

CONFIDENTIAL

MINUTES OF THE 67th AHDB POTATO BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 3RD AUGUST 2018 AT 11.00 AM

BOARD ROOM, AHDB STONELEIGH PARK

PRESENT:

Sophie Churchill, Chair (SC), Will Shakeshaft (WS), Michael Welham (MW), Bill Quan (BQ), Jonathan Papworth (JP), Mark Taylor (MT) Alistair Redpath (AR), Andrew Skea (AS), Dan Metheringham (DM), Reuben Collins (RColl).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Rob Clayton SSD Potatoes (RC), Mrs Rita Hall (RH), Richard Laverick (RL), Phil Hadley (PH), Anna Farrell (AF), Roz Reynolds (RR), Tom Hind (TH), Christine Watts (CW), Jimmy Phillips (JPh), Rob Burns (RB).

Meeting governance

AGENDA ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. Apologies received from PH. She also advised that the agenda had changed slightly to enable current issues to be discussed.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST PT11

Members were requested to confirm their entry was correct and asked to sign accordingly. MT advised that his status at FPSA would change from member to Chair in waiting wef January 2019. SC extended the congratulations of the Board on the appointment. She advised that any conflicts of interest would be dealt with proactively.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24th May 2018 (PTM18/03)

The minutes were approved and signed by SC.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD 24th May 2018 PT12

- Data centre registration figures – log in data currently reflected 120 per month. With the impending launch of Project Blue, the log in process would be simplified and enhance the access/usage of the data centre.
- SBCSR options – covered on agenda.
- Technical matters – work on fungicide insensitivity had been commissioned
- Finance and Levy costings – RC communicated on email
- China - ongoing analysis.
- Edinburgh costs included in pack – these were hypothecated accurately and correctly for the current year although AR challenged previous financial commentary that appeared to suggest the hypothecated figure was higher in previous years. RC to check.

- Great Soils - Key project on Project Blue.
- Inconsistencies on reporting – RC leading the project to refresh the reporting process which will be reflected in the next board report.
- Evaluating outcomes – TH suggested inviting David Swales to attend a board meeting to elaborate. Chair and RC to consider for next board meeting.
- Finances – RC had incorporated requested changes, removing export budget for international events (Asia) from the plan until a better understanding of issues was available.
- Influencer plans - ideas had been through the marketing strategy meeting – outcomes were a proposal around support for a Food Advisory Panel, retain Bud the Spud until the end of the financial year. MP and ministerial visits for hosts of SPot farms had been instigated.
- BP2019 - a return of the industry dinner would be embedded at this event, delivered by a third party. This was welcomed by the Board.
- Levy Payer Satisfaction - shared and views amalgamated.
- SPot farm north update – a very successful event with media working with the host on current issues.

Action: RC had been requested to produce and circulate a simple one page paper for board with key messaging lines on the Levy collection rules and processes.

RC to investigate the variance costs of the Edinburgh office and report back to AR.

Chair and RC to consider inviting Tim Isaac to the next board meeting.

Standing agenda items

AGENDA ITEM 5 – CHAIRS UPDATE PT13

Main Board update - Minnette Batters and Lucy Neville-Rolfe had attended the pre board dinner to promote closer working relationships between AHDB and NFU in view of current challenges.

Comms strategy, Project Blue and the new Livestock programme were covered in some detail on the agenda.

Results of the Chair's 360 review were circulated and improvements in board performance and interaction with colleagues were discussed.

It was agreed that SC, supported by the Board, would undertake a proper search to recruit new members to reflect a broad industry representation encompassing geography and diversity. Messages at SIE and CUPGRA were suggested as means of engagement to supplement formal recruitment.

Personnel – Nick Vermont had shared his plans to retire from McCain. SC would follow up with a letter of thanks for his services to industry. David Walker planned to retire from FPSA with Mark Taylor to succeed as mentioned earlier. SC advised that any conflicts of industry would be resolved to enable MT's presence on the board.

SC advised that a thorough look at AHDB through a DEFRA review was imminent; Christine Watts would join the meeting to update.

Action: SC noted feedback on 360 reviews and urged the board to keep being internally challenging to aid learning credibility. BQ commented that participation by all Board members was stronger than it had been and SC thanked members for all their support as she continued to develop in the role of Chair.

