

AHDB POTATOES AGENDA ITEM 3
PAPER PTM03
AUTHORISED

MINUTES OF THE SIXTY SECOND MEETING OF AHDB POTATOES
ON 18TH JULY, COMMENCING AT 8.30AM

PRESENT: **Chair:** Sophie Churchill **Growers:** Dan Hewitt, Will Shakeshaft, Michael Welham, Jonathan Papworth, Reuben Collins **Independents:** Phil Huggon **Seed Merchants:** Alistair Redpath, Andrew Skea **Fresh Supply Chain:** Mark Taylor **Processing:** Daniel Metheringham.

IN ATTENDANCE: Tom Hind Chief Strategy Officer, Christine Watts Chief Communications & Market Development Officer (part only) Jimmy Phillips, Senior Marcomms Manager Potatoes, Phil Bicknell Market Intelligence SSD, Amber Cottingham Analyst Potatoes (part only) Dr Rob Clayton, SSD Potatoes, Mrs Rita Hall, Strategy PA.

17/01/02 AGENDA ITEM 1&2 – WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies from Bruce Kerr and Bill Quan. Paper number AHDBPT19 Register of Members signature was passed to members for approval and signature or for amendment. The Chair highlighted agenda items that required the Board's focus: item 5 goals and achievements for the year, item 7 clarity of the communications strategy and item 12, that would take the form of a workshop. **Action: DM to advise of amendment to Register.**

17/03 AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29TH MARCH 2017 (PTM/17/02)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Board and were signed as a true record of the meeting by the Chair, with the caveat that the word "divestiture" be removed from item 13. The notes from the Board Away Day at CUF including a short Board meeting were also approved. **Action: RH to amend previous minutes.**

17/04 AGENDA ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING PT20

All matters were covered within the agenda with the exception of the following:-

- Student placements were in existence and required embedding into HR strategy.
- Weber Shandwick had won the contract as AHDB's agency.
- A beta version of the new single AHDB website would be presented at this year's sector Board conference.
- Marketing Strategy Committee awaiting suitable dates from BK. **Action: BK to supply prospective dates for MSC.**

17/05 AGENDA ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S UPDATE AND WORKPLAN (A) PT21

The Chair emphasised that an annual offsite meeting was valuable and had the status of a full Board meeting, even if less paper-orientated. It linked with the education element of the venue being visited. Discussion debated the overall effective delivery of the strategy, highlighting that the Chair and Board needed to understand the priorities of their audience and shape activities and messages accordingly. Board members reflected on priorities ready to share after the main Board meeting.

Over the next 12 months R&KE would play a big part of spend, supporting AHDB's competitive and productivity priorities. The staffing requirements, which included capacity, skills and succession, were recognised as a risk by AHDB and would be addressed. The perception that people in the sector in general with the right skills and knowledge were losing credibility and events were not being delivered to the optimum. **Action: RH to retain staffing issues as a recurring agenda item in order to monitor and address.**

MI – Gaps in production of the weekly pricing data had been acknowledged and were attributed to imbalanced data samples. The monitoring of how the messages relating to data-capture were being received with ongoing dialogue with AHDB required. The MI Committee had been dissolved, requiring a refreshed approach. The setting up of two working groups in its place covering horizon scanning and communications would be organised.

In finance, it was essential to monitor budgets ensuring any underspend was addressed effectively.

On Committees, the Chair indicated she intended to increase their influence, findings being fed into the cycle of Board meetings, but at the same time ensuring the right people and numbers on the Committee were relevant. **Action: Chair, Committee and Working Group Chairs, SSD.**

A discussion around how best to articulate the inter-relationship between sector strategies and thematic approaches to R&D followed and **Action: it was agreed that SC would prioritise the top three issues for our sector and integrate them into AHDB's strategic thinking.**

Sutton Bridge – The Chair invited MT to update on the 4th July Committee meeting and also asked that the Board ratify the appointment of both Jonathan Papworth and Will Shakeshaft who attended the meeting as observers, **Action: The Board ratified the new appointments. RH to update membership.**

MT said that relationships with CRD remained a priority for SBCSR. A meeting had taken place with AHDB, CRD, PPA and FPSA to discuss MRLs and recommended dose rates for CIPC. During this meeting SBCSR data was recognised (an improvement on previous position) although scale-up to commercial scale remained important to CRD. A follow up meeting would take place on the 27th, a short summary of which would be emailed to the Board. MT commented that SBCSR was an outstanding source of independent expertise but it was not filtering down to the levy payer. He also advised that engagement with CHaP after its capital phase had yielded little in terms of funding opportunities and the commercial income gap presented considerable concern. MT and the chair were due to meet with Richard Laverick, Chief Technical Officer to discuss SBCSR in more detail. MT asked for an update on the SBCSR leaky roof and recruitment of a business development consultant. The SSD confirmed that in both cases, approvals had been granted and they were progressing.

