



HCP Annual Report 2026



Report from the Chief Executive Officer



I am delighted to report on our third year of operations at Horticulture Crop Protection Ltd (HCP Ltd). The success of our business is attributable to the continued support of the 29 crop associations that make up our membership, as well as the loyalty and dedication of the HCP Ltd team. Despite being a small organisation, we are fortunate to have a highly skilled group of experts in the field of crop protection. Their work is critical, and British horticulture would struggle to function without the steady stream of plant protection approvals they deliver.

In the year ending March 2026, we secured a total of 67 Minor Use Authorisations for British horticulture. Of these, 11 were Emergency Authorisations and 56 were Extensions of Authorisation for Minor Use (EAMUs). The team currently has 73 live applications with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and we expect decisions on these throughout 2026 and 2027.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the HCP Ltd Board of Directors, who represent a broad cross-section of British horticulture. They play a vital role as advocates for HCP Ltd within their crop associations and across the wider industry. I am personally grateful for their continued support and guidance, particularly Ali Capper, our Chair, and Jack Ward, our Company Secretary. In 2025, we were also pleased to welcome Stefan Atanasov of Coletta & Tyson to the Board, representing the interests of the British ornamental sector.



As a voluntary-funded organisation, it is vital that we retain the confidence and support of our member crop associations. I am therefore pleased to report that, in our third year, all member subscriptions were paid in full. We continue to publish our financial metrics, demonstrating strong cost control while recognising the significant margin pressures facing our sector.

We have also continued to strengthen relationships with our wider stakeholders, including the HSE, agri-chemical manufacturers, distributors, and sector agronomists. This engagement is maintained through regular meetings, as well as attendance at conferences, trade shows, and industry events throughout the year. I was honoured to be invited to speak at several such events and would like to thank the crop associations that provided these opportunities.

It is encouraging to see our member associations making use of the AHDB surplus fund. At the time of writing, a total of £365,000 has been allocated or spent on relevant projects.

Looking ahead to our fourth year, the most significant challenge we face is the implementation of EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) alignment, expected to come into force in summer 2027. At the time of writing, we anticipate further details regarding implementation in the Autumn.

To support our members in preparing for these changes, we have commissioned a horticulture-focused impact report to inform DEFRA negotiators. In addition, we have produced a detailed crop protection “gap” analysis for all members and are developing comparative analysis of GB versus EU Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). I represent HCP Ltd on the DEFRA SPS Pesticide Working Group and meet quarterly with DEFRA as part of the Horticulture Experts Group, which is contributing to the development of the sector plan under the Food and Farming Board.

Finally, I would like to thank all growers and the crop associations that represent them for the continued support they have shown to both myself and the HCP Ltd team. Our purpose remains clear: to support a commercially sustainable future for British horticulture by enabling crops to be grown in increasingly challenging conditions—not only economic, but also environmental, as climate change drives more volatile and unpredictable weather patterns. The team and I look forward to another successful year and to continuing our engagement with member associations throughout 2026/27.



Reflections from the Chairman



HCP Ltd is a lean, focused and highly effective organisation that continues to deliver excellent results for its grower and Crop Association members. I would like to echo Simon’s thanks to the Board, whose members represent the many different sectors of British horticulture and who all work hard on growers’ behalf to ensure HCP Ltd is delivering what their crops associations and businesses need. We were pleased to welcome Stefan Atanasov of Coletta & Tyson to the Board in 2025, bringing a strong ornamental sector voice to our discussions.

The retail landscape remains highly competitive, and we continue to be alert to the effect that MRL lists and retailer “red lists” can have on a grower’s ability to supply more than one customer cost-effectively. This is a subject we discuss regularly with retailers, guided by our Crop Association members, and it sits at the heart of why consistent, evidence-based crop protection policy matters so much to our sector.