SC would co-ordinate in the recruitment process to ensure new members were in place for March 2019. A proposal to come to the board before the next meeting.

2019 board dates and venues – the board agreed the dates and wished to remain at Woodside.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – DROUGHT VERBAL DISCUSSION

JPh was thanked for his input on drought. An area release had been issued following a stakeholder meeting where industry and consumer messages had been discussed. It remained crucial to remain sympathetic to the genuine hardship experienced by some growers whilst maintaining balanced and panic-free commentary for consumers. This had been embedded within AHDB's new drought hub which provided advice and intelligence across all sectors. Members recognised that AHDB's potato reporting was constrained as drought-related intelligence remained anecdotal and explored the various merits of adding to the intelligence by either initiating extra test digging through the Grower Panel, the wider industry or by using available crop modelling tools to provide the sector with a better forecast of total production. After discussing each option, members asked RC to pursue modelling options with research providers.

Action: RC to explore use of modelling with research providers.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – EDUCATION AND GYOP

AF and RR updated the board on the GYOP pilot year in a new format which had been achieved for £80K expenditure, a saving of £90K on the previous approach. This entailed handing the core scheme over to British Nutrition Foundation who had distributed 15,000 growing kits to schools and replacing printed materials with online tools. Participating schools had produced their own crop labels as part of a competition.

Legal aspects of sponsorship were currently being explored and a scheme was being devised that would acknowledge the in-kind contribution already made by seed-houses. Board members supported sponsorship approaches and encouraged the team to tread carefully particularly with regard to advertising within education: a brand-free sponsorship approach was preferred. RR drew the boards attention to other aspects of the educational offer noting that higher level schemes like Prep, Cook, Serve would require budget if they were to be pursued. The board requested that a partnership with Natural England also be pursued.

Action: The board were happy with the direction of the successful pilot with an ambition to go back up to 18k packs and would welcome a partnership approach. An update on BNF collaboration in due course.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – ISSUES MANAGEMENT AND VERBAL REVIEW PRESENTATION

JPh presented an overview of AHDB's approach to issues management illustrating how the process had been used for recent issues around carbs, drought and CIPC. Common features included the assembly of an issues team drawn from different functions who would draw on historic material or create new messages depending on the situation to ensure balanced media reports on issues affecting the sector.

The process was always under review and continuous improvement was always sought. Recent improvements included working with industry more closely to ensure timely communications between stakeholders, continuous horizon scanning and spotting up and coming issues along with finding the right independent experts to contribute to rebuttals. These needed to be robust and evidenced given that "expert" advice about carbohydrates, quoted by BNF for example, is coming under fire. In this regard, AF recommended the Meat Advisory Panel, a collective of independent experts, be expanded to the Food Advisory Panel so that AHDB could draw on a greater pool of people. This would cost c£20K p.a. for AHDB-Potatoes and was supported by the board.

Action: Refresh of stakeholder cascade to be initiated. Funding for Food Advisory Panel approved. The Board requested close reporting on progress noting that some months had passed since the FAP was first mentioned to the Marketing Strategy Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – EXPORT AND SEED VERBAL PLANS

PH and RB had been invited to update the board on the export and seed situation moving forward. They had embarked on a tour of industry stakeholders seeking views on AHDB activity and had completed 6 out of 9 visits. Initial conclusions were that the previous committee structure was felt to be obsolete but stakeholders felt that simply meeting businesses on a one-to-one basis was far from transparent. All stakeholders welcomed regular contact with SASA and DEFRA along with updates from AHDB and wished to influence the AHDB plan although they had divergent views on what was best for small and large exporters and what was most appropriate for the domestic seed trade. In order to re-connect with industry, board members debated a number of ways-of-working which included continuing 1-2-1 visits, separating export from seed activity and building on existing forums, like meetings provided by SASA and BPTA where the right audience was already present. PH and RB would work these ideas into a proposal to present at the next meeting demonstrating how the differing needs of exporters and domestic seed suppliers would be met.

