

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTIETH MEETING OF AHDB POTATOES
HELD AT AHDB
ON 17TH JANUARY, COMMENCING AT 8.30AM**

PRESENT: **Chair:** Fiona Fell **Growers:** Anthony Carroll, Bill Quan, James Daw, Reuben Collins, **Independents,** Zoe Henderson, Phil Huggon **Seed Merchants:** Alistair Redpath, Alistair Melrose **Fresh Supply Chain,** Mark Taylor, **Processor representative,** Dave Chelley.

IN ATTENDANCE: Tom Hind AHDB Chief Strategy Officer, Stephen Farmer AHDB Senior Comms Marcoms Manager (part only), Mrs Anna Farrell AHDB Levy Payer Communications Director, (part only) Mr Matt Catlin AHDB Digital Services Director, (part only) Mrs Diane Symes AHDB Senior Education Team Manager (part only) Dr Rob Clayton, AHDB Potatoes Strategy Director (SSD), Mrs Rita Hall, Strategy PA.

Note: confidential information in italics

17/01 AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS

Mrs Fell welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr Kerr and Mr Hewitt gave their apologies. Mr Chelley requested a change to the Register of Members interest to reflect that he had resigned from both the PPA and FCPA as Chair respectively. On behalf of the Board, Mrs Fell expressed congratulations to Mr Chelley on his retirement and thanked him for his greatly valued contribution to the Board, during his term of office.

17/02 AGENDA ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25TH OCTOBER 2016 (PTM/16/04)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Board and were signed as a true record of the meeting by the Chair.

17/03 AGENDA ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING AHDBPT01

16/42 It was confirmed that Rob Burns was achieving a good level of attendance at BPTA reflected in their good relationship with us and in their positive response on the consultation. The SSD reported that Sophie Lock was leaving the organisation and the Board wished to express their thanks to Ms Lock for her contribution to the sector.

16/43 skills strategy conference call was overdue,

Action: SSD to follow up over the next month. Mr Taylor had offered his assistance with this item.

Mr Quan had attended the first hypothecation group and was reassured that fair systems were in place. The Chair thanked Mr Quan for attending but requested a deputy be appointed from the new Board member intake.

16/48 Seed and export meeting name change to be discussed at the next committee meeting and the Marketing strategy meeting date was in process.

The Chair requested an update on efficiency savings and the SSD advised that **Mr Boyns (AHDB Chief Finance and Operational Director) would attend the March meeting to update.**

Mr Whelan had been approached and accepted a place on the R&KT committee.

16/49 Update on activity plans – SPot farm analysis – a national feedback survey was underway.

16/50 - Horizon scanning, sits across each of the functions. The Chair requested we ensure this be lodged as an activity and was work in progress.

16/51 A more comprehensive calendar had been included in the pack for members to note.

17/04 AGENDA ITEM 4 – CHAIRS VERBAL UPDATE

Mrs Fell highlighted that the new Strategy had been well received, and thanked the Board for their on-going help to communicate it effectively.

Recent events she had attended: Seed Industry Event had been very well run and well attended. AHDB scholars made a notable contribution to the Nuffield conference. She had attended Cupgra and both she and the Director had engaged with the round table stakeholder group, to discuss the new strategy and gain initial views. At the Oxford farming conference Mr Hind had delivered a good presentation which had been well received.

The recent Agronomy conference had been live-streamed (160 watching remotely) with large numbers of people accessing this event on-line subsequently.

She commented that a separate SBCSR strategy would be brought to the forthcoming committee prior to presentation.

Mrs Fell advised that interviews for sector Board member replacements were scheduled for the 18th January and that her own vacancy would be advertised imminently. She requested that the Board encourage suitable candidates to apply. Once new Sector Board members were appointed, her intention was to invite them to the next AHDB Potato Board as observers.

17/05 AGENDA ITEM 5 – SSD VERBAL UPDATE

The SSD reported that his recent focus had been on the Strategy and activity planning. Work was underway to maintain international contact via the International Potato Group.

He had met with Kathleen Kelleher's replacement at DEFRA, Nick Turner. The Board asked if there was an opportunity for DEFRA to be invited to such events as SPot farm to aid his induction. He had attended sessions with NFU Norfolk group and Alex Godfrey to discuss MI. Other ongoing issues concerned blackleg, brown rot and acrylamide. Mr Redpath raised concerns that APHA had notified a cap on PCN sampling for seed crops in England and Wales.