Paper AHDBPT25 on Grow Your Own Potato was discussed. Board members felt a new partnership with BNF could be beneficial but felt they would like to understand the organisation more. They agreed to support the proposed pilot and future working with BNF providing the pilot was properly evaluated and that 15000 school packs were properly and efficiently utilised.

Action: The Chair would meet with the education team to discuss further. Board members were asked to share their thoughts on potential sponsors for the project in the future.

Summary of agreements and actions on Chair and Board's priorities 2017 - 2018:

All actions in the paper were agreed. Highlighted were these listed below:

A continuing focus on providing value for the levy payer. All Board members and SSD.

Action: By the end of March18 a new marketing and education strategy would be complete. Chair and Marketing Strategy Committee (Chair, Bruce Kerr).

Action: A sharp focus to be maintained on staffing and capacity in potatoes, including KE. Chair and SSD, with HR.

Action: Sutton Bridge would remain a focus. By end March 2018 to have an agreed position. Chair and Mark Taylor (Chair of Advisory Group)

Action: Committees to have more influence by being linked into Board meetings, but the Board also needed to ensure they were effectively set up and functioned efficiently. Chair and committee / working group Chairs.

Action: Cross-sector work with cereals and horticulture to be developed further. Chair and SSD.

17/06 AGENDA ITEM 6 –SSD UPDATE AND PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD (I) PT22

The SSD introduced the new dashboard explaining the RAG (red, amber, green) ratings and plans to report against exceptions; and requested feedback. Board members welcomed the clarity of the new format but felt a key with full activity titles would be helpful. They also agreed that access to a fuller deck of activities would help them to champion successes and ongoing work. Describing activities in each of the priority areas:-

Priority 1. Competitive. The planned global deep dive started in earnest this month with staff visiting European Association of Potato Researchers triennial conference providing an insight into what we can do differently and deliver through SPot Farms. Contact has been made with supply chains willing to work in partnership on Farmbench entry and a roster of international speakers has been secured for BP2017.

Status: Amber Risks: measurement is predicated on high levels of entry into Farmbench and this is dependent on ambitious communications plans this summer.

Priority 2. Productive. R&D commissioning remained on track. All SPot farms are up and running this year with encouraging feedback achieved at Elveden (>80% indicating they would behave differently or use new technologies as a result of attending). Support for two new pieces of research was ratified for the Board. The first regarding a previously discussed blight project at JHI and the second following a recommendation from RKE Committee to fund further research into blackleg (£90K from AHDB Research and £20k from AHDB Potatoes KE. Total project cost £243k with in kind contributions from various industry participants).

Status: Green Risks: delivery against the priority is dependent on providing new resources for agronomists and KE at SBCSR – both resources are still under development.

Priority 3. Customer. The latest round of our EU co-funded marketing activity has been delivered successfully although some tongue-in-cheek criticism was received because of its racy nature. There is little new to report on our advocacy work as key staff have been ill during the reporting period.

Status: Amber Risks: some stakeholders are likely to become impatient if we can't demonstrate movement in our advocacy campaign. Marcomms are reviewing options to speed up delivery. **Action: the Chair to meet with Stephen Farmer, lead on advocacy work.**

Priority 4. Thought leadership and MI Our use of contractors for market intelligence (reported last time) has now been wound down and future reports will be delivered by the in-house team. Our first webinar (delivering the planted area and related scenarios, new Consumer Insight, Brexit update and strategy) was received well with strong positive feedback.

Status: Green **Risks:** one or two levy payers (with strong relationships with contractors) have questioned our rationale for changing historic methods of intelligence gathering. These are being dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

In response to a question regarding the investment test, the SSD confirmed a project having originally failed could be resubmitted twice and then presented to AHDB Board, in total 3 attempts to pursue. This is a change from the originating sector board being able to over-ride the test decision.

Action: SSD to provide more description of the activities in future reports.

17/07 AGENDA ITEM 7 – ROLE OF SECTOR BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR COMMUNICATION (D)

Both Jimmy Phillips and Christine Watts from the AHDB marcomms team joined the meeting. JP gave a presentation to explore ways of integrating the Board and utilising them as champions and key players for AHDB links to relevant third parties. Examples given were press spokespersons, engaging their own networks, hosting grower groups at events such as SPot. It was highlighted that the media were keen to engage with AHDB and in turn, AHDB encouraged the positive image messaging through the numerous communication channels available.

During the following discussion, all Board members expressed a willingness to be more involved in acting as champions for the work of AHDB. To do so, simple tools would be required that frequently drew their attention to the right issues and any supporting materials. JP would provide timely updates and seek further feedback from Board members. Members noted that timely updates were occasionally required out of hours especially where AHDB products were cited in the mainstream press. Recent experiences with the “More than a bit on the side” campaign were used as an example of where the heads-up process might be improved, especially for the Chair.

- **Actions: CW acknowledged that elements of the media briefing process had not been carried out successfully and would review and reinforce the process. JP to follow through with Board members, including media training.**

17/08 AGENDA ITEM 8 – AHDB FINANCE AND LEVY (I) PT23

The SSD advised that papers had been redesigned so that financial performance could be observed by priority as well as by function. Additionally, details of potential risks, opportunities and key variances were included. Board members welcomed the change.