The most significant issue on the political landscape this year has been the progress of the UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement. Alignment with EU crop protection rules, expected to come into force in summer 2027, has the potential to reshape how British growers access plant protection products for years to come. Handled well, closer alignment, over a sensible transition period, could ease access to the wider range of actives used by the EU growers we compete against, and speed the flow of new EAMUs that follow them to market. Handled badly, it risks locking British Horticulture into rules set without our sector’s needs in mind and creating yet more competitive disadvantage with European growers. That is why HCP Ltd has taken such an active role: representing HCP Ltd on the Defra SPS Pesticide Working Group, meeting quarterly with Defra through the Horticulture Experts Group that is feeding into the sector plan under the Food and Farming Board, commissioning an independent impact report to inform Defra’s negotiators, and building a detailed crop protection “gap” analysis and GB-versus-EU MRL comparison for our members. This is exactly the kind of evidence-led advocacy our Crop Associations set HCP Ltd up to provide, and we intend to stay at the centre of the process as the detail of implementation becomes clearer through the rest of 2026.

Alongside SPS, the continuing reduction in plant protection products available to growers remains

our most pressing underlying concern. Active substances are being lost to regulatory review faster than conventional chemistry is being approved to replace them, and in several crop sectors we remain dependent on repeat Emergency Authorisations simply to grow a commercially viable crop each year. Biological alternatives are improving, and the National Action Plan for sustainable pesticide use rightly continues to prioritise Integrated Pest Management and a faster route to market for biopesticides, but the pace of that transition has not yet caught up with the pace of active substance loss. Closing that gap, for both chemical and biological products, has to remain a shared priority for HCP Ltd, Defra and the regulator if British growers are to keep the tools they need against pests, weeds and disease.

Finally, I must thank Simon Conway, our CEO, and the whole HCP Ltd team for another year of professional, agile and responsive work on growers’ behalf. If you are reading this and wondering how you, as a grower, can get involved, please speak to your Crop Association and offer to join their technical committee. And if you have any questions for Simon or I about the history of the organisation, its governance or the work of the team, please do get in touch at info@hcpltd.org.



HCP Key Moments - April 2024 to March 2025



April
HCP meet with Claire Donkin to discuss ongoing plans for asparagus.



May
Team visit Cobrey Farms for their annual away day.



June
HCP attend the HTA plant show .



July
HCP visit Fruit Focus in Kent and meet with growers, agronomists and researchers.



August
Sandy visits Barfoots to discuss crop protection needs for sweetcorn.



January
Carlos and Simon attend the FAST conference.



February
Kim presents at the British Leeks Technical Day.



March
Grace presents at the Tomato technical meeting held at Warwick Crop Centre.



September
Carlos presents update at the British Berry Growers technical day.



October
HCP take part in the 10th MUCF conference held in Munich.



November
Kim and HCP Board member Rob parker participate in BCPC conference in Harrogate.



December
Jo produces gap analysis of the impacts in GB of active substance losses on horticulture.



Balance Sheet Breakdown

	£ 2025/2026	£ 2024/2025	Description
Tangible Assets	1,656	5,645	Office equipment
Intangible Assets	0	5,007	Website
Debtors	83,298	20,184	Monies owed at Year End
Cash at Bank	1,068,796	965,837	Consistent Cashflow AHDB Grant Distribution ongoing
Creditors	7,240	19,984	Monies owing at Year End

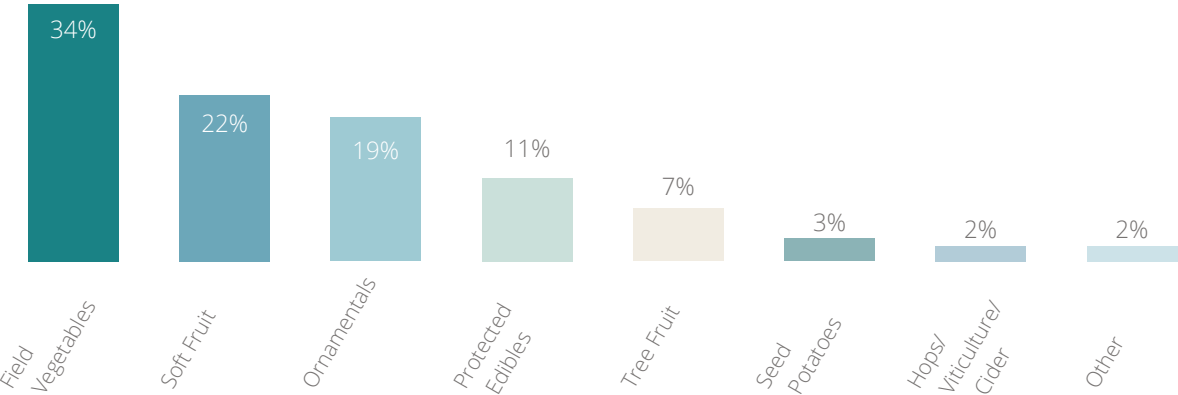


2025-2026: Facts & Figures

	2025-2026 (Actual)	2024/2025 (Actual)	2023/2024 (Actual)
EAMUs (authorised)	56	46	49
EAs (authorised)	11	17	18
Trials	11	3	2
Success Rate for applications	EAMUs 98.1% EAs 92.3%	EAMUs 100% EAs 100%	EAMUs 89.6% EAs 100%
Agchem Company Contributions	£70,961	£29,942	£37,955
AHDB Grant income	£213,323.70	£515,000	£672,500
Costs as a % of income	93%	97%	102%
Costs per CRD application	£5,494*	£4,650	£5,350

* Now includes all indirect employee costs

Contributions By Sector 2025-2026



Meet the Team



Simon Conway, CEO

Simon Conway is HCP Ltd's part time CEO. Simon comes from a family farming background and has worked within the fresh produce and horticulture sector for 35 years. He holds a masters in business administration. During his long career with Vitacress Ltd, he was commercial director and then managing director of Vitacress Herbs Ltd. Most recently, he was managing director of Vitacress Salads Ltd, which grows open field, leafy salads, spinach, watercress and herbs at farming locations in southern England as well as in Portugal and Spain. Simon was vice chairman of West Sussex Growers association for four years and is a business mentor for Flourish in Food. He is chair of British Tomatoes and a Board member of Veg power CIC

Simon can be reached at simon.conway@hcpltd.org



Ornamentals
British Christmas Tree Growers Association
British Ornamentals Association
Cut Flowers
Narcissus
Horticulture Trades Association
Forest nursery (HTA Tree & Hedging)
Wine GB
The British Hops Association

Joanna McTigue, Crop Protection Scientist

Jo is a crop protection scientist and focuses on ornamental crops, grapes and hops. Jo also specialises in worker exposure risk assessment and manages the crop association risk registers to ensure that the main priorities are recognised for each crop sector.

Jo champions biopesticides within the HCP Ltd team. She has a PhD and research background in viral and fungal control of lepidopteran pests and works to ensure that a greater range of biological products become available to growers. Jo has experience of contract research; conducting, and then managing, efficacy field trials, and compiling reports and biological assessment dossiers to support product registrations.

Jo can be reached at joanna.mctigue@hcpltd.org



Tree Fruit
British Apples and Pears
British Stone fruit

Soft Fruit
Blackcurrants
British Berry Growers

Carlos Duarte, Crop Protection Scientist

Carlos is a crop protection scientist at HCP Ltd. He has a degree in plant pathology and a master's degree in engineering, agronomy and agricultural engineering. Carlos has a farming background and is a data management specialist. At HCP Ltd he focuses on soft fruit and tree fruit crop protection issues.

