

SUMMARY OF 69TH MEETING OF AHDB POTATO BOARD HELD ON 22ND JANUARY 2019

THE BOARD ROOM, AHDB, STONELEIGH PARK

PRESENT: Sophie Churchill (Chair), Reuben Collins, Philip Huggon, Dan Metheringham, Jonathan Papworth, Will Shakeshaft, Andrew Skea, Alistair Redpath,

APOLOGIES: Bill Quan, Mark Taylor, Michael Welham

IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Clayton (RC), Richard Laverick, Ken Boyns, Phil Bicknell (PB), Anna Farrell, Phil Hadley (PH), Rebecca Miah, Jon Knight, Sue Cleaver (Minutes), Martin Grantley-Smith

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, AND DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTERESTS

The Chair, Sophie Churchill, opened the meeting at 8:30am and welcomed those in attendance. Apologies were received from Bill Quan, Mark Taylor and Michael Welham.

MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13.11.2018

A change to the minutes from the previous meeting was requested. Subject to this amendment, the minutes from the 13th November 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING held on 13.11.2018

The Board discussed the issues surrounding CIPC. RC updated the Board on communications that have already taken place, and future communications that were in the pipeline ready to go live the minute a decision was announced. The Chair summarised that the message from the Board was that AHDB should be ready to answer questions regarding CIPC in a straightforward and clear manner.

RC updated the Board regarding Jagdeep Basi's work on electronic submission. The question posed by the Board was whether AHDB had a legal basis for moving to electronic compulsory submission. It has now been agreed to go for a digital by default approach, but to also keep the provision for print available for the moment.

The Board expressed concern regarding the horticulture petition and encouraged AHDB to resolve this as fast as possible.

SENSE CHECK ON ACTIVITIES – PHIL BICKNELL

PB introduced the Board to a sense check on activities that were taking place at AHDB. The starting point was the Activity Plan which captures all current activities, and was also used to ensure hypothecation within teams. All current activities were being considered carefully, to check whether they were still a good fit, for example, in terms of current strategy, sector priorities or levy payer impact. This was just the start of the process, and the list would be reviewed to pinpoint priorities. The aim was to free up space to focus resource on the things that make the biggest difference, resulting in a greater organisational focus and clarity, for staff, boards and industry. There would be a clearer narrative back to the industry on what we do and what we don't do, and a greater impact for focussed activity that delivers meaningful change.

The Board reflected on how they need to examine the priorities of the sector, and narrow down the key topics and priorities that they can get behind for the industry. The Chair summarised that the sense check process that Phil was describing would help reach a place of more clarity and focus. The

questions the Board should be asking are what are the big focus areas that will give good value for the levy?

CHAIR'S UPDATE – SOPHIE CHURCHILL

The Chair updated the Board regarding the Board member recruitment process. There had been strong applicants who would be announced once the offers had been officially accepted. The Board also noted that there would be a gap for a new Chair for the RKE Committee when Alistair came off the Board.

The Board discussed how to handle the conflict of interest with Mark Taylor's new role as Chair of FPSA. A note about lines of confidentiality and agenda items which MT would not participate in will be signed by both parties. The Chair will clear this approach within AHDB.

EXPORT PROPOSALS – PHIL HADLEY

PH summarised the export challenges that were discussed at the last Board meeting. On the back of those comments an exporter meeting had been held on 15th January. This was well represented, and there was willingness to engage and have dialogue from the stakeholders which was welcomed and appreciated. The general discussions focussed on the future going forward around communication and direct exchange; support for Potato Europe and Fruit Logistica; less support for Fruit Logistica Asia; improving the connection between AHDB and SASA; increasing AHDB's support in overseas discussions and also inward missions to the UK from government organisations. There was a comment by BPTA that AHDB should be more present for media enquiries.

Following this meeting, PH had put together a 7 point plan which he outlined to the Board. This included working with MI to develop a potential communication tool – a monthly summary to key players on what has been happening and what is on the schedule; increased direct contact with individual stakeholders to shape activities; a link with BPTA; some interest in producing an overseas market intelligence report; and a discussion of which events to attend.

There was good support for Fruit Logistica and Potato Europe. The question to consider was whether it would be better to focus on doing two events really well, rather than attending lots of events with a smaller presence. Andrew Skea had agreed to join the event planning group. It was noted that if Horticulture pulled out there would be an impact. This would need to be monitored closely to determine whether Potatoes could and should pick up the shortfall.

Everyone had been in agreement on the maintenance market, and PH would work with SASA to focus on Egypt, Morocco, The Canaries, Thailand and Israel. When it came to exploring new markets, there was a consensus that this needs to be stakeholder led but will be controversial. The next meeting would piggy back on a meeting that was already being attended – the SASA end of season session in May 2019.

The Chair, Alistair Redpath and Andrew Skea had also attended the meeting, and all felt it had been generally positive and constructive.

FINANCE AND LEVY

RC gave an update on finance and levy. The Board were invited to take part in Helen Walker's survey to give feedback on format of the management account reports.

The Chair summarised that the expected variance to plan was much better, and a great step forward. The Board were encouraged to respond to the finance survey.

DIRECTORS AND OPERATIONAL REPORT

RC clarified the reasons behind the KPIs that were amber and red. The Board questioned whether a KPI of opening up 3 to 4 export markets a year was unrealistically ambitious. Although the Board welcomed the clearer formatting of the operational report, it was still considered a difficult document to navigate and understand. The content of the document was now subject to an internal audit, in order

to clarify issues such as linking evidence to progress, linking both to the KPIs and the percentage completed within the year.

