

**AHDB POTATOES AGENDA ITEM 2
PAPER PTM02
AUTHORISED**

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTIETH MEETING OF AHDB POTATOES
HELD AT
ON 29TH MARCH, COMMENCING AT 8.30AM**

PRESENT: **Chair:** Fiona Fell **Growers:** Anthony Carroll, Bill Quan, Dan Hewitt, Bruce Kerr **Independents,** Zoe Henderson, Phil Huggon **Seed Merchants:** Alistair Redpath, Alistair Melrose **Fresh Supply Chain,** Mark Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE: Tom Hind Chief Strategy Officer, Ken Boyns Chief Finance and Operations Officer (part only) Dr Rob Clayton, Potatoes Director, Mrs Rita Hall, Strategy PA.

GUEST observers: Daniel Metheringham (processing), Jonathan Papworth (grower), Andrew Skea (seed grower), Michael Welham (grower), Will Shakeshaft (grower).

Note: confidential information in italics

17/01 AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS.
Mrs Fell welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked the retiring Board members for their valued contribution to the sector during their tenure. There were apologies from James Daw and Reuben Collins. No declarations of interest.

17/02 AGENDA ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2017 (PTM/17/01)

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 PT08

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

A conference call had taken place with Mark Taylor, Tess Howe and Rob Clayton. Ms Howe would report on skills strategy and activities in July.

The Director advised that a formal response had been received from APHA with regard to their cap on testing for PCN for seed land in England.

New operational reports and dashboards would be made available from May onwards and would be dispatched bimonthly.

AHDB's role in providing student placements would be raised with HR Chair

17/04 AGENDA ITEM 4 – POTATOES FINANCE REPORT INCLUDING LEVY COLLECTION UPDATE (A) PT09

The SSD reported a near break-even forecast for AHDB potatoes. Deviations from plan had been explained in previous meetings. Fruit logistica had been presented as an overspend and was described better as a corral of costs that reflected real spend. Members supported this and understood genuine benefit had been measured via the exhibitor feedback.

Mr Quan was asked to update the Board in his capacity as a member of the finance and hypothecation group and reported that he felt reassured that Mr Boyns was fully in command of his leadership brief.

The board briefly debated issues around financial stewardship and whether reserves were used effectively, including mechanisms for dealing with underspend and the importance of capturing “great ideas” from colleagues quickly.

Some concern was expressed regarding growth in overall AHDB headcount and how this would be messaged alongside published figures in AHDBs ARA. In particular how the situation related to bringing skill in-house rather than using agencies.

Mr Boyns entered the meeting

17/05 AGENDA ITEM 5 –EFFICIENCIES AND SAVINGS PRESENTATION

Mr Boyns presented on AHDBs programme of efficiencies and savings; headline ambitions had been shared with the board previously. He described a rigorous process whereby savings and efficiencies were being captured and scrutinised to create a record of those that were genuine, those that were forecast and those where added value could be quantified. Whilst many areas were still under scrutiny he was confident that AHDB's original target of an annualised £1M saving would be realised.

Board members recognised that savings allocated to the potato sector appeared low but understood that less impactful projects had already ceased during a previous period of revenue-decline, that some bigger rationalisations (websites and PR agency) were yet to conclude and that added value (e.g. Better user-reach through digital services) had been prioritised within the sector. Members sought clarity on timelines for the website platform and the move to one PR agency across AHDB.

Action: provide clarified timelines for website rationalisation and the move to one PR agency SSD

Mr Boyns reported that a savings report would be published in April. A summary would also be included in the ARA along with case studies.

The Chair thanked Mr Boyns for his attendance at the Board.

17/06 AGENDA ITEM 6 – CHAIR UPDATE

The Chair asked her fellow Board members to assist in the integration of the new Board members. She thanked the Committee Chairs, retiring from the Board, who had contributed to drive the maximum benefit from the committees. Mr Kerr would now Chair the Marketing Strategy Committee which Mr Collins had joined. Mr Hewitt would now chair the Export and Seed. It was agreed that MI would move from a committee to 2 working groups as discussed by members, overseen by Phil Huggon. Mr Taylor will be chairing SBAC. Members supported these changes.

She highlighted the importance of Board members meeting at NIAB-CUF in June noting that they were a key contractor for the substantial R&D investment in soils work and subsequent

KE opportunity for AHDB Potatoes. A horizon scanning discussion on industry issues, and AHDBs role in addressing them would be timely, as the main Board looks to provide a response to BREXIT challenges.

