

Delivering for our Growers 2022 - 2025

Our Mission

'To undertake and implement research and knowledge exchange to increase the competitiveness of the UK sugar beet industry in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner'

Our 3-year Vision

'We will have an efficient team of enthusiastic and world-respected experts in their individual fields, and we will support and steer key decision-making across the sector, from strategic industry planning to on-farm agronomy'



BBRO is unique in the way it is funded by growers and British Sugar. We are proud to provide an independent service for the industry. UK sugar beet has seen a 25% yield increase over the last 10 years due to improved agronomy, research, uptake of innovation and plant breeding. However, we need to continue to work together to further adapt and address the current demands and challenges faced by today's growers. Sustainable farming, with greater focus on environmental impact is vital for future success. New legislation, such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive and the Environmental Land Management Scheme, will drive this forward and as an industry we need to be prepared. In the future, the value chain will depend as much on environmental success as it has previously on financial success i.e. growing for yield. BBRO will support and help future-proof sugar beet growing to continue to secure the crop's place in farm rotations. We want to ensure sugar beet stays in the rotation as a valued break crop.

This strategy document sets out what we aim to deliver and the Core Priorities we will address over the next three years, through a dedicated programme of research and knowledge exchange, underpinned by meeting the needs of growers. We will continue to work in partnership in other areas that are not identified as priorities or we do not have the expertise in-house.

We will:

- engage, inspire and influence growers
- change attitudes and promote positive practice
- focus on knowledge exchange, helping growers with their on-farm decision making.

Our aspiration to deliver the best information on-farm

BBRO at your fingertips – to grow BBRO's knowledge exchange (KE) activities to deliver greater commercial value to growers using personalised and tailored information via a range of communication channels, especially digital messaging and applications.

Making it relevant and timely – to share a range of information for different grower requirements from Brilliant Basics at operator level to Agronomy Plus for agronomists and key decision makers.

Local focus – to further expand our KE network using local agronomy hubs, pest & disease forecasting and demonstration farm events to enhance our relevance at the 'local' level.

Learning from and acting on farm data – to work together to access on-farm trials data, use insight from commercial crop data and use various tools to drive yield improvement. For example, we will roll out the Beet Yield Tracker tool to help grower decision making and ensure all growers understand the true potential of their sugar beet crop.

Be the best – to ensure growers and agronomists have the best sugar beet agronomy information relevant to their area.





CROP PRODUCTION

Variety Evaluation

- Continue RL trials with additional descriptive info on the impact of pests, diseases and virus
- Develop assessments for new traits e.g. drought, canopy architecture, Virus Yellows
- Continue to drive yield progress but also exploit new agronomic traits beneficial for growers

Preparing for Change

- Impact of the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMs) on sugar beet in the rotation
- Better understanding of carbon accounting for UK sugar beet
- Review how systems and approaches from other countries could benefit the UK

Soil Management

- Investigate factors that assess and improve soil health and soil resilience
- Better understand and exploit soil variability using available tools
- Explore alternative tillage and cover crop options supporting Regenerative Agriculture

Precision Technology

- Improve drilling and harvesting, and better understand the effects of placed fertiliser

Post-harvest Technology

- Reduce sugar losses and improve storage solutions

Core Priorities

CROP PROTECTION

Focus on Control of Aphids and Virus Yellows

- Assess varietal, chemical, non-chemical & innovative technical options, including the potential of different breeding techniques e.g. gene editing, to achieve varietal resistance to Virus Yellows
- Exploit drones and sensors to control aphids and boost natural plant resilience

Control Foliar Diseases

- Assess control options and review product timings for optimum control
- Develop new forecasting and monitoring tools to aid control
- Focus on Cercospora control

Impact of Nematodes

- Assess new nematicides and bio-control options
- Improve understanding of population dynamics and rotational impacts on yield performance

Plant Protection Products

- Assess new chemicals, biologicals and nature-based solutions e.g. holistic farming
- Apply for Emergency Authorisations when needed

Emerging Threats

- Use the BBRO Plant Clinic to monitor UK crop issues
- International knowledge exchange and collaboration



How can growers get involved with BBRO?

We run our replicated trials with the help of host growers, without whom we could not deliver new information to other growers.

Our Innovation Trials are also hosted by growers and are a great way to review a range of concepts without having to run detailed trials. Often, ideas for Innovation Trials come from a grower noticing something interesting on their farm and asking BBRO to investigate further.

We are keen to work even more closely with growers. For example, by hosting strip trials on your farm. We may also be able to offer some help in design, assessments and review of your data. Working in partnership with growers in this way can help us deliver even more value for the industry.

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Working in partnership

We recognise the key role agronomists play in delivering BBRO information on-farm and we will continue to work closely with them to support this. We are also aiming to undertake more activities in partnership with commercial companies to bring new products and services to market as quickly as possible.

Attracting future talent

We want to continue to attract new talent to pursue a career with UK sugar beet and we will continue to welcome new PhD students and student placements.

We also recognise the importance of having the right communication skills to ensure new knowledge reaches growers and drives positive change on-farm. That's why we will ensure our PhD students spend time with sugar beet growers.