Farmbench KPIs were discussed. The Board suggested that a useful marker of the success of Farmbench was whether growers came back year on year to use it. That would be proof of a concept that is delivering. Not all growers would see a very marked increase in productivity, for example if they were already adopting the majority of the potential margin savings (cultivation work, bio fumigation work, soil amendments, energy use etc).

CONSUMER PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT APPROVED INFLUENCER WORK - REBECCA MIAH

Rebecca Miah and Anna Farrell presented Consumer Proposals to support approved influencer work. This detailed a strategy which winds 3 intrinsically linked pillars together to create opportunities for the sector, be impactful and focussed enough to cut-through. The Board was asked to consider whether there would be an industry appetite for them. The strategy would be to create a potatoes “trend” dish (akin to pulled pork). This singular focus would allow AHDB to create relevance for potatoes, give greater stretch and cut through to the budget, and repetition to the messaging, allowing both a purchase driver and underpinning positive messages around all potatoes. The 3 pillars would each focus on the same trend, creating 3 points of reference for the consumer and opportunity for growers/processors.

Rebecca outlined the pillars in detail, covering details such as the target audience (potentially “millennial” audience), innovation days to be arranged with chefs working in development kitchens, and a full suite of influencer activity. The influencer programme, supported by full supply chain integration would position potatoes as inspiring, nutritious and contemporary, using a network of influencers that can present new information to their respective audiences.

The Board raised the importance of timing the campaign to coincide with when potatoes are good quality and easy to use.

The difference between tactical news stunts (putting potatoes in the news) versus a campaign to increase potato usage was discussed.

The Board were enthused by the ideas presented around getting involved with Foodservice and signature dishes. There was a discussion of how to get more collaboration within industry. Rebecca challenged the Board to consider whether they were prepared to promote potatoes as a whole, rather than just “British potatoes” – overall increase in take up would result in gains for everyone. There was a danger that parochialism would result in losing the whole market, because of protecting a few interests. Potatoes needed to be relevant and innovative for consumers.

The Chair summarised that the discussion had been useful, with a consideration of budget, and also about how we can get more embedded in a collaboration within the industry. Pillar 3 could be considered once pillars 1 and 2 were started.

The Board approved pillars 1 and 2 with a focus on partnering with industry to develop new products and seek their buy in. The Board approved keeping social media and the website active.

IPM STRATEGY – JON KNIGHT

Jon presented an overview of Integrated Pest Management to the Board. The chemical landscape was changing rapidly, the government 25 year Environment plan explicitly mentioned IPM repeatedly, and IPM would be included as part of the Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS). The Sustainable Use Directive lists IPM as

- Achieving prevention and suppression of harmful organisms
- Monitoring of harmful organisms
- Decisions made based on monitoring and thresholds
- Non-chemical methods

- Pesticide selection
- Reduced use
- Anti-resistance strategies
- Evaluation

AHDB currently has 122 projects running that are directly related to IPM (63 horticulture, 32 potatoes and 32 Cereals and Oilseeds). In addition it had projects working across sectors and organisations such as aphid monitoring and insecticide resistance monitoring. AHDB would be able to deliver on all elements of the IPM list through work such as varieties and soils work, diagnostics, aphids and blight work, rotations, bio-pesticides, precision farming, resistance monitoring and the Farm Excellence platform. The IPM Roadmap outlined a way in which AHDB could develop a plan for what industry should aim for, and do the work to support the changes. It should ideally be on the same time scale as the 25 year Environment plan. The thoughts of the Board and industry were important to getting this right.

The Board highlighted the need to engage agronomists in order to protect the chemicals that are still available by using them correctly and precisely. SPot farms could be used to demonstrate best practice. There was a leadership role for AHDB which should instigate the meetings to maintain what is out there, and make sure that organisations are working together.

The Chair summarised that there was a leadership role for AHDB, and both within technical and KE there needed to be strong communication as well as an understanding of the legal and chemical implications. The Board questioned the timescales cited in the Roadmap and asked them to be shifted forward.

The Board were in full support of the programme, and looked forward to hearing more as it developed.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE OUTPUTS REVIEW

Sara Maslowski presented the Market Intelligence Outputs Review Key Findings to the Board. The key messages were that where used, the market intelligence outputs were generally valued. Awareness and understanding of use still needed improving, for example of third of growers surveyed were not aware of Potato Weekly. Communication channels needed considering for example, many growers did not like accessing information online. The Board considered the available next steps, and proposed keeping but refreshing current outputs with a refocus to a more tailed audience working closely with levy payers and with a clear communications plan. This would continue to provide familiar but improved outputs for levy payers with usefulness improved by focusing on specific parts of the industry. The limitations would be an increased requirement in staff time.

The Board questioned whether people would be able to drill down in to the information and see individual pricing. Sara confirmed that this would not be possible.

The changes would help make the information more user friendly. The next step was to change to a new contact management system called Click Dimension. This was GDPR compliant, more secure and had a better interface. The general idea was to have less content within each email, but they would signpost to the website.

The Chair summarised that the Board had welcomed the verbal presentation from Sara about the outcome of the review, and that they Board agreed that this was a sensible way forward, and endorsed the decision to keep but refresh current outputs.

AOB

The Chair summarised the decisions made during the meeting. The meeting was closed at 3pm.