

23rd WGIN5 Stakeholders' Meeting

Wednesday 11th March 2026 at the John Innes Centre

Please register via Eventbrite for this meeting using either of these 2 links:

1. In person @ JIC: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/23rd-wgin-stakeholders-meeting-in-person-registration-only-tickets-1982681691311?aff=oddtcreator>
2. Online: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/23rd-wgin-stakeholders-meeting-online-registration-only-tickets-1982684508738?aff=oddtcreator>
3. **to access the online meeting** (after registration on Eventbrite) please use this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82684127817?pwd=oOxf2iBgaNMZmGElthcOG7kcCJoQL.1>
Meeting ID: 826 8412 7817 **Passcode:** 037326

Chair : Dhan Bhandari

- **9:30** onwards – registration + coffee/tea
- **9:55 – 10:00** Introductory remarks and Welcome – **Dhan Bhandari (Chair)**
- **10:00 – 10:20**

Talk 1 **UK Cereals market update – Anthony Speight** (Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board, AHDB) (ONLINE)

This presentation will focus on global drivers of price movement in the major cereals markets, and how this affects domestic prices: Focus will then turn to factors impacting UK supply and demand in 2025, as well as looking ahead to what we can expect from harvest 2026

- **10:20 – 10:40**

Talk 2 **An overview of WGIN phase 5 (2024-2029) – Kim Hammond-Kosack** (Rothamsted Research, RRes) Overview of GINs phase 5, the new WGIN5 project, the consortium partners and key results so far

WGIN started in 2003 and has provided a research platform for the delivery of tools, resources and expertise for the identification of naturally occurring (useful) genetic variation in a broad range of new traits for hexaploid wheat: WGIN phase 5 commenced in July 2024 and involves researchers based at Rothamsted Research, John Innes Centre, NIAB in Cambridge and the MetOffice in Exeter. Many of the researchers and the topics to be investigated are new to WGIN. In WGIN phase 5, 80% of the research efforts will continue to focus on improving hexaploid wheat, and 20% will focus on two UK agriculture underutilised cereal species, namely durum wheat and triticale. For the first time, we have included precision breeding approaches to increase the range of useful variation available for key traits. Within WGIN 5 the plan is to focus on experimental breeding, grain protein deviation, enhancing resilience to pests and pathogens, adaptation to climate change and enhancing crop stability. WGIN has always acted as a catalyst giving rise to multiple and diverse areas of research which are taken up by breeders, academic researchers and other funding agencies. This presentation will give an overview of the WGIN5 project and present some of the highlights that have already taking place.

- **10:40 – 11:00**

Talk 3 **Rapid response to the widespread breakdown of Yellow Rust Yr15 resistance – Paul Nicholson** (John Innes Centre)

In May 2025, the UK Cereal Pathogen Virulence Survey (UKCPVS), led by Niab, reported the emergence of *Puccinia striiformis* f. sp: *tritici* (Pst) isolates capable of overcoming the yellow rust resistance gene Yr15. Yellow rust resistance ratings in the AHDB Recommended List (RL) for 2025/26, were markedly reduced for many RL varieties. As Yr15 had been widely deployed in UK and European wheat varieties, these new Pst isolates are threatening up to 50% of UK wheat acreage. Genetic analysis at JIC confirmed these “new” Pst isolates were related to the prevalent ‘Warrior’ race group of Pst. With an urgent need for new resistance sources, we turned our attention to the heritage Watkins landrace collection: We quickly identified 32 lines that exhibit resistance to Yr15-breaking Pst isolates: A rapid, coordinated response across the UK wheat research and breeding community, led by JIC in partnership with Niab and Rothamsted Research has been designed to produce robust and diversified resistance strategies that reduce reliance on single resistance genes and minimise the risk of future large-scale breakdowns.

- **11:00 -11:10**

Talk 4 **Introduction to the rest of day – Dhan Bhandari (AHDB)** Wheat breeding, field trialling, official testing, commercialisation, ongoing evaluations, eventual withdrawal of commercial cultivar. What are the skills required? What does the job entail? How long does everything take? What are the opportunities within the role?

- **11:10 – 11:30 Refreshment break**

- **11:30-11:45**

Talk 5 **Pre-breeding and Parental selection – Ben Jones** (Assistant Barley Breeder, **KWS**) will discuss selecting traits, designing crosses and explain practical crossing

- **11:45-12:00**

Talk 6 **Crossing and molecular genetics input – Chris Burt** (Head of the Molecular Marker lab, **RAGT**) will discuss checking F₁ lines, the double haploid process, KASPS/chips, using Marker Assisted selection to fix populations and genomic prediction as a breeding tool

- **12:00 – 12:15**

Talk 7 **Field and trial management – Andrew Riche** (Agronomist, **RRes**) will talk about setting out field trials, land preparation, chemical inputs, varying N rates/sowing rates etc, using drone technologies for phenotyping, and plot harvesting

- **12:15-12:30**

Talk 8 **VCU breeding – Matt Kerton** (Wheat breeder, **DSV**) will examine the traits on the recommended list (RL), what and how we measure in the field, new traits and the RL groups (bread, biscuit, specials etc)

- **12:30-12:45** **Q and A session on Talks 4 through 7**

- **12:45 – 14:00** **Lunch**

- **14:00 – 14:20**

Talk 9 **Preparing for official testing: a breeder's perspective – Matt Kerton (DSV)**

- **14:20 – 14:40**

Talk 10 **The national and recommended official testing – Paul Gosling (AHDB)**

For more than 80 years the wheat Recommended List (RL) has guided farmers in their variety decisions, providing independent information on variety characteristics and performance. But before a new wheat variety can be legally sold in the UK it must be added to the national Variety List (VL). The process by which a variety moves through the two systems and is finally recommended, and the role the RL team of data analysts and trial programme managers play will be explored and some of the challenges that the RL faces discussed

- **14:50 – 15:50** **Panel Discussion (chair Dhan Bhandari)**
‘Skills and Knowledge Gaps in the Wheat Chain’

The panellists

Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (**AHDB**) – **Georgia Baxter** (Senior Crop Production Systems Scientist), British Society for Plant Breeding (**BSPB**) – **Louise Everest** (Technical Manager), Commercial Wheat Breeder (**Elsoms**) – **Milika Buurman** (Head of Wheat Breeding), Commercial Wheat Breeder (**DSV**)– **Matt Kerton** (Wheat Breeder and Station Manager), Commercial Wheat Breeder (**KWS**)– **Nick Bird** (Lead of Winter Wheat Research)

Please send any questions for the panellists to wgin.defra@rothamsted.ac.uk

- **15:50** **Final remarks**
- **16:00** **Refreshments**
- **16:30** **Finish**

NB: this meeting will be registered for BASIS points