AHDB Potatoes was running moderately behind its budget. Main variances related to KE which was underspent as was advocacy and related levy payer communications. A discussion on advocacy would follow at the next meeting. Previous year’s support costs were queried by Alistair Redpath.

Action: The SSD would follow up on support costs after the meeting.

Action: In response to a question, the SSD would confirm the proportion of levy collected via Direct Debit. A member of the finance team would visit the Board once a year.

17/09 AGENDA ITEM 9 – UPDATE ON FOCUS AREAS FOR UNDERSPEND (D)

Having recalculated the likely income and expenditure after publication of increased crop-area figures, the SSD encouraged members to think about the best way to invest a “surplus”. The surplus was estimated at C£500K above reserves after three years delivery of current strategy. Underspends (or failure to meet revenue target) were expected in several areas:-

- Uncertain revenue at SBCSR.
- Additional communications expenditure to allow compliance with new data protection regulation.

Once these were accounted for and R&D expenditure clarified, the SSD would ask colleagues for ideas that would:-

- Speed up delivery of advocacy.
- Increase the speed of uptake of Farmbench.
- Underpin productivity in R&D.

17/10 AGENDA ITEM 10 – UPDATE ON STAFF FACING THE POTATO SECTOR (I)

The SSD presented a review of potato-facing staff within AHDB illustrating where residual knowledge of potatoes was strong and where less so, where the sector was benefiting from expertise drawn from other sectors and where gaps were evident or additional training required. Key issues raised were:

- Strong competency but low knowledge in communications and issues management.
- Succession issues at SBCSR and in R&D.
- Gaps in knowledge within some R&D thematic teams.
- Skills gaps in KE.
- Gaps in knowledge of delivery in Export.

Some training was being developed and succession reviews discussed with Rebecca Geraghty, Head of HR. **Action: the Chair would discuss with RG.**

17/11 AGENDA ITEM 11 – P4 DEEP DIVE INTO MI ACTIVITIES / MEET THE TEAM (I)

Phil Bicknell (Director of MI) and Amber Cottingham joined the meeting. The Chair welcomed them both, commenting that they were the first guests to follow the cycle of strategic priorities which would shape each Board meeting. This was the focus on thought leadership and horizon scanning. PB reported that it was imperative to adopt a proactive approach in relation to future challenges including farmer awareness, consumer insight and Brexit, being much more determined by market forces. AC presented a slide deck introducing key personnel within the MI team, their aim to communicate independent data effectively. She introduced the potato specialist team and the relevant reports, industry estimates, and articles, they prepared. PB and AC both acknowledged the gaps experienced on weekly prices but commented that these were reliant on the need for correct timely data. It was agreed that this was useful data requiring feedback to inspire the confident use of price data. However, it was also acknowledged that an indication of price-movement, not necessarily actual price-figures was key.

17/12 AGENDA ITEM 12 – P4 WORKSHOP; BIG ISSUES FOR THE POTATO SECTOR POST BREXIT (D)

PB, AC and RC proceeded to facilitate a workshop to discuss any concerns and the big issues over; a 12 month horizon, 2-3 year time span and ongoing issues to 2025.

The Board were split into 3 rotating groups discussing items such as consumption, sector structure and Brexit. Both PB and AC would take away the notes and revert *via* email to determine priorities for the future. The SSD indicated that a big strategy piece was also coming through. **Action: PB to email summary of workshops to Board members. Clarity was also required for next steps on the transition from MI Committee to workshops and**

inviting previous Committee member views was encouraged. PB and Phil Huggon to progress.

17/13 AGENDA ITEM 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

The SSD commented that the BP paper included in the pack was being used for staff briefings and comms. He would take any questions/concerns offline, commenting that to date timelines were all on track. The work on BP was commended by the Board.

Additional board discussion on priorities

The Chair proposed that identifying the top 3 key broad areas of activity was critical underpinning for the potato strategy and useful to do with new Board members. This was explored after lunch. The top three areas emerging from a quick exercise by the whole Board were:

A skilled industry for the future: the next generation in the potato sector. **Action: look at current work in this area at next Board meeting.**

A crop in the future, including crop protection, genomics and soil and water management. **Action: press for cross-sector and focused work on these areas, well-communicated to levy payers.**

Competitiveness and growing a changing market in the context of Brexit. **Action: Board to monitor impact of Farmbench and other services from AHDB to levy-payers.**

Agreed: more to do to prioritise and to communicate the impact of AHDB services to levy-payers, whilst delivering on the strategy as agreed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 14th November 2017.

INFORMATION PAPERS: Potato Dates for 2017/18, Contact sheet, BP2017 (AHDBPT24), GYOP update (AHDBPT25) Flipchart sheet from exercise after lunch.

MINUTES BETWEEN BOARDS: R&KE, 7th June 2017.

Signed:

Dated: