



Engagement with impact

Delivering knowledge to help
industry develop, access and
implement innovative technology,
techniques and skills.



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Introduction

Potato Council is a division of the statutory levy body, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), which administers the collection of an industry levy to fund essential near-market research and development, knowledge transfer and other associated industry services.

Through effective knowledge delivery Potato Council seeks to enhance engagement with levy payers and key industry stakeholders to drive efficiency, competitiveness and sustainability for the potato industry.

Potato Council facilitates over 12 new R&D projects each year, communicating results directly to Levy Payers. In fact, at any given time Potato Council oversees in excess of 29 research projects and, in total, has funded over 190 projects since 2000 – all aimed at ensuring business sustainability and improving competitiveness.

For industry to truly benefit from Potato Council-funded research and development it is essential that the results are communicated in an effective and timely manner.

Potato Council seeks to become the independent “go to” industry knowledge hub, providing practical, relevant information to strengthen growers’ skills and knowledge. Information is gathered from a number of sources including Potato Council-funded R&D, AHDB research and development and national and international programmes.

Potato Council aims to serve our levy payers by being a top-class, efficient and progressive facilitator of near-market potato research and development and knowledge delivery.

Potato Council has worked closely with HDC to develop an aligned strategy and supporting knowledge plan that promotes collaboration and delivers to both the potato and horticulture industries. This joined up approach offers opportunities to share expertise, create campaigns that reach out to a wider audience and demonstrate value for money. Potato Council will endeavour to work with other AHDB divisions to develop and support cross sector initiatives for the benefit of the levy payer.

Sharon Hall

Head of Knowledge Delivery & Communications
September 2013



Aim of the Delivering Knowledge Strategy

This strategy presents how Potato Council will deliver knowledge derived from the priorities set out in its Corporate Plan. It ensures that Potato Council is focused on delivering relevant and impactful messages to the right person at the right time and provides the vital link between research, development, knowledge and the levy payer to achieve maximum business benefit.

The priority for Potato Council is to ensure that valuable knowledge and practical solutions are delivered to levy payers through accessible channels. In order to focus on the task, Potato Council must prioritise activity, work with others to help spread the word and deliver against AHDB's corporate objectives.

To raise the profile of the industry, Potato Council will communicate levy payer needs to industry influencers, government, research funders and stakeholders to ensure that the funding platform supports research that is both relevant and practical.

Potato Council must monitor, measure, review and assess the impact of knowledge delivered to levy payers and considering impact assessment from commissioning a project through to knowledge delivery is crucial so Potato Council can demonstrate the value of the levy invested.

Potato Council priorities

- Knowledge delivery
- Communications
- Industry profile
- Skills and careers

Potato Council audiences

- Levy payers (growers, purchasers, technical managers & extended workforce within the levy paying business)
- Stakeholders (grower associations & trade bodies such as FPSA, PPA, NFU, NFUS, EA etc.)
- Supply chains-seed suppliers, processors, packers, retailers and exporters
- Agronomists, advisors and consultants
- Policy makers (such as devolved governments, BIS, Defra DECC etc.)
- Research funders and contractors (BBSRC, TSB, university depts. and independent research associations)
- Farming and trade media

AHDB objectives

- Improve efficiency and productivity in the industry to help levy payers have thriving businesses
- Improve ways in which the industry contributes to sustainable development

Delivering knowledge

Potato Council Priority 1

Work closely with industry, research providers and stakeholders to develop and deliver targeted programmes to ensure that levy payers can put 'science into practice'.

Industry status

Knowledge is a key component to business development. Access to information and the tools to develop best practice, address challenges and develop staff is essential if the horticulture industry is to thrive.

Industry need

To drive business forward, levy payers need access to the latest technology, techniques and knowledge. Potato Council will bridge the gap between technical development and science into practice through relevant, timely and accessible knowledge delivery. Knowledge delivery activity includes:

- **Knowledge Transfer (KT):**
extracting relevant information from research and development and translating it into practical solutions.
- **Knowledge Exchange (KE):**
develops and draws on dialogue with industry and stakeholders to exchange ideas, evidence and expertise to encourage take up, drive impact and feed into further strategic development.
- **Communications:**
the delivery of knowledge through accessible and innovative channels.

Potato Council strategic R&D and KT priorities

Knowledge delivery underpins Potato Council's research and development priorities as set out in its R&D strategy and Corporate Plan.

Activities will focus delivery of the outcomes of research on priorities identified by industry in the 2012-2015 R&D strategy:



- **Potato Cyst Nematodes:**
population management and yield modelling, loss of nematicide control options, understand the potential of biofumigants
- **Crop nutrition:**
soil management and exploiting inputs, NPK and micronutrients, nutrition for maximising seed productivity
- **Blackleg and soft rots:**
blackleg contamination of seed crops and control, store ventilation management, epidemiology and control of Dickeya
- **Water use:**
resource availability and exploiting soil water and irrigation, precision application systems
- **Late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*):**
population monitoring and maintaining control strategies
- **Consumer preference determinants:**
understanding flavour and texture and managing crops, new market opportunities
- **Common scab:**
options for control with limited water resources
- **Minimising bruising and damage:**
improved understanding and advice
- **New emerging pests and diseases:**
monitoring incidence and developing control strategies e.g. rotational management of FLN's and *Alternaria*

How will Potato Council deliver?

Potato Council will:

- Follow the Potato Council Strategy Development and Implementation process (see Figure 1.), to capture and assimilate knowledge through mining of the worldwide scientific and technical literature to deliver practical results and evaluate the impact of R&D.
- Based on the knowledge identified in 1), develop a rolling 12-month knowledge delivery plan that captures all knowledge delivery and communications activity to effectively manage, maximise awareness of and improve the impact and take-up of knowledge through innovative communication channels.
- Ensure that knowledge delivery gives growers access to the very latest technology and know-how, so that industry is able to make continuous improvement in efficiency, resilience and sustainability.
- Through direct dialogue with industry, continually identify and address gaps in industry knowledge; developing and delivering practical support through the Potato Council knowledge hub.
- Raise the profile of and deliver outputs from AHDB cross divisional research, development and KT activities.
- Develop innovative KT and communication campaigns that encourage take-up and implementation of new technologies.

Figure 1. The strategy development and implementation process enables PCL to effectively identify and address industry needs in direct dialogue with levy payers and wider industry.



(Source: HDC)

Communications

Potato Council Priority 2

To become the industry knowledge hub by developing channels and activity to ensure knowledge is accessible, targeted, relevant, and has real impact.

Industry status

The way we access information has changed dramatically over the last few years and the instruments we use to access and deliver messages will continue to develop. These changes force the need to constantly evaluate communication channels and increase awareness through new tools that meet the needs of the audience.

Industry need

The potato industry needs to access the Potato Council knowledge hub that provides practical and current advice along with information on future industry developments to help them apply best practice in their business.

How will Potato Council deliver?

Potato Council will:

1. Develop a rolling 12-month Communications Plan that captures Potato Council delivery activity and contributes to identifying and addressing knowledge gaps and focuses on collaborative opportunities for cross-sector working.
2. Develop and maintain a consistent Potato Council brand so levy payers recognise where their levy investment has delivered back to industry.
3. Carry out audience segmentation activity to ensure we produce targeted material for a tiered group of profiled levy payers.
4. Develop mechanisms to enhance levy payer engagement. This activity will be based on targeted programmes to meet levy payers and will be carried out in a number of ways:
 - one to one: e.g personal visits on farm



- one to few: e.g. field events, technical workshops, training sessions and focus groups
 - one to many: e.g. cross sector, cross divisional conferences and workshops
5. Develop mechanisms that encourage grower feedback, contribution and interaction.
 6. Assess impact, review relevance and develop communication channels (Apps, social media, online learning, E-media etc.) that underpin knowledge delivery.
 7. Review and improve levy payer perception, knowledge and views of levy investment and the activities that Potato Council undertake.
 8. Identify and develop new routes to facilitate dialogue and better communicate with levy payers by interacting with industry contributors. For example regional advisers, grower champions, agronomist groups, consultancies and industry ambassadors.

Potato Council Priority 3

Represent industry and ensure levy payers needs are captured and addressed through strategy development, funded research and knowledge delivery.

