



## **What is the Network**

The UK NIR Grain Network is a group for people involved with the analysis of grain (barley, wheat, oilseed rape) who have common objectives of achieving accurate results from their NIR instruments and reducing the disagreement between analytical results within the grain industry. The Network provides a means towards achieving this and following ideals of good laboratory practice whilst reducing effort and cost by working together to achieve the common aims. Parameters covered are moisture for all 3 crops and nitrogen for barley, protein and hardness for wheat and oil for oilseed rape.

The Network exists for the members and is not part of a company, but contracts required work to appropriate organizations. It is also vital to work closely with instrument suppliers as certain aspects can only be achieved by the facilities and technology they offer in support of their instruments. A committee made up of appropriate individuals from member companies (companies currently represented include 5 malsters, 1 flour miller, 1 plant breeder and 6 grain merchants) controls how the Network operates.

### **Aims and objectives**

To supply members with:

- ✓ facilities that allow: instruments to be standardized to a common reference point just prior to harvest;
- ✓ to check calibration performance during harvest and have any appropriate updates made to all instruments;
- ✓ work with and provide data to instrument suppliers to update calibrations on an annual basis to incorporate newer varieties and enhance robustness and accuracy;
- ✓ provide samples on a regular basis to allow members to compare their instrument performance with that of others and reference analysis.

Supply a service that will help reduce disagreements in analytical results through out the grain industry and encourage good laboratory practices. By using common samples and sharing data provide the service cost effectively.

### **Membership**

There are 107 members, including major UK maltsters, of the Network (April 2004) in locations over a large part of the UK, ranging from Cornwall to Easter Ross, East Anglia to Merseyside and Northern Ireland.

The types of companies involved include plant breeders, grain merchants, farmers co-operatives, grain exporters, flour millers, malsters, brewers and agricultural research organizations.

Most members use the full facilities of the Network, but there are some, and likely to be more, that only participate in the monthly ring check scheme. These are now very large schemes with in excess of 100 taking part in the barley ring check.

The membership has grown each year since the Network started (1994) as have the facilities and commodities tested.

Many member companies assist the Network operation by supplying various grain samples that are required during the year.