Action: director to raise concerns with APHA

Mr Hind joined the meeting.

17/06 AGENDA ITEM 6 – STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSES AHDBPT06

Mr Hind summarised overall industry response to the AHDB vision and sector strategies.

Over 300 stakeholder groups had been involved since December and c100 written responses received from a diverse range of businesses and stakeholder groups. Most had welcomed the ambition and focus within the document and had raised a series of constructive challenges. These would be summarised and presented to the AHDB Board.

The SSD drew attention to those that specifically referenced or impacted potatoes:-

FPSA, Hutchinson's, BPTA, National England, CPA, James Hutton Institute, NFU, NFUS PPA, DEFRA, Scottish Government, NIAB

Responses were all largely supportive of the new strategy and several common themes were discussed in more detail including:-

- Provision of more detailed KPIs and outcomes (due for next meeting, see 17/07)
- Development of advocacy approaches
- Better join-up of crop protection approaches between sectors

- Better articulation of domestic and international benchmarking ambition
- Clearer analysis of EU match-funded marketing campaign outcomes
- Cost efficiency and review of levy collection

The Chair suggested that while strategy was being developed, it was important for Board members to be equipped with short, sharp summaries of current successes that could be used in discussion with levy payers.

Action: SSD would respond to specific responses in February and share top-line figures from Levy Payer Satisfaction survey when available. A message bank would be created and shared with Board members.

The Board agreed that the strategy should be pursued in line with the published draft, activities would be adjusted to take account of the 6 key points (above) and a recommendation to maintain levy rates would be shared with the AHDB Board.

17/07 AGENDA ITEM 7 – UPDATE ON ACTIVITY PLANS AHDBPT02

The SSD informed that activity plans were being developed by functions based on the consultation draft. These included the capture of activity, expenditure and staff costs for each area of the strategy. Work was required to ensure that activities were clearly aligned to priorities and that sufficient cross-functional conversation had taken place. Work was expected to finish mid-February allowing KPIs to be negotiated and agreed. These, along with budgets would be presented to the Board in March allowing for a public version to be created in April.

17/08 AGENDA ITEM 8 – UPDATE FROM AHDB COMMS – PRESENTATION

Mrs Fell welcomed Anna Farrell, Matt Catlin, Stephen Farmer and Di Symes to the meeting, all of whom would update the Board via paper and presentation on their activities within AHDB and the sector. Mr Farmer introduced his presentation advising the Board of the experience he could bring to the table. His advocacy programme would be incorporated into activity planning and would draw down specific expertise drawn from digital dairy campaigns, proactive messaging in meat media and experience of stakeholder engagement across vloggers, education, journalists and health professionals. Members were reassured that Mr Farmer would make full use of legacy products and experiences (e.g. within the current EU funded campaign) and looked forward to receiving a more detailed plan in the next meeting. Mrs Farrell provided an update on how comms and media management was now benefitting from cross-sector approaches that provided 24/7 cover. Best practice was being shared around the team and historic approaches to issues management developed in the potato sector were being shared across the sectors. Board members were invited to sign up to media alert services and take stock of the detail on offer with regard to media monitoring.

Mr Catlin presented an update on digital developments focussing on activities affecting potatoes; these included event filming and roll out, development of decision support tools, digitising on literature and rationalisation of education websites. He also briefed the sector board on “project blue”, a new project to rationalise all of AHDB’s main sites. *(Mr Hind left the meeting)*

17/09 AGENDA ITEM 9 – DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION STRATEGY AHDBPT03

Ms Symes presented a draft paper on a combined cross sector approach to education that sought to position AHDB within a busy education landscape as a trustworthy provider of information on food and farming over the next five years. Board members provided useful feedback regarding partnership working, vision, international comparison and measurement of success. The draft would be finessed prior to presentation to AHDB Board. Members sought reassurance that they would be able to consider options for Grow Your Own Potato divestiture and that successful activity in secondary and further education would be

maintained.

Action: SSD would provide options paper at the next meeting.

