
Agriskills Progress Workshop Report

10th March 2017

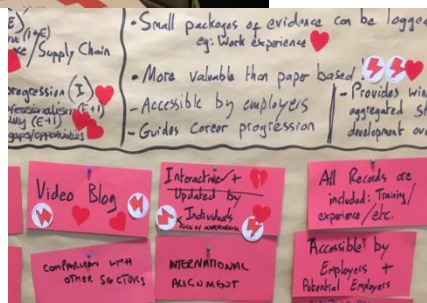


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Background

AHDB has been working closely with the Agriskills Forum to develop Agriskills Progress, which is as an online skills and people management toolkit for individuals and employers in the agriculture and horticulture industry. Skills development is one of the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the industry and Agriskills Progress has the potential to become a practical toolkit resource to help farmers and growers. It is envisaged that this capability would be delivered as an app, available through a computer or mobile phone, and should be an invaluable, one-stop place to guide, support and motivate the industry around skills development and lifelong learning. Nick Skinner from Poppyfish People Development, was engaged as an external facilitator to provide independence and structure to the day.

Aims

The aims for this workshop were:

- 1) To pull together key stakeholders to share understanding about a vision for an Agriskills Progress toolkit and explore what collective assets are available in the community to build and develop the toolkit
- 2) To agree or scope out how the toolkit might fit, what might be included within it and how it might integrate with other industry resources and projects in the skills landscape.
- 3) Explore ways in which the community can create easy pathways to ensure maximum use and engagement of these new tools.

Summary

Over twenty five people attended the workshop from the key stakeholder organisations and potential users of any future system. The format of the workshop kept attendees highly engaged throughout the day and the workshop plan clearly delivered the objectives that had been set.

As a result of this participation a significant amount of information was generated and will be invaluable in supporting future strategic planning and the preparation of a detailed business case.

Powerful conversations between key collaborators occurred throughout the day seems to have been the order of the day. At times, some of the open and honest exchanges began to expose some of the most difficult areas and by so doing, built trust, showed humility and generally added a depth to proceedings and created meaningful and powerful exchanges. In these discussions, participants from organisations that might be labelled 'competing' showed an openness to collaborate for best outcomes and declared their core values.

Further work is now required to take the outputs from the workshop and shape them into an action plan for the development of a pilot. This work needs to look at the detail of the data generated during the day. In the detailed review of each element with the toolbox for instance, assessment should be made of the weight of feeling behind the key ‘must have’ areas (as marked by the love hearts). Likewise, areas marked with a lightning bolt clearly require further attention and, possibly, some key assumptions should be challenged.

In assessing the success and the relevance of the outcomes from the workshop it should be remembered that the group of people in the room do not represent the entire stakeholder network, nor the entire user base, and this is something which will need to be rectified as part of the ongoing development.

Organisations identified as being best placed to lead in certain areas should take on that role conscious of the fact that, within the community, there are many areas of overlap between organisations, meaning that skills in short supply in one partner might be augmented, developed – and challenged – by skilled experts working in other bodies.

This project has received an injection of momentum, pace and energy which now needs to be supported with resource, strategic championing and good project management. Further opportunities to share thinking and drive development should be grasped regardless of the perceived restrictions of organisational boundaries and the organisational drag of politics, which might threaten to impede progress.

“I think I can safely say that this event was probably unique. Unique in the universal enthusiasm of all participants for what we are all trying to achieve with AgriSkills Progress and, more importantly, unique for the unanimous mandate the meeting gave to see some positive action to drive the project forward.”

“And, notwithstanding inevitable concerns about commercial sensitivity, there also appeared to be a general consensus that the opportunities for all created by the synergistic collaboration afforded by AgriSkills Progress should, if managed carefully, far outweigh those concerns”.

Richard Longthorp, AgriSkills Forum Chair

Welcome and Introductions

Richard Longthorp welcomed attendees and set the scene for the day. He spoke of how resilience of the agricultural sector relies upon highly skilled people. Describing that although skills alone can't solve all the industry problems improving employee engagement and levels of activity and investment in skills development will make businesses more adaptable and profitable, adding that never has there being a more important time for skills development within the industry.

