept of a digital passport. The AHDB Cereals and Oilseeds Sector Council have also formally agreed to use levy funds to cover ongoing running costs once the industry has fully transitioned to the digital system.

There is also agreement on the position of the Digital Passport for Scotland and Northern Ireland. NFU Scotland (NFUS) has withdrawn from the Leadership Group but given its agreement for the project to proceed in its absence. The Digital Passport will initially operate in England and Wales, but with an option for Scottish businesses to join voluntarily at a point that suits individual businesses. The Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU) will continue to remain as part of the Leadership Group as observers.

Digital Passport adoption is founded on securing grant funding to cover build, pilot and implementation costs. Work continues in this area. Final review, due diligence and benchmarking is being undertaken on the budget and delivery options. This is being considered now with a focus on ensuring the right level of support is in place to enable a smooth transition across the supply chain. Once complete, the business case will be revised and shared with industry.

The Leadership Group are seeking a meeting with Daniel Zeichner, Defra Minister, in March 2025 to make the case for funding.

Digital Passport - summary

The Leadership Group continue to work on proposals for a digital passport (DP) system incorporating the same data as on today's paper passport. There are two key additions: real-time assurance status checks and immediate feedback of weight and quality data to growers. There is a short video available explaining how it is envisaged the digital passport will work in practice: Digital Passport 2024 | AHDB.

Grain and particularly wheat, is one of the UK's major food staples. For improved food and feed safety, supply chain traceability, transparency, fairness and national food security reasons, there is majority cross-industry support to move to a digitised combinable crop passport. This would be to strengthen food and feed safety and enable a two-way data exchange through supply chains.

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