Carlos can be reached at carlos.duarte@hcpltd.org



Protected veg
British Herbs
British Leafy Salads Association
Cucumber & Pepper Growers Association
Tomato Growers Association
Mushroom Growers Association

Grace Emeny, Crop Protection Scientist

Grace is a crop protection scientist at HCP Ltd. She has over 10 years' experience in horticulture scientific research with a zoology undergraduate degree and MRes degree in biology. Grace works alongside growers and liaises with researchers and plant protection product companies to bring new crop protection solutions to growers. At HCP Ltd she is responsible for working with protected vining crops, protected leafy salad and herbs and mushrooms

Grace can be reached at grace.emeny@hcpltd.org



Field veg – brassicas, roots, alliums and leafy
Brassica Growers Association
British Carrot Growers Association
British Onions Producers Association
Red Beet Growers Association
Leek Growers Association
Celeriac
Plant Propagators Limited
Seed Potato Organisation (NEW)

Kim Parker, Crop Protection Scientist

Kim Parker is a crop protection scientist at HCP Ltd. She has 25 years' experience in UK horticulture. She has specialised in minor-use plant protection product regulation since 2021 and has responsibility in the HCP Ltd Team for field vegetables (including outdoor leafy salads and herbs).

As well as EAMUs, Kim is experienced in coordinating Emergency Authorisation applications, efficacy trials and residue studies for HCP and also leads on seed treatment issues.

With a PhD in plant pathology, Kim worked for ADAS from 2000 conducting applied research on crop diseases, with a focus on field vegetables and protected edibles, before joining AHDB in 2016 as a research manager and crop protection scientist.

Kim can be reached at kim.parker@hcpltd.org



Field crops (stem and speciality)
Minor Crop Group
Asparagus Growers Association
Outdoor Cucurbits Growers Association
Pea and Bean Growers Association
Sweetcorn Growers Association
Rhubarb Growers Association
Fennel
Celery

Sandra Hey, Crop Protection Scientist

Sandy is a crop protection scientist at HCP Ltd. She has an extensive background in crop research, having spent over 15 years at Long Ashton Research Station and Rothamsted Research.

Much of that time was spent working in arable crops research, on both wheat and oilseeds, so at HCP Ltd she has responsibility for minor cereals and oilseeds in addition to fresh legumes, speciality, and stem vegetable crops, including asparagus, celery, rhubarb and sweetcorn.

Sandy has also worked extensively in seed research, including 3 years at UPL Ltd heading their seed laboratory. Sandy therefore also supports HCP Ltd's seed treatment specialist, Kim Parker.

Sandra can be reached at Sandra.Hey@hcpltd.org



Lindsey Daniel, Team Coordinator

Lindsey has worked in crop protection for more than six years and acts as the HCP Ltd team coordinator. She leads on website communications for growers and agronomists.

Lindsey can be reached at lindsey.daniel@hcpltd.org



Meet the Directors



Ali Capper – Stocks Farm – HCP Ltd Chairman

In partnership at Stocks Farm, Suckley, Worcestershire UK with her husband Richard and his father Mark, the Cappers specialise in growing hops and apples. They farm dessert and cider apples and hops.

Ali's former career was in advertising and marketing. Today, in addition to numerous roles at the farm, her work includes membership of the boards of the Oxford Farming Conference, and formerly the British Hop Association, the NFU's National Horticulture & Potatoes Board and Wye Hops Ltd. Ali is executive chair of British Apples & Pears Ltd, a Nuffield Scholar and a non-executive director for NFU Mutual.



Jack Ward – Company Secretary

Jack is a director and former Chief Executive of the British Growers Association, a grower owned, and grower-controlled cooperative which facilitates 40 organisations operating across UK horticulture.

He works extensively on behalf of the sector on the issues of the day. He is on the board of trustees of Processors and Growers Research Organisation and a member of the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers.

Prior to joining British Growers, Jack was CEO of City & Guilds NPTC providing vocational qualifications for the land-based industries. He also held several posts with the NFU, including regional director for the East Midlands. He is a Nuffield Scholar and went on to chair the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust.

He is a former director of the Oxford Farming Conference and became a fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 2014.



Robert James – Technical Director, Thanet Earth

Robert James has been with Thanet Earth since its inception in 2008, playing a key role as part of the leadership team. Over the years, he has been instrumental in the development of the site into one of the UK's most advanced and fully operational greenhouse complexes.



Rob Parker – G's

During the past 20 years Rob has moved up through the lettuce and farming team and now holds the positions of Growing Director for G's Growers Ltd and G's Growers Nurseries managing director. Rob has been the British Leafy Salads chairman for the past seven years and sits on both the British Leafy Salads Association and Plant Propagators Limited R&D panels.



Sam Rix – P.G. Rix Farms

Sam is a director of Rix Farms and Stourgarden Ltd. An onion specialist with 14 years of agronomy experience, he is the current British Onions R&D chairman and has previously served two terms on the AHDB Field Vegetable Panel.



Stefan Atanasov – Coletta & Tyson Ltd

Stefan Atanasov began his horticulture career in 2009 after relocating to the UK from Bulgaria, where he had developed strong experience in plan production and operational management.

In 2019, he joined Coletta & Tyson Ltd. As Technical Manager, further advancing his knowledge in Ornamental plant production and contributing to the company's ongoing technical and operational progress.



Dr Louise Sutherland – British Berry Growers

Louise is chair of the British Berry Growers R&D board. She is also director of Ceres Agri-tech at Cambridge Enterprise, the commercialisation arm of the University of Cambridge. Ceres Agri-tech translates plant agritech innovations from university lab benches to farmers' fields. She has a PhD in Plant Pathology.



Derek Wilkinson – Sandfields Farms Ltd

Derek is based in Warwickshire and is managing director and a shareholder of Sandfields Farms Ltd (part of The Shropshire Group). Sandfields Farms, which was set up in 2007, is a farming business growing over 1500ha of salads and vegetables for the major retailers, and employing more than 800 staff across Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Kent.



Stephen Shields – Technical and Sustainability Director Huntapac

Stephen Shields is Huntapac's Technical and Sustainability Director and has worked within the food industry for the last 30+years, notably within Huntapac Produce for the last 19 years. Stephen heads up the technical division at Huntapac with the additional responsibility of ensuring the business meets its sustainability ambitions.



Tim Lacey - Consultant

Having grown up on a hill farm in south-west Scotland, Tim has been involved in agriculture all his life. Undergraduate studies in Conservation Management and Environmental Science at the University of Stirling led to graduate work in research at Syngenta's renowned Jealott's Hill site before embarking on a PhD in irrigation on carrots at Cranfield University.

He is delighted to be able to bring his wide expertise to help support the Horticulture Crop Protection board since its inception two years ago.

Crop Protection GB Horticulture: Future Plans



- Work collaboratively with Defra, stakeholders and grower associations to deliver a robust, frictionless Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) transition, securing critical crop protection tools with an aim to establishing a level playing field with our EU counterparts. The key goal is to protect the competitiveness, resilience, and long-term food security of British horticulture



- Continue to develop digital capability to maximise process efficiency
- Horizon scan for both future crop protection challenges and novel solutions
- Collaborate with stakeholders to streamline the EAMU and EA application process



- Work with Crop Associations to ensure key priority areas are being identified through risk register updates
- Support and accelerate the transition to biological PPPs; a key target in the National Action Plan for sustainable pesticide use





Thank you

To all our members who have helped support our work during 2025/26,
our work wouldn't be possible without you.

We are grateful to our wide range of extended stakeholders...



British Stone Fruits Limited / Mushroom Growers Association / Outdoor Cucurbits Growers Association
Plant Propagators Ltd / Beetroot Growers Association / Rhubarb Growers Association
Sweetcorn Growers Association / Minor Crops Group / Celeriac & Fennel Growers Association