Bev Dixon spoke from the heart about the importance of employee engagement, it's benefits and importance, describing how vitally important it is that businesses and organisations in the agricultural sector create a climate and establish a capability for talent development and ways to harness good practice. The crucial nature of a one stop shop for decision making support and high quality guidance was emphasised, stating that the Agriskills project has a vital role to play in providing businesses and individuals with an action oriented way to make the good decisions that help to maximise the potential of employees. Bev also highlighted the benefits developing a business vision to clarify where the business should be, then thinking strategically to set goals to achieve the vision, which then moves thinking to the skills gaps that might occur as part of that process and assessment which ultimately allow individual goals to be targeted, leading ultimately to a more directed training approach which will have a more positive impact than the scatter gun/reactive approach currently seen in some places.

Jane King

AHDB CEO Jane King spoke of AHDB's purpose to inspire farmers and growers and the industry to succeed in a rapidly changing world, emphasising the need for a complete evolution in skills and lifelong learning in agriculture if the sector is to survive and thrive post Brexit. Jane outlined her vision Agriskills as an online skills and people management toolkit for individuals and for their businesses and described work completed so far to scope out content, explaining how various elements had already been designed, for example:

- LANTRA has had significant government funding to develop its framework for aligning skills roles and identifying skills gaps in individuals and for recording CPD.
- The NLBC is working on registration schemes for new entrants and recording all the activity they engage with to build online cv's.
- Brightcrop, following successful pilots, are working to develop CPD materials for careers advisors so they can advise potential entrants more accurately.
- AHDB is building a reserve of people management and business content and relevant signposting so that industry can access templates, HR advice and get a better understanding of HR processes

The Toolbox: Audience, Content, Expectations and Input

The attendees were split into groups and were asked to work together to explore ideas around each of the six elements of Agriskills Progress namely;

- Business Support;
- Job Standards;
- Training Records;
- Career Pathway;
- Skills Needs and Training Providers; and
- Project Management;

1	2	3	4	5	6
Richard Longthorp Richard Self Paul Temple Rhonda Thompson	Chris Moody Sarah Purdell Debbie Beaton Derek Wilkinson	Simon Telfer Bob Webb Carly Goodridge- Smith Tess Howe	Richard Cooksley Jane King Chris Padfield Leigh Morris	Sarah Palmer Katie Garner Nick Shorter Gwyn Jones	Bev Dixon Lee Osbourne Robert Tabor Roland Evans
Business Support	Project Management	Standards	Training Records	Career Pathway	Skills Needs and Training Providers

Figure 1: The groups

In each of the top five areas attendees considered the following questions:

- Who is the target audience for this element?
- What need does this element serve, or what problem does it solve?
- What is the Unique Selling Point of this element?
- What must the element contain (what functionality must it have)?

Finally, attendees were asked to agree which organisations or individuals they felt were best placed to take the lead in the ongoing development of each element¹












¹ This final question for each element was actually completed after lunch and after the attendees had heard brief presentations on current assets within the community from some of the organisations present

The Boards:

Work was captured using Neuland facilitation boards and cards. Each group had a chance to add content to each of the areas. The data generated is shown on the following pages:

NB. In the detailed review of each element with the toolbox for instance, assessment should be made of the weight of feeling behind the key 'must have' areas (as marked by the love hearts). Likewise, areas marked with a lightning bolt clearly require further attention and, possibly, some key assumptions should be challenged.

Business Support

Who is the audience for this element?	Employers Business Owners  Training providers/Business Advisors Employees
What need does this element serve? What problem does it solve?	Easy access to specialise advise/support etc HR requirements, training available Who pays? Guidance Solving lack of experience/knowledge in the business Practical guide to legal requirements  Knowledge gap in people management Professionalise micro businesses
How would you define the USP of this element?	Accessible Recognised  Help to revise standards and skills Encourage motivation Demonstrates competency Current and up to date across all nations
What <u>must</u> this element contain?	 Health & Safety Legislation and regulation Human resource management (appraisals/PDP's)  Soil Health Finance Quality Control/Farm Assurance  Risk Management Benchmarking performance Information technology use  Environmental management  Templates/step by step guides What to expect from a good training provider  Why bother – demonstrate ROI Managing links – providing guidance Explanation of why good people management is good for business  How to support learners/businesses Accessing funding for career development Business diversification  Web links to other sources
Who should lead?	AHDB

Job Standards

Who is the audience for this element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Potential new entrants Employers Employees Standards Board Assessment organisations Government Careers advisors Influencers (parents) Colleges and training providers
<p>What need does this element serve?</p> <p>What problem does it solve?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Matching expectations Consistency for roles (allowing some company flexibility) Easily understood Standardisation (aligning different roles/names) Better use of apprenticeship levy
How would you define the USP of this element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Ensure quality, competence/professionalism Framework for career development ♥ Encourage CPD Credibility for industry Competitiveness NLBC facilitate setting of standards For individual career development & rewards For Manager – skilled workforce
What <u>must</u> this element contain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear skill requirements ♥⚡ Remuneration/salary bands Governance Clarity Behaviour Also known as.... Progression opportunity Personal/professional development ♥ Responsibility level (identify gaps for professions) ⚡ Align to trailblazers where applicable Entry requirements User friendly Clear pathway Employer/industry backing/offering
Who should lead?	AgriSkills Forum in collaboration with Institute for Apprenticeships, Lantra & AHDB

Training Records

Who is the audience for this element?	Employers (recruitment, training/ development, compliance, audit, customers) Individuals (empowered career record, creation of digital profile)
What need does this element serve? What problem does it solve?	Audit – compliance Job applications Monitoring training Individual development ♥ End customer assurance/supply chain Traceability ♥ Motivating career progression Demonstration of professionalism ♥ Demonstration of compatibility ♥ Identification of training gaps/opportunities
How would you define the USP of this element?	Digital (CV) profile ♥ One stop shop Robust/Recorded/♥ Accredited - <u>credentials</u> Small packages of evidence can be logged e.g. work experience♥ ♥⚡ More valuable than paper-based Accessible by employers Guides career progression Provides window of aggregated skills development over time
What <u>must</u> this element contain?	Digital credentials ♥⚡ Video blog ♥⚡ Interactive and updated by individuals All records are included, training & experience Mechanism for validation Comparisons with other sectors International alignment Accessible by employers and potential employers If training in date – email alerts Training records could be categorised ♥ Professional accreditation ♥ Learn from pigs, poultry and others eg. Army Simplicity and transparency Transferable for employee
Who should lead?	NLBC

Career Pathway

Who is the audience for this element?	<p>Parents/ School children / young people</p> <p>♥ Teachers / Careers advisors</p> <p>HE/FE/Undergraduates/Universities</p> <p>Those in careers</p> <p>Industry – employees & employers</p> <p>Recruitment</p> <p>Public sector bodies</p> <p>Those outside sector</p>
<p>What need does this element serve?</p> <p>What problem does it solve?</p>	<p>Recruitment – Employment or education</p> <p>Progression – employment/prof. development</p> <p>Stability in business</p> <p>Personal/Prof. development</p> <p>Advice and information</p> <p>♥ Signposting/pathways</p> <p>Matching need/skills/suitable opportunities and people</p> <p>Widening the ‘pool’</p> <p>Business succession</p> <p>♥ Competing with other industries (eg. Automobile)</p> <p>Securing the future (inc. planning)</p>
How would you define the USP of this element?	<p>Exposing the ‘hidden’ opportunities in the industry</p> <p>♥ Changing the image and creating clarity</p> <p>♥ Informing, Inspiring & Enabling</p> <p>Make it easy for people to get in and progress</p>
What <u>must</u> this element contain?	<p>⚡ Consistent messages / Remove barriers</p> <p>⚡ Replication of portal info on every relevant organisations website/comms</p> <p>Information relevant to each audience</p> <p>Industry support e.g. NFU, AHDB</p> <p>♥ Digital – how communicating?</p> <p>Transferable skills / Relevant tools</p> <p>♥ Promotion of the industry / success stories</p> <p>Typical salaries / ♥ Case studies / Employer expectations</p> <p>Profiles of role models in careers already</p> <p>♥ Career pathways</p> <p>Access to training opportunities</p> <p>Access to funding (support charities/RDPE)</p> <p>♥ ⚡ Highlight international opportunities</p> <p>Job adverts</p> <p>Generic job descriptions</p> <p>Post CV’s</p> <p>STEM</p> <p>Identify skills development needs against job roles</p>
Who should lead?	BrightCrop