Mrs Fell thanked the team for attending

17/10 AGENDA ITEM 10 – AHDB POTATOES OPERATIONAL UPDATE & KPI'S REPORT

The SSD requested the paper be taken as read but he would highlight the exceptions.

- Mr Cunnington had reported a third round of cost escalation at Sutton Bridge which would be addressed further in the agenda.
- Board endorsement was sought on a studentship support project recommended by the R&KE committee to be held at Lancaster University on soil management and irrigation interactions affecting root-to-shoot signalling and yield of potato totalling £70,500. **Endorsement given.**
- Farmbench had been presented at MI Committee and concern regarding usefulness was now being picked up under consultation.
- Web hits in MI were below the published KPI, however following the redesigned Potato Weekly subscriptions had risen.
- Mr Melrose requested that the text comment regarding the Russian mission be amended as the event had been postponed, rendering the comment out of date.

Issues management was underway regarding an FSA campaign raising awareness on acrylamide.

In response to questions, the strategy Director confirmed that opportunities around the two Next Generation cohorts would be developed during the 2017/18 financial year and that the potato industry was connected to AHDB's Volatility Forum via invited membership.

Board members expressed several concerns regarding the length and format of the report and whether it was being used effectively to measure progress against KPI's. They questioned whether concentrating on exceptions allowed them to understand successes well enough to share with levy payers and asked that a summary of key messages be introduced.

Action: SSD to raise reporting issues with Senior Team.

17/11 AGENDA ITEM 11 – UPDATE ON SBCSR Q&A AHDBPT07

Members received a short update on developments at SBCSR and understood that a full strategic review was underway and would be presented to SBAC first.

Key points were:-

- Relationship with CRD regarding acceptance of SBAC data in chemical registration trials required further attention.
- Modelling work was underway to assist the CRD discussion
- Centre for applied crop research (formerly CHaP) had restructured and adopted a smaller executive. This could mean that the onus to market SBCSR services could fall to AHDB.
- There was inadequate contingency within CAPEX projects to account for unforeseen corrosion in some older storage units.

Board members were invited to make recommendations to contribute to the strategic review. The most pressing were:-

- To prioritise recruitment of a business development role
- To ensure research costing models were fit for purpose.

17/12 AGENDA ITEM 12 – AHDB POTATOES FINANCE REPORT INCLUDING LEVY COLLECTION UPDATE (A) AHDBPT04

The SSD advised that the Potatoes specific page reflected the AHDB position and was currently underspent in some areas. Board members noted that revised forecasts would bring the sector close to break-even by the year end but were concerned that a combination of back-loading of activity and vague forecasting presented a risk. Members also felt that key decisions (e.g. the balance between CAPEX and OPEX at SBCSR and updated reserves policy) should be reiterated in each paper throughout the year to make interpretation easier.

Members noted changes to the SBCSR forecast and understood that further repairs had been identified and incorporated in refurbishment work. They thanked Mr Cunnington for his pursuit of these issues whilst maintaining the pace of research delivery. Members also noted details around the pursuit of legal cases in levy collection and were updated on Direct Debit and levy estimate processes.

17/13 AGENDA ITEM 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair and Director acknowledged the valuable contribution Mr Godfrey (Chair of NFU Potato Forum) had made to the conversation at dinner the previous evening and sought the Boards opinion on adopting closer working relationship with the forum. They agreed that a complimentary way of working with the group would be valuable. **Consideration to be given to meeting with them at Harrogate.**

Board members sought information on AHDB activity in China.

Action: SSD would contact Karen Morgan and request a short paper

An update on BP was requested and it was advised that Steve Wellbeloved was managing the event with sales going well and Mr Wellbeloved tweeting new bookings. It would be held back at the showground in an impressive new hall. AHDB potatoes would have a smaller stand footprint but would be running a strong seminar programme which was under development. It had been agreed that we would not host the industry dinner. However we would host an awards reception.

The Chair requested the Board give consideration to what they wanted from the visit on 17 June to NIAB CUF.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 29TH March 2017 (all future Board meetings to be held at Woodside).

INFORMATION PAPERS: AHDB Potato Dates for 2017, Market Dynamics Report AHDBPT05. Contact sheet.

MINUTES BETWEEN BOARDS: R&KT 12th October 2016, S&E 25th August 2016, MI 30th November.

Signed:

Dated: