



Meeting 12 December 2017
CROP, Flakkebjerg – Department of Agroecology

MINUTES

Chairman: Per Kudsk

Minutes: Kirsten Jensen

Part 1: Presentation of prosulfocarb project by Peter Kryger Jensen

Part 2:

General information

- Staff Development Dialogues (SDD; Danish abbreviation: MUS) and GroupSDD (Danish abbreviation: GRUS) / Per Kudsk and Johannes Ravn Jørgensen

The yearly SDD will be in a changed format in comparison with last year's SDD. The form to be filled in before last year's SDD was criticised for having too many questions and for being a statistical tool focusing on performance, especially for VIP, and for being a managerial tool. Following an evaluation the form will be changed. The number of questions in the new form has been reduced, and they will focus on development (see also the Department of Agroecology newsletter from 20 November 2017). A Group SDD will be held before the individual SDDs to talk about common challenges; there will be a Group SDD for each of the groups of employees, for instance one for the lab technicians. Per Kudsk will make a plan for the dialogues; the Group SDDs will probably take place in February and hopefully Erik Steen Kristensen will attend. The individual SDDs will be led by Per Kudsk. Holding SDDs should more or less be finished in May, and the process should end with a final discussion summing up the results.

Sabine Ravnskov asked whether it would be possible not to answer questions. Johannes does not know whether it will be possible or not. Per Kudsk added that the number of questions had been reduced as many were felt to be relevant to a small group only. Those left are of a more general character. This year there will be more open questions. Mette Sønderkov added that last year if you found that a question was not relevant, you gave an answer with a value "in the middle"; this would influence the final result. Therefore some guidance would be necessary.

A new feature is a "spider web" where you have to score how you feel about your personal competences, for instance ability of cooperation, etc.

- Tenure track / Per Kudsk

A tenure track position in plant pathology has been announced. This type of position is a result of being part of the university. It guarantees employment for 6 years if the person hired fulfil a set of pre-determined criteria.

The AU management views the tenure track system as a good way of attracting talents from outside. Within the management team we feel the tenure track system does not meet our need to employ scientists who can contribute to the many policy support tasks we have at AGRO. The department has taken up this issue with the rector, the dean and the vice-dean for research, including also recognising the relevance and significance of research programmes where the department can attract grants, for instance Horizon 2020.

For the first tenure track position there was a large number of applications; 4 were invited for an interview and the position has now been offered to one of these. Because of the procedure, the process has taken very long.

Sabine Ravnskov asked about the reason for both a tenure track position and professorship position with plant pathology at the same time. Per Kudsk replied that it was part of the job hiring plan that Erik Steen Kristensen made a long time ago and which has been approved by the dean. Concerning positions as a professor with special responsibilities (= professor mso) these positions are limited to 5 years with the possibility of extending them by another 3 years more or less automatically. Some of the current positions are close to ending and will also need to be re-announced.

- Finance / Per Kudsk

Overall, the department's finances are looking very well. The dean would like the budget to end in "0" and that was how it looked to end some months ago. However, a number of researchers have asked for

permission to postpone some activities to 2018. This means that the department will have a deficit in 2017; most of these activities concern Foulum due to lack of staff. This means that anyone who was allowed to spend additional money in 2017 could wait to spend that money until next year. – To avoid a similar situation in 2018, it is important that Erik Steen Kristensen is informed as early as possible of any transfer of money to the following year. It is very difficult to do something if this happens as late as October or November.

- Pesticide strategy/ Per Kudsk

A new pesticide strategy was agreed upon in the Danish parliament, and this means that we can now finalise our contract with the Danish EPA. We are also involved in the evaluation of the impact of the pesticide tax on pesticide use and load. This evaluation will be used to decide whether to continue or discontinue the pesticide tax. That work is being led by Jens Erik Ørum (University of Copenhagen) together with Lise Nistrup Jørgensen and Per Kudsk. The agricultural industry is against the tax, whereas many politicians find that the pesticide tax has served its purpose.

Also as part of the pesticide strategy, an IPM task force has been set up. This is supposed within 3 months to look into the possibilities of promoting IPM in Denmark. There will be a partnership with all stakeholders. Per Kudsk represents AU.

The pesticide strategy contains 3 very specific measures:

1. Requirement to use low-drift nozzles when applying prosulfocarb
2. Ban of use of glyphosate pre-harvest for crops intended for human consumption
3. Re-monitoring of herbicide resistance, which was done by Solvejg K. Mathiassen last year, will be repeated in 2020

- Contracts

The department has 1 large contract with the Ministry of Environment and Food and 1 small contract with the Danish EPA. Much of the work done in conjunction with the pesticide strategy is done as part of the contract with the Danish EPA. – As mentioned previously this contract is currently being re-negotiated; the old contract was for 2016-2017, whereas the new contract will be for 4 years. It looks as if it will be similar to the current contract, and it ensures that the department will get an income from policy support and efficacy evaluations. The EPA seems generally to be satisfied with the contract with the department.

- Use of laboratory equipment / Hanne Birgitte Christiansen

There have been some incidents in the laboratory in which PhD students during weekends have been instructed on how to use various instruments by other PhD students who don't know the correct procedures. As a result the equipment/the laboratory was not in correct order when the lab technicians returned on Monday mornings. Therefore the lab technicians have set out some rules and also put "stop" signs on some of the equipment meaning that you are not allowed to use a certain piece of equipment or area until you have had proper instruction from the laboratory technicians. – Per Kudsk asked the PhD students present to inform the other PhD students.

- Applications / Per Kudsk

Per Kudsk has sent around an email with an Excel sheet attached concerning research applications and requested that it should be completed. Concerning major grant suppliers such as Horizon 2020 and the Innovation Fund Denmark, the department would like to know about all activities as there may also be a need for support and/or co-funding. For minor applications like GUDP a complete list is not needed. – The department will then make a list of all the activities involving for instance Horizon 2020 and Innovation Fund Denmark, among other things to see if several groups are involved in similar applications.

The concept for applications for Innovation Fund Denmark has changed a little. There is now one phase procedure, meaning a full proposal in February. However, there will be two calls in 2018 (meaning one more in August).

- Other issues

The next section meeting will be shortly after the Group SDDs.

Gabor Lövei pointed out that it was highly unsatisfactory that information about an issue, which has been raised in the press concerning the work permit of non-EU citizens, was only sent out by AU in Danish. It should have been in English as well. The issue raised was that as a non-EU citizen you are not allowed to do any kind of work or give a presentation or similar, even without payment, other than as stated in your work permit. Otherwise you may be fined. It is possible to apply for an exemption but this seems to be a very

bureaucratic procedure. PS: this issue was also mentioned (in Danish and English) in the AU newsletter 34 published on 17 November.