Skills Needs and Training Providers

Who is the audience for this element?	Employers Training providers Learners/employees College/university Schools/potential applicants Funders Parents New entrants Government
What need does this element serve? What problem does it solve?	Targeted involvement Finding quality provision Skills gaps Progression Development of training plans Succession and development planning Value for money Provides a system for assessment of skills records Recognised CPD
How would you define the USP of this element?	♥ Trustworthy one stop shop Organisations endorsing Clear – Simple – Audience Industry recognised one stop shop Trip advisor
What <u>must</u> this element contain?	♥ Meeting recruitment needs / Future thinking for future jobs Mobile friendly Cost/time/location ♥ Centralised database of training with recommendations Accredited training Management and control of skills needs ♥ Qualifications to deliver occupational needs Appropriate training to meet skill need ♥ Governance and quality control of providers Recording existing skills against skills required and prioritise Return on investment / Close skills gaps Searchable function Feedback /Reviews/Quantification Link to CPD and standards Appropriate info/training for careers advisors Print training record ♥ Job roles and skills required Management / Mandatory / Technical skills Alert on refresher / Suggest next training Set/improve safety standards Ability to register interest to improve economy of deliver
Who should lead?	Lantra/AHDB/Edge/NLBC

Project management

For the Project Management element some different questions were considered namely:

- What are the three key outputs and expectations for this role?
- What key skills or background is required for project management and the project manager?
- Who are the key stakeholders who need to be managed/co-ordinated and led?
- To whom should the Project Manager be responsible
- Which organisation is best placed to lead on overall project management?

What are the 3 key and essential outputs of the role?	<p>Development of accessible, easy to use tool</p> <p>I.T. works</p> <p>Promotion of tool</p> <p>Realistic project plan</p> <p>Maximum uptake by individuals and managers</p> <p>Engaged, more professional workforce</p> <p>♥ Retain them – continued engagement</p> <p>Increased productivity, profitability & global</p> <p>♥ Competitiveness</p> <p>⚡ How to measure</p> <p>Surrender of ‘ownership’</p> <p>Common goal (remove/reduce duplication)</p>
Key skills or background for PM?	<p>♥ Project Management</p> <p>♥ Benign dictatorship – effective leadership</p> <p>Audience engagement (eg. Micro businesses)</p> <p>Breadth of experience</p> <p>Marketing & communications</p> <p>♥ Stakeholder management</p> <p>Digital experience (in team doesn’t have to be PM)</p>
Who are their key stakeholders?	<p>Colleges & Universities</p> <p>Retailers & Supply Chain</p> <p>NFU & Trade bodies</p> <p>♥ Media</p> <p>Training providers</p>
To whom are their responsible?	<p>♥ Whoever owns and/or funds it</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>Quality assessment</p> <p>Delivers compliance requirements</p> <p>Government (DfE, Defra, BEIS)</p>
Lead?	AHDB

Asset Reviews

To help determine which organisation might be best placed to lead each element, delegates from targeted organisations were invited to share the assets they felt they could contribute. This asset review gave the key organisations the chance to describe the work they are doing and how they can contribute to the common goal of upskilling the industry and promoting the opportunities available via Agriskills Progress. This review (which the attendees had prepared) took the form for a 5 minute presentation from:

- AHDB
- NLBC
- NFU
- Brightcrop
- LANTRA

The floor was then opened to other attendees to provide detail on their own assets with regards to Agriskills Progress.

