



Research and Development for the Arable Sector

Sinclair Mayne

Third Annual Arable Conference - Tuesday 13 January, 2015



AFBI Overview

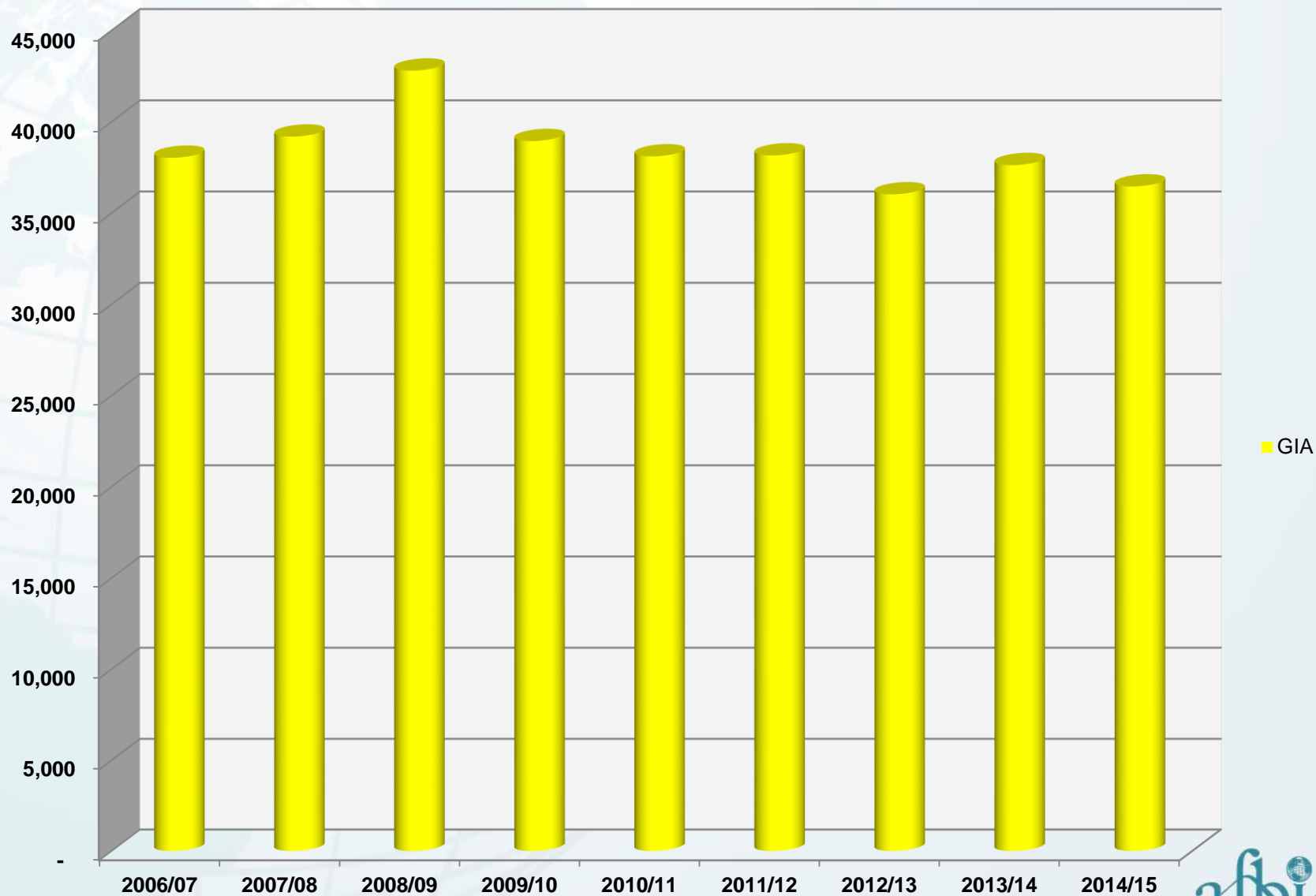
- AFBI formed as an NDPB, sponsored by DARD, on 1 April 2006
- Amalgamation of DARD Science Service and Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland (ARINI Hillsborough)
- Customer/contractor relationship with DARD
 - AFBI undertakes a programme of work commissioned by DARD and funded via grant-in-aid.
- AFBI also undertakes work for a wide range of public and private sector organisations
 - **now accounts for 34% of total AFBI income**
- Significant budget pressures in recent years
 - No new research commissioned by DARD in 2014/15

