

**AHDB POTATOES AGENDA ITEM 2  
PAPER PTM03  
AUTHORISED**

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTY SIXTH MEETING OF AHDB POTATOES  
ON 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018, COMMENCING AT 8.30AM AT THE JOHN INNES CENTRE,  
NORWICH RESEARCH PARK, NORWICH FOLLOWED BY A TOUR OF KETTLE**

**PRESENT:** Chair: Sophie Churchill **Growers:** Will Shakeshaft (WS), Michael Welham (MW), Bill Quan (BQ), Jonathan Papworth (JP), **Independents:** Phil Huggon (PH) **Fresh Supply Chain:** Mark Taylor (MT) **Seed:** Alistair Redpath (AR), Andrew Skea (AS).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr Rob Clayton SSD Potatoes (RC).

**18/24 AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies from Reuben Collins (RCo) and Phil Huggon (PH). There were no declarations of interest.

**18/25 AGENDA ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018 (PTM/18/02) AND MATTERS ARISING AHDBPT09**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed by SC.

RC summarised progress against matters arising. These would be formalised and written up prior to the August meeting.

**18/26 AGENDA ITEM 3 – CHAIRS UPDATE AHDBPT10**

SC presented her views on progress made within the prior financial year in relation to AHDB's overall aims and delivery of the potato sector plan. She emphasised the significance of the combined arable KE team and commitment to move forward with Sutton Bridge. Continuing to focus on the areas with biggest impact and on communicating well were vital in the future.

**18/27 AGENDA ITEM 4 – LEVY PAYER SATISFACTION SURVEY HEADLINES – SLIDES PRESENTED AT DINNER**

Members had discussed the Levy Payer Satisfaction survey the night before the meeting and used the meeting to consolidate their thoughts. In short, they were disappointed that limited progress had been made in terms of improving levy payer views but recognised that an under-resourced KE team had been a key levy payer concern within the year. The survey had also been conducted under tough potato-market conditions although that could not be used as an excuse. Across AHDB there was a similar level of result. Asked to summarise reflections on the survey, RC suggested that the sector might wish to focus on a handful of questions (value, adoption of AHDB originated best-practices etc.) and that a methodical approach to improving KE and comms, with a more consistent focus on levy payers bottom-line might lead to quicker and more positive changes in attitude. Members sought assurances that staff morale was treated sensitively, especially for staff who had worked tirelessly to improve their services but saw no notable change in levy payer attitude. RC responded that staff briefings had been handled sensitively.

**Action: RC to share reflections with AHDB senior and leadership teams. It was noted that the survey only included growers. Incorporation of agronomists into any focus groups was requested.**

#### **18/28 AGENDA ITEM 5 – AHDB FINANCIAL CONTROLS - PRESENTATION**

Following previous observations that a grip on finances could be lost in some areas (e.g. around FruitLogistica), RC presented a summary of controls in operation across AHDB. Accountability, responsibility and standing instructions were described for different tiers of management and checks and balances (roles for auditors, finance business partners) were described.

Members were satisfied that good controls were in place but sought continued focus and accurate reporting of financial issues so that variances could be managed quickly, their causes understood and underspends reallocated to the benefit of levy payers.

**Action: RC to continue focus on financial issues (ongoing).**

#### **18/29 AGENDA ITEM 6 – LEVY PRESENTATION**

RC provided an overview of new on-line portals for levy payer (grower and buyer) declarations. These were seen as a positive step forwards and offered levy payers simpler ways of recording areas planted or tonnage movements. The levy team had started communicating the new system to levy payers but had moved key deadlines for declaration of area backwards in light of national planting difficulties. Paper-based alternatives remained in place for levy payers not able to use web-based tools. Board members welcomed the development but noted that the rules governing which potato-buyers should pay the levy remained confusing and should be incorporated prominently into the portal.

**Action: RC to brief the levy team regarding prominent communication of payment rules. Board members to continue to feed back any LP views. Levy working group to share with Board new portal wording.**

#### **18/30 AGENDA ITEM 7 – YEAR END MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (I)**

RC presented March 2018 accounts; the last of FY 17/18. Members noted that a surplus for the year of £349K was evident representing a variance to plan of £641K. When comparing the year end position with the last forecast (made in January), members noted that in most cases variances were small. A larger variance (underspend) was observed in R&D and resulted from the release of prior-year accruals as R&D projects came to an end.

**Action: tight monitoring of budgets this year and expectation of impact in new / increased spend areas as agreed at previous meeting.**

#### **18/31 AGENDA ITEM 8 – OPERATIONAL REPORT AND HEAT MAP (I)**

RC presented the year end operational report highlighting six activities where delivery was behind schedule and one activity where delivery was ahead of its KPI. Members provided a critique of the reporting tool highlighting instances where the narrative was more verbose for small activities than for bigger areas of expenditure, where amber RAG ratings might have been better flagged as red, where success was over-claimed and where the narrative did not related directly to the set target. They suggested that a clearer differentiation between impact - related and operations – related KPIs along with better instructions to authors would help bring accuracy and consistency to the process. RC drew attention a broader review of reporting within AHDB and would share criticisms made as part of the review.

**Action: RC to share criticisms as part of reporting review.**

**18/32 AGENDA ITEM 9 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Nothing to report.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** 3<sup>rd</sup> August (day meeting 11am – 4pm – Stoneleigh board room).

Signed: .....

Dated: .....