



Annual Report

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2025



Overview

At times, 2024 proved to be a challenging year for the BBRO team. The sudden loss of Dr Simon Bowen in March 2024 left quite a gap that was keenly felt by all. It was a case of all 'hands on deck' with everyone having a role to play to keep activities on track. From managing trials to navigating shifts in policy alongside the consequences of unseasonal weather patterns, and dealing with new pests and increasing disease pressures, these all ensured that the trials team were fleet of foot and ready for the challenges ahead. Our aim was to promote IPM as being at the heart of sugar beet production. This theme has become embedded with our own ethos of crop management, and we are continually looking for ways to enhance crop performance in a more sustainable way.

In August 2024, Dr Vicky Foster stood down from her role as the Head of BBRO and I was honoured to take up the mantle as Interim Head. However, at times, I could still be found on my knees supporting the team as we all continued to strive to find the tools and solutions for the future of our industry. I can be proud to report that, against a backdrop of these challenges, the BBRO team have continued to deliver high quality trials and robust research to support the sugar beet industry.

“ **IPM - the heart of sugar beet production.** ”

Prof. Mark Stevens

Interim Head of BBRO

Sept. 2024 - May 2025



**Protecting the crop through
Integrated Pest Management**



Research

20 new research projects
launched over 12 months



There have been two main drivers behind our crop protection research portfolio of 2024-25; impact of climate change and the loss of plant protection products. Whilst aphids and Virus Yellows remain a priority we are investigating novel methods of control or rather deflection, with the use of dyes and odours. We are also working further to utilise endophyte grasses, which when managed correctly may have multiple positive effects for the crop. Working closely with industry partners we are investigating new treatments, their timing and sequences to enable a more targeted approach to use, ultimately reducing costs on farm.

Dr Georgina Barratt continues to lead projects assessing water use efficiency, nitrogen application and carbon release which will provide invaluable data to drive on-farm practices in future, along with sustainable approaches to soil management.



Monitoring and risk forecasts

In February 2025 Dr Alistair Wright launched the BBRO CropWatch programme, incorporating our existing aphid and cercospora monitoring work. This will be expanded to incorporate other pests and foliar diseases giving growers timely updates on the risks to crops in their own area.

Finances

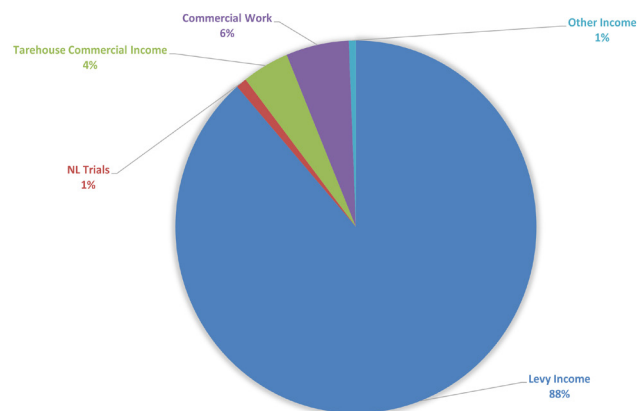
Investment Summary

The total income for the year ending 31 March 2025 was £3.2m (£2.9m from the levy).

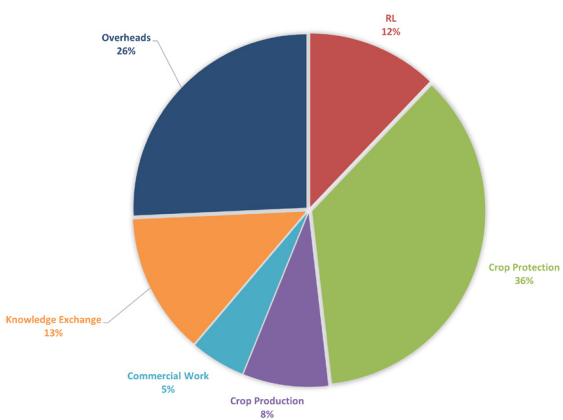
Stewardship work associated with the Cruiser SB EA consisting of a programme of soil, vegetation and pollen sampling from a number of Cruiser SB treated fields continued in 2024-25 at a cost of £175k to BBRO (2023-24 - £183k). This programme will not continue in 2025-26 given that Cruiser SB is not permitted on the sugar beet crop.

The levy remained at 18p/tonne (increased from 14p/tonne on 1st April 2023). The crop remained at levels seen in 2021-22, leading to a surplus in 2024-25. The surplus for the year has bolstered the reserves, which previously was reduced in the 2022-23 campaign by a severe cold spell. The balance sheet shows a surplus of £3.5m (2024: £2.9m).

INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

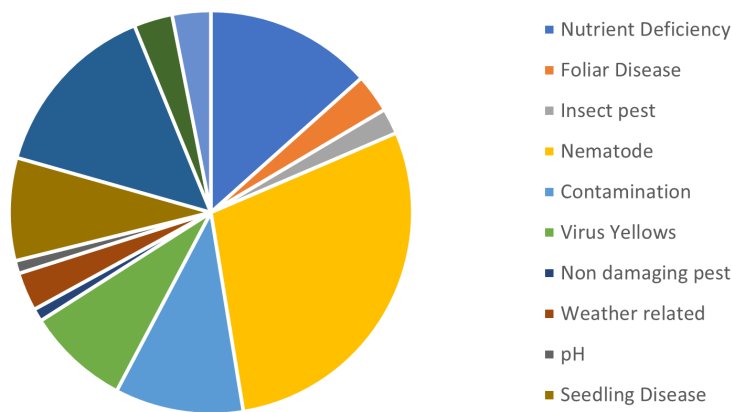


EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025



Plant Clinic results for 2024/2025

Plant Clinic 2024



The wet start to the 2024 season increased the presence of free living nematodes, and later in the year we had a high number of BCN enquiries in the plant clinic. This re-enforces BBRO data that BCN is far more widespread than currently documented. Further work will be undertaken in 2025.