She provided a short update on the recent AHDB Board meeting highlighting:-

- Growth in AHDBs Farm Excellence platform and roll out of strategic farms in other sectors (Dairy, C&O, B&L).
- An update of progress in the delayed Education strategy.
- A summary of future board and sector board reporting processes
- Top line messages from AHDBs levy payer survey. Upward trends in satisfaction.
- A proactive collective approach to the Brexit challenge was needed.
- Increased clarity of use of funds in the technical directorate required.
- Move towards continuous forecasting to avoid big jumps.
- HR: career pathways for experts being put in place. Talent management focus.

17/07 AGENDA ITEM 7 – SSD UPDATE

Key undertakings for the SSD during the period included-

- Development of the annual plan
- He had attended Harper Forum which had been well attended – presentation on Brexit from an AHDB colleague, Sarah Williams, had been well received.
- Invited to attend and speak at Scottish Farming conference, tapping into SPot farms
- Final round of 2016/17 Next Generation programme
- Engaged with PPA post consultation to establish KPI's for productivity priorities.
- The Director highlighted new privacy legislation and a change to an opt-in system which would impact on both MI products and events, work was in progress building a campaign to sit alongside planting returns
- He was engaged with the Food waste initiative led by WRAP.
- The roll out of Farm Bench required help and support from board members;

Action: share YouTube of Brexit presentation with members. SSD

Action: members to volunteer for Farm bench participation. Board Members

17/08 AGENDA ITEM 8 – COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The SSD presented a summary of work done to quantify scale and cost of AHDB's committee work. The presentation was a stimulus to discuss value, relevance and strategic fit of existing committees. The external focus provided by committees was noted. The review was now to be sector led, an early start had already been made in potatoes;

- Cessation of the MI committee and replacement with two Working Groups
- Marketing strategy committee had considered ToRs. Changes discussed by the board were to remove reference to retailers in membership (noting that relevant contributors may be invited by the Chair).
- Export and Seed committee had undertaken workshops to focus on how well the participants line up to our new strategy, whether they were generating enough personal value from attending and how best to run meetings going forward. The work had yet to conclude and the SSD would work with Dan Hewitt on next steps.

Actions: write to MIC members to create Working Groups plus thanks to any who choose to step down. Change ToRs MSC date for next meeting required. Work up next steps for Export and Seed, Staff lead requires clarification. SSD.

17/09 AGENDA ITEM 9 – POTATOES OPERATIONAL UPDATE & KPI'S REPORT (PT10)

The paper was taken as read with exceptions highlighted:-

Ahead –

- CIPC and label changes handled well and on time
- High subscription rates for Nematicide Stewardship
- New SPot sites initiated
- Storage calculator updated and launched.
- AHDB-led entry into International benchmarking for NEPG members.
- Subscription for reformatted Potato Weekly ahead of 2k users target
- Acrylamide issues management applauded by stakeholders
- First year report on EU funded campaign indicated progress above target for most measures

Behind or modified -

- Soils platform survey – industry engagement lower than anticipated, now prioritised.
- CRD and relationship with SBCSR. Some positive movement but acceptance of data still a challenge
- Storage survey – replaced with CIPC contractor dialogue.
- Web based training models around storage out of date – taken site down.
- Farm bench – new modules still being snagged

Board members were asked to endorse a priority ranking process used by RKE committee. This approach was taken as a stop-gap allowing the committee to progress project proposals while budgets were being finalised. **The Board Agreed the ranking approach was acceptable.**

Actions: continue to escalate CRD issues to AHDB Board and Leadership Team. Chair & SSD

Share Comms plan for EU campaign success SSD

Mr Hind joined the meeting.

17/10 AGENDA ITEM 10 – NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all new Board members and they were invited to introduce themselves. They participated in the rest of the meeting as observers.

17/11 AGENDA ITEM 11 – STRATEGY AND BUDGET PT11

A draft annual plan had been circulated with the papers. The SSD highlighted key changes to budget as activities had now been costed (in terms of both expenditure and staff costs). The budget was now available on both a functional basis and broken down by priority and activity.

The budget was agreed by the board on the proviso that a note of how inflation was managed and how hypothecation drivers affected support costs would be circulated.

Action: Circulate note on inflation and hypothecation drivers. Share concerns with Audit Committee SSD, Phil Huggon

In the body of the plan, activities were now detailed under AHDBs four priorities and each activity headed up a series of bundled tasks that functions would undertake. This bundling

approach allowed multiple activities (from AHDBs activity planning process to be expressed in the plan). Each activity was supported with a set of KPIs that had been negotiated with functional directors.

One new work area that had been introduced after the last meeting concerned skills in agriculture. Mr Taylor had discussed previously with the SSD and Tess Howe (AHDB's lead on skills) and after a short summary of the discussion, members were content to sign this section off.

Board members agreed the priorities and activities and recognised that some KPIs required finessing. Messrs Huggon, Taylor and Shakeshaft would assist in this regard. A summary document was requested highlighting the top KPIs for the sector.

There was some concern that staff provision was not sufficient to deliver ambitious export targets.

Actions: Improve KPIs and circulate summary document. Request for explanation of planned Export staffing levels SSD.

17/12 AGENDA ITEM 12 – SUTTON BRIDGE STRATEGY PT12

The Chair introduced the SBCSR strategy discussion noting that a review of the current status of Sutton Bridge was in the Board papers. Following a second wave of inward investment the facility had reached a position of global excellence in storage research facilities increasing the capacity of the residue-free environment for novel research. Short term and longer term needs for the facility had been highlighted in the paper. Changes in KE provision, essential maintenance and IT had been included in the 2017/18 budget. A business case for a Business Development post was requested, which would allow the researchers to focus more on research.

Action: develop business case for business development post. Ensure SB uses central AHDB services effectively to free up Researchers time to win new business.

The Board **recommended** that new Members visit SBCSR as soon as possible to enable them to participate fully in strategy development.

Action: arrange SBCSR visit for new members

The Board **recommended** that SBCSR strengthen academic partnerships with the best aligned research establishments. **Bill Parker/Adrian Cunnington**

17/12 AGENDA ITEM 13 – UPDATES ON GYOP/ADVOCACYPT13/14

Following the Boards request for the SSD to explore options for GYOP within the new strategy, he advised that it had been discussed at the recent Marketing Strategy committee (summary of recommendations in Board papers). MSC members felt it was difficult to make a judgement without information on the success of the current approach, which is due to be reported in July. The overarching education strategy for AHDB was also yet to be formulated. The board reflected on this and other industry feedback. There was unanimous agreement for AHDB to retain ownership and control of the scheme, brand, values and messages. It was agreed that multiple partners be sort to provide finance for GYOP and to maintain a whole industry approach and avoid bias. Current seed suppliers should be contacted regarding the current position.

Action: instruct education team to engage potential sponsors and partners and present a “best fit” solution for approval.

With regard to advocacy, the SSD presented progress made by Mr Farmer. He had sought views from MSC and this was being taken into account. Key points were

- To ensure appropriate sequencing of the activity, especially key face-to-face meetings that were required before social media work
- To progress investment test, providing detail of scope, scale and cost
- To explore extension of the Meat Advisory Panel to cover more food groups
- To grow an outer circle of industry specialists around the existing project working group.

Mr Carroll requested that within the project plan, that organic movement wording replace soil association.

17/13 AGENDA ITEM 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Diary date for new members – cross sector induction 12th April – Stoneleigh

Mrs Hall to circulate both relevant diary dates and contact details of all Board members.

Alistair Redpath shared details of enquiries into new potatoes; Mark Taylor would raise with FPSA.

The Chair asked the Board to champion within AHDB and externally;

1. the Researcher/Grower interaction & partnership of the Strategic Potato Farm; pushing the boundaries to create innovation of interest to the leaders in agriculture,
2. options providing resilience for Sutton Bridge for the future,
3. development of the advocacy approach, influence through communication.

She reiterated her impression of the USPs of AHDB; the ability to get key players round a table to discuss industry issues, and independence in R&D, KE and Market data. She thanked the Board for their time and passion for the industry, and encouraged them to focus on what can be achieved by AHDB.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 13TH June Board **visit** to NIAB CUF – next Board 18th July 2017

INFORMATION PAPERS: Potato Dates for 2017, Contact sheet, China paper

MINUTES BETWEEN BOARDS: R&KE 14 Feb 2017, SUTTON BRIDGECSR 7 Feb 2017, S&E 16 March 2017, MI 23 March 2017 (latter two tabled)

Signed:

Dated: