

The logo for the CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER. It features the text 'CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019' in white on a black background, followed by 'GOLD WINNER' in large, multi-colored letters (pink, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple).

**Category:** Best Publication

**Company:** British Sugar Agriculture

**Entry title:** Sowing success: British Sugar Beet Review

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**Brief and objectives:**

British Sugar is the UK's sole processor of sugar beet, partnering with 3,000 growers to produce homegrown sugar and supplying around half of the UK's demand for sugar.

The British Beet Research Organisation (BBRO) is home to the UK's sugar beet research scientists and is funded annually to the sum of £2 million – equally funded by British Sugar and the growers.

The British beet sugar industry's magazine 'British Sugar Beet Review' is steeped in history, with editions dating back to 1930. The publication is a joint venture between British Sugar and BBRO.

Published three times a year, British Sugar Beet Review is the sole publication dedicated to the growing of sugar beet in the UK. In eight decades, the publication has seen very little change in its editorial style.

Brief:

- Significantly transform the publication into a relevant, fit-for-purpose journal that delivers timely, reliable information to 3,000 British sugar beet growers and industry partners.

Objectives:

- Create a new identity and folio for the British Sugar Beet Review that generates appeal to its readers
- Implement a new style guide to embed consistency of writing style and form across all editorial content, transforming very technical content into easily digestible and reliable editorial
- Align editorial content to the annual sugar beet growing cycle, signposting relevant technical information to sugar beet growers at the right time
- Signpost growers to the advice and guidance of the UK's sugar beet scientists through easily-understandable, timely, well-illustrated articles

- Ensure strategic planning principles are applied to drive relevant content at the right time of year
- Introduce efficiency savings through the sourcing of a new third-party supplier
- Support both organisation's drive to reducing plastic use.

### **The idea, research and planning:**

The new editor of the publication originated the idea of rewriting the history books, putting fresh eyes on the publication and adopting a 'no stone unturned' approach to delivering a powerful, new-style.

We commissioned analysis of British sugar beet growers to understand their attitudes towards communications and scientific knowledge exchange.

Consultation was carried out with growers, agronomists (crop doctors), British Sugar and BBRO colleagues, and existing editorial consultants.

The editor researched other arable crop publications to understand their formats, house styles, content and target audiences.

Feedback showed there was a need for both scientists and growers alike to view previous edition's content, so the need for an online search facility was required.

### **Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:**

We carried out the following:

- Commissioned a design agency to prepare three design proofs with attention to typeface, font size, imagery, tables, colours and columns
- Carefully mapped key functions and agronomic elements of the annual sugar beet growing cycle
- Sourced a new printing supplier to challenge previous printing costs whilst supporting our vision for a single supplier to print, fulfil and mail the publication
- Identified a supplier of a compostable corn-starch wrap to replace non-recyclable poly-wrap
- Produced mock-ups of different paper stocks to aid decision-making on bind and finish
- Introduced segmentation to better signpost readers through the publication, placing content into headings: industry, features, agronomy, BBRO (science), factories, profiles
- Introduced a professional flat-plan to assist structure.

### **Delivery:**

- A formal, structured monthly planning process was introduced that focuses on the forthcoming edition, future editions, and review previous edition
- Flat-plans become bedrock of strategic planning process to map edition content and treatments
- An initial two-year schedule was created to allow contributors, photographers, advertisers, designers and printers to plan diaries
- The editor created a style guide following consultation with key partners
- Commissioning guides for writers and photographers were introduced to provide clear briefing mechanisms. The guides include copy deadlines, content briefs, agreed fees and a formal acknowledgement/sign off procedure.
- Held in-house writing training to help scientists transpose their scientific findings into easy-to-understand, well-signposted, relatable articles
- In-house filing structures and file naming conventions introduced to ensure strict version control, including final approval
- A network of contributors and PR practitioners was developed, sourced through recommendation, CIPR, and British Guild of Agricultural Journalists (BGAJ)
- Commissioning a professional agricultural-focused agency to manage advertising.

### **Measurement and evaluation, including engagement of target readers:**

- A BBRO communications survey, issued three weeks after the launch of the first new style edition, revealed that: (survey base of 605)
  - 36% of respondents (218) rated the publication as 'Excellent'
  - 54% of respondents (325) rated the publication as 'Good'
- On launch day of the first edition, we received a twitter endorsement from Farmers Weekly
- Streams of email and verbal endorsement from sugar beet growers – our favourite: "the best edition in the history of this publication"
- Results of a reader survey, issued three weeks after the third edition, shows:
  - 83% of respondents are 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' with the content
  - 78% of respondents have changed their on on-farm practices as a result of reading the publication
  - 65% of respondents say the publication is 'extremely helpful' and 'helpful' in providing timely advice and guidance
  - 60% of respondents 'strongly agree' and 'agree' the publication influences what they do on farm
- Positive feedback from senior management
- All growers with email invited to read publication online, with 43% accessing the online page-turn software.

### **Budget and campaign impact:**

In-house staffing:

- All strategic planning achieved in-house by the editor and BBRO's editorial consultant
- Tasking and co-ordination was delivered by an in-house team: one British Sugar colleague and one BBRO colleague

A budget was allocated for contributors (writers & photographers), design, printing, fulfilment and mailing. Costs were kept within budget.

Efficiency savings have been realised through the procurement of new third-party suppliers.