Action: Committee to be replaced by an export forum meeting (exact name to be determined), relevant to industry, together with a seed forum. Proposal paper to be included on the next agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – SPROUT SUPPRESSION PT15

Proposals had been made in anticipation of an unfavourable EU decision on the future of CIPC. Whilst no decision had yet been taken by EU, board members considered the issue had been a “wake up call” for the industry and that a strong package of measures for KE and R&D was required to help fill gaps in future best practice for sprout management. The proposal was approved and staff were encouraged to work quickly, taking advantage of crops in the ground this year and maximising partnership opportunities with industry. Members sought a low-key launch so that any further EU voting wasn't compromised by knowledge of the new R&D.

Action: Activate R&D and KE proposals on the future of sprout suppression.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – SBCSR VERBAL PROGRESS REPORT

RL updated the board on the latest position regarding SBCSR.

Action: RL to continue investigations and report back.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – KE PROGRESS VERBAL UPDATE

RL updated the board on KE advising that Tim Isaac was now in charge of the combined arable KE team and suggested that he be invited to update of the review of process and alignment within the team. Recruitment was still underway for some posts and the team had started to demonstrate renewed enthusiasm and professionalism. Members concurred, noting improvements in SPot Farm management which had worked well this year. Reinvigoration of the relationship with agronomists was now being pursued with vigour and regular interactions eg with AIPC were now commonplace. Possibilities for extending partnerships were being pursued and projects like YEN (Yield Enhancement Network).

RL fielded a number of questions on Farmbench where a waning of confidence in the scheme was perceived with some stakeholders in the potato sector. Modifications prior to launch of V2 of Farmbench had been agreed with key potato supply chains and would be rolled out in October.

Action: SC to invite Tim Isaac to attend the next board meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 13 – FINANCE REPORT PT14

RC updated on the highlights within the paper and asked board members to note specific points.

- Forecast overspend in research related to an accrual on a fellowship at NIAB requiring further investigation.
- Increased expenditure forecast for levy payer comms related to SPot north which had originally been speculative but proving successful requiring more investment.
- Comms time on Great Soils alignment required more expenditure.
- No reforecasts for Influencer Plans had been provided.
- Rotational work was over-budget and an explanation sought.
- An understanding of the future for ChipSkills was sought.

Action: clarification on influencer plans and costs, fellowship costs, rotational work and ChipSkills to be shared with board members.

AGENDA ITEM 14 – OPERATIONAL REPORT

RC advised that he was leading the review of the operational report. The report in the next meeting would reflect simpler KPIs with more clarity on RAG ratings, percentage completed and better activity summaries.

Highlighted items for the current report included amber ratings in development in the R&KE team and advocacy plans. Phil Bicknell had commenced a broader review in MI and a summary of opportunities for industry to participate was described.

AGENDA ITEM 15 – DEFRA REVIEW

CW briefed on the forthcoming review of AHDB by DEFRA now called a “request for views”. This was likely to start in late August and run for 12 weeks and DEFRA were particularly keen to hear from levy paying businesses individually rather than through trade associations. Questions would be broad ranging and give levy payers the opportunity to ask for a very different shape for AHDB going forwards. This would include core responsibilities for the levy body as well as new and different mechanisms for levy collection.

In preparation, an AHDB tool-kit was being prepared that would capture key impacts that could be attributed to AHDB. Members would be encouraged to participate in a conference call so that they were prepared to encourage industry participation. One aspect of the preparation was for each sector to prepare a list of “killer facts” – examples of how and where AHDB was supporting levy payers. RC had commenced this exercise and shared examples with the board where AHDB services had been converted into £/ha.

Action: RC to circulate an example. Board to feedback into killer facts document. Board members to be prepared to encourage contacts to participate in the review and to do so themselves.

AGENDA ITEM 16 - OUR BIG GAME CHANGING PROJECT

Cross sector product range was discussed.

Action: This item to be revisited due to prioritisation of agenda items covering current issues.

AGENDA ITEM 17 - AOB

SC sought reassurance that relevant action points made in committees were communicated.

Dates of future meetings

- *Tuesday 13th November*
- *2019 (all Tuesday's)*
- *22nd January / 19th March*
- *21 May (possible Away Day)*
- *6th August / 12th November*

Signed:

Dated: