

Broom's Barn is Europe's largest sugar-beet research centre and the main source of research and education for British sugar-beet growers. The facilities include analytical, plant physiology, molecular biology, virology and micropropagation laboratories, greenhouses, controlled environment rooms and a 77 ha farm. Broom's Barn is part of Rothamsted Research. The Institute has 400 scientific staff (mainly post-doctoral) plus 110 visiting workers.

At Broom's Barn a wide spectrum of research is covered from the molecular level to field agronomy trials, and disciplines include virology, entomology, plant pathology, molecular biology, statistics and mathematical modelling, ecology and agronomy. Broom's Barn scientists publish extensively in the scientific literature and disseminate results and recommendations to over 7000 sugar-beet growers, to the processor British Sugar plc, and to other relevant organisations.

Broom's Barn is committed to complying with the standards of the Joint Code of Practice for Research (JCoPR).

Infrastructure

Rothamsted Research provides a quality oriented environment and culture through training, a professional support staff and a responsive management structure. There is/are:

1. a management structure to meet the demands of multidisciplinary programmes
2. well-equipped laboratories
3. high quality support services (computing, library etc.)
4. highly trained, professional farm staff to manage field trials
5. a well-defined training policy for students.

Monitoring

Monitoring and improvement of quality standards is achieved through the operation of internal and external procedures:

- There is a Quality Assurance Team, which has a Quality Manager, Quality Assurance Advisor and staff who act as contact points for Quality Assurance in scientific divisions.
- The Quality Assurance Team conducts a programme of internal audits of science projects against the standard of the Joint Code of Practice for Research and other RRes internal Quality Policies.
- Internal scrutiny procedures are in place to ratify the statistical design, management and output for all field, glasshouse and CE experiments; by independent biometricians located within a separate, discipline-based department
- Laboratory notebook procedures are in place ensuring all records and operations are signed and dated, to allow primary data to be linked to secondary data and for sample location to be easily identified
- There is an Institute-wide database of Standard Operating Procedures, Risk Assessments and COSHH forms, which are subject to annual review.
- Electronic data are maintained and backed up on networked servers. Every week a full copy is cycled to a separate physical location
- There is an Institute database of staff skills
- There is regular calibration and maintenance of equipment;
- There is an internal procedure whereby senior management review of all publications prior to submission and a policy that emphasises submission to peer-reviewed journals;
- Internal seminar programmes within departments and across sites.
- Outputs from projects are designed to meet customer needs