Copies of the Asset reviews can be obtained from Tess Howe at AHDB (tess.howe@ahdb.org.uk)

Overcoming the barriers to progress

After lunch, attendees worked in a facilitated exercise in two self-selecting groups. Whilst one group worked on identifying six STRENGTHS present in the community that would be important bases for success, the other group identified six reasons why the project might fail (ie the THREATS to the project)

This 'Forcefield' exercise is completed by analysing the strengths against the threats, and determining how the strengths can be drawn upon to negate the blocks or reasons for failure. This generates a series of 'enablers'; broad ways of working or commitments to action that will keep the project on track, maintain momentum, overcome obstacles and deliver success. These 'enablers' also influence actions that the community wishes to take, having determined them from an analysis of the wider strategic picture.

The STRENGTHS of the community as identified by attendees were:

1. Existing collaborations
2. Foundations already in place
3. The timing is right
4. Industrial demand is high (and Brexit)
5. Good access to resources and the user community
6. We will have a co-ordinated funding bid

And the six threats or reasons for potential failure:

1. Overambitious scope
2. Communication challenges
3. Lack of funding
4. Competition and vested interests between participants
5. Prevailing Industry culture leading to;
6. Why bother?

'Enablers'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increase levy to NFU, CLA, AHDB to pay for this type of project.- Use Government language in any bid application.- Be evangelistic. Become a champion of this project.- Inclusive approach needed – training needs to free at the point of delivery.- Timing is crucial – needs to be prioritised now to move quickly.- Timescale. Project Manager? Needs to be tangible. Business case needed.- Worth looking at other industry models and how other EU countries develop their skills sets.- Need to inject pace and leadership coupled with dynamic project management to deliver.- Interdependency – need to agree to deliver.- Farmer centric – consultation as pilot/plans develop (with user groups).- User group buy in essential.- Start small with a view to going big 'do a pilot'.- Advances in technology & brexit & opportunities.- Tight project management encompassing flexibility & realistic.- Everyone needs to sign up to AgriSkills.- Can build an outline plan to present a collaborative bid for funding.- Not about individual businesses it is about the <u>industry</u>- Add value – make easy. Collaborative partner's response – utilising and benefits are clear. FAB for collaborations.
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Action plans

The session closed with an action planning session, designed to identify key things to be done within the next week, the next two weeks and the next two months. These are captured in the image below:

Action	Who	Timescale
To produce photos and summary of day. Need to report back to each company/ organisation.	Nick Skinner	17 March 2017
Organise a smaller group to look at business case and bid submission.	AHDB	31 March 2017
Support Bob with communicating back to government what working party/AHDB have been doing.	Bob Webb	31 March 2017
Identify key points/questions that need end user input. NOT consultation.	AHDB	28 April 2017
Milestone timeline for project: - Milestone - each leader to create.	Lantra, NLBC, BrightCrop, AHDB	28 April 2017
Identify key influencers "Socialising the idea!"	NFU	28 April 2017
Commitment from each organisation to lead on certain aspects and acknowledgement of value to the organisation.	All	31 May 2017
Template covering what project would help with for each organisation.	AHDB	31 May 2017
Business case complete.	All	31 May 2017

Attendee list

Organisation	Name
Agri Food Charities Partnership	Debbie Beaton
Agri Food Technology Leadership Council	Bob Webb
Agriskills Forum/LKL Farming	Richard Longthorp
AHDB – BrightCrop	Katie Garner
AHDB – External Skills development	Tess Howe
AHDB CEO	Jane King
Arable Farmer	Paul Temple
Bishop Burton College	Rhonda Thompson
Branston	Simon Telfer
Defra	Roland Evans
Edge / Anglia Farmers	Richard Self
G's Fresh	Beverly Dixon
G's Fresh	Derek Wilkinson
Institute of Agricultural Management	Richard Cooksley
LANDEX	Chris Moody
Lantra	Robert Tabor
National Farmers Union	Lee Osborne
National Federation of Young Farmer Clubs	Carly Goodridge-Smith
National Federation of Young Farmer Clubs	Sarah Palmer
National Land Based College	Leigh Morris
National Land Based College	Luke Harmer
R N Padfield & Sons Ltd	Chris Padfield
Velcourt	Nick Shorter