Overview of Key Activities

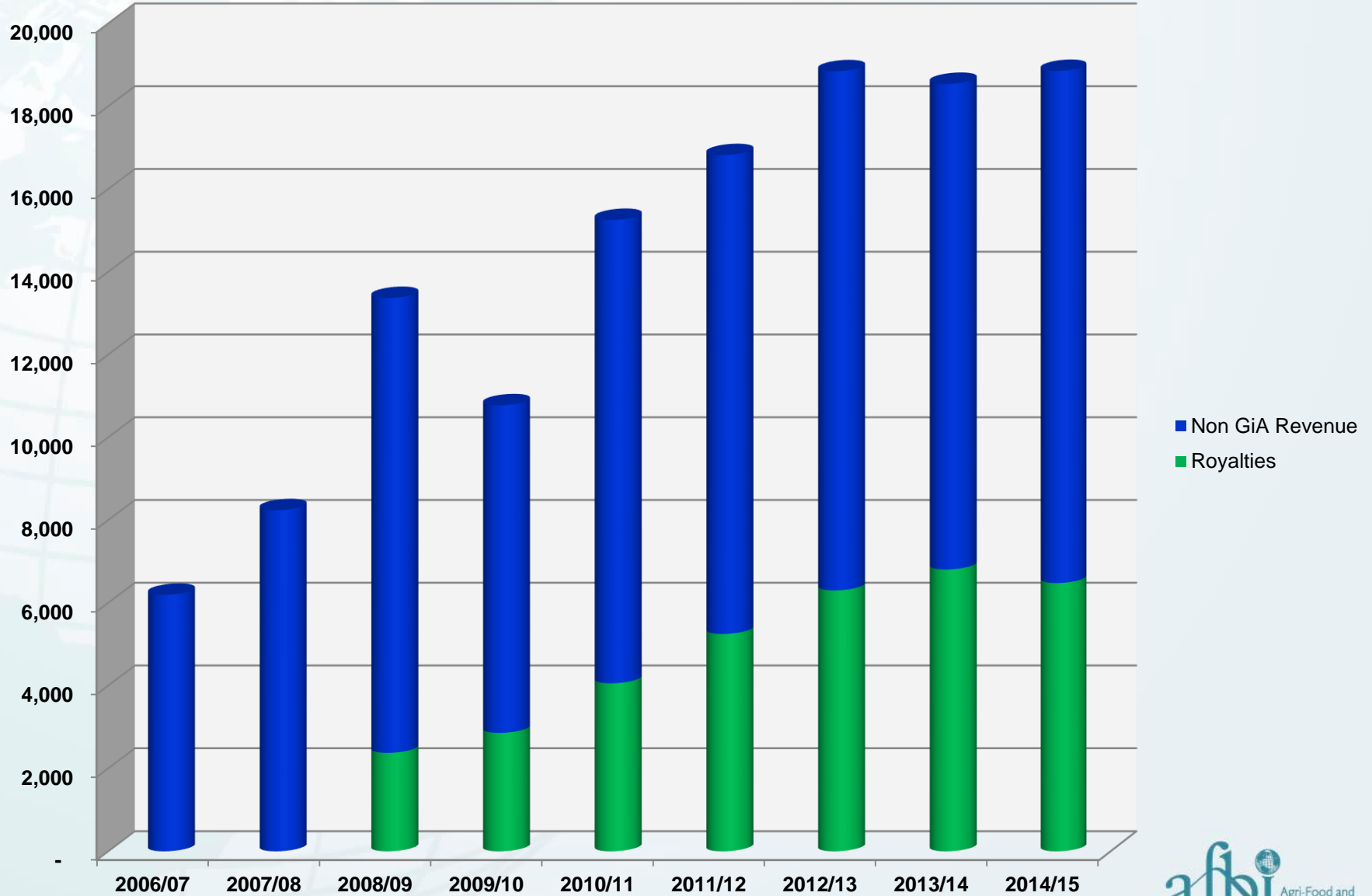
- Statutory/regulatory/diagnostic
 - Animal, plant, tree and fish health
 - Seed testing/certification
 - Food testing
- Monitoring
 - Fish stocks - marine and freshwater
 - Aquatic, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems
- Research and development
 - Research to address policy and industry knowledge gaps
 - to inform policy development
 - improve industry competitiveness and stimulate innovation.
- Specialist advice and emergency response to government & industry
- Communicating results and achieving impact
 - Informing policy development
 - Improving industry competitiveness through knowledge exchange



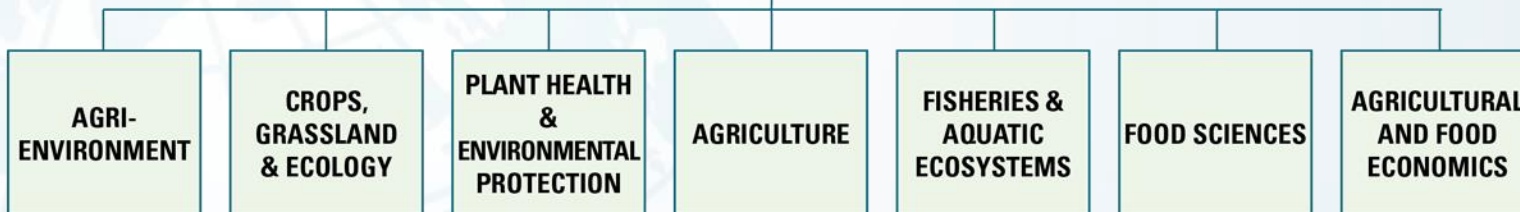
DARD Grant in Aid 2006/07 to 2014/15



AFBI Non-GIA Income 2006/07 to 2014/15



Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division



Current Arable Research Programme

- Previous presentation has highlighted the importance of the current scientific programme on arable crops within AFBI
 - Recommended and National List Testing
 - Plant health diagnostics and testing
 - Research and development on:

Soil structure and management

Nutrient management

Plant health

Crop agronomy

Livestock feed value



Future Challenges

- Current DARD Budget Proposals indicate a £3m cut in AFBI's baseline for 15/16, and AFBI asked to achieve a further £2M increase in non GIA income.
- AFBI has to work within the budget provided by DARD and therefore:
 - A number of areas of current activity will have to cease;
 - Discussions with DARD are ongoing to determine which areas of work will no longer be commissioned
- AFBI has highlighted:
 - Importance of Recommended List and National List testing of arable crop varieties;
 - Critical need for local research and development to support the competitiveness of the NI arable sector.

Options

- Cost Reduction
 - reduce scale of programme - recommended lists and R&D
 - reduce operational costs - more on farm trials?
- Increase Industry contribution
 - Significant industry contribution via HGCA currently
 - Scope for other charges?

All options are being explored at present in discussions with DARD, particularly option of further developing the current links with Teagasc in ROI, SRUC in Scotland and other research providers in England and Wales.

Summary

- Current scientific programme on arable crops at AFBI has a key role in supporting the competitiveness of the local arable sector
- DARD funding for the current arable programme at AFBI is approximately £2.5m per annum
- Proposed reductions in DARD funding for AFBI will impact on the current arable programme
- Options currently being considered include:
 - Cost reduction ie cease some/all of the current programmes and develop lower cost models of delivery
 - Increased contribution from industry

Input from industry in consideration of options is critical