Industry status

The horticulture and potato industry makes a vital contribution to the nation's economy, jobs, food security, nutrition, health and well-being and accounts for farm gate sales of around £3.4 billion, employing 100,000 workers. Occupying 5% of the (non-grass) cropped land area it produces 40% of total farm gate crop sales (Source: Defra (2011) and AHDB MI (2011)). It is important that this contribution is recognised and that Potato Council supports the industry by communicating the need for continual innovation.



Industry need

Representation of levy payer issues, challenges and opportunities with government, the media, key stakeholders and the research and development funders to influence, challenge and steer.

How will Potato Council deliver?

Potato Council will:

1. Develop industry information and evidence streams that provide awareness of the role, impact and image of the potato industry.
2. Facilitate networks, generate debate and act on behalf of the potato industry to raise the profile of the challenges and opportunities ahead and to ensure the funding platform is well placed to address them.
3. Provide robust evidence that responds to government consultations and management of wider issues relating to, for example, water availability, pesticide legislation and stewardship activities, plant health issues and climate change.
4. Engage in dialogue between policymakers and the industry to inform evidence-based policy development and ensure that levy payers are aware of future developments that may have impact on their business.
5. Develop and work with networks that focus on addressing the barriers to converting science into practice. For example Potato Council and HDC are fully engaged with the Horticulture Innovation Partnership (HIP), where stakeholders across the commercial horticulture and potato supply chain have joined forces with the research and knowledge community to unlock potential for innovation and growth.
6. Use the Potato Council issues management system to monitor and respond to industry issues. Work closely with other industry bodies (such as NFU/NFUS) to ensure that issues which may impact on levy payers are managed in an effective and joined up way and that messages are communicated consistently.

Skills and careers

Potato Council Priority 4

Develop, steer and support skills and career programmes that build capacity, educate the next generation and up-skill the industry.

Industry status

The trend towards highly specialised and capital-intensive enterprises is likely to continue. To be competitive, the GB potato industry needs state-of-the-art production systems, a well-trained professional workforce and a community of scientists, technologists and growers to drive innovation and development. Growers are encouraged to balance efficiency sustainability; producing more whilst using less land, water and energy and meet consumer demands in a growing population.

Industry need

The potato industry must demonstrate that commercial food production is an exciting and forward thinking sector that will only thrive by attracting individuals with skills in agriculture, horticulture, science, business management, marketing, engineering, design and technology.

To do this, industry must have access to new technologies and have the skills necessary to exploit new systems, facilities, research and development.

- **Skills:**

Potato Council provide a wide range of skill-enhancing activities and training delivered directly to the levy payer through KT activity including factsheets, grower guides, practical workshops and DVDs. The focus for Potato Council is to ensure that levy paying businesses have access to the latest technologies to up-skill current staff and new entrants.

- **Careers:**

Potato Council recognises the shortfall of new entrants coming into industry; be it in the science arena, commercial arm or in the field or on-farm. It is important for levy payers that the profile of the potato industry is such that the new generation see the potential and is encouraged to consider a career in the potato industry as an exciting opportunity.

Potato Council supports activity aimed mainly at tertiary education through the funding of PhD studentships, fellowships, summer school undergraduate placements, Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTN) and participation in Advanced Training Partnerships (ATP).

On behalf of levy payers, Potato Council must:

- Support the industry by addressing the shortage of skilled people choosing a career in commercial food production.
- Ensure that existing growers and supply chain businesses have the skills necessary to develop best practice and train those coming into the business.
- Support activities that encourage the recruitment of future scientists and technologists, to ensure that the sector specific research knowledge base is maintained.



How will Potato Council deliver?

Potato Council will:

1. Address the shortfall in investment in the next generation of scientists by promoting the AHDB/ Potato Council-funded studentship schemes.
2. Promote the impact and value of Potato Council-funded studentships that partner new scientists with more established researchers to encourage the transfer of knowledge and skills.
3. Where there is a clear benefit to the levy payer, support AHDB education activity aimed at primary and secondary schools to raise the profile of food, farming and the environment.
4. Support industry-led initiatives that raise the profile of career opportunities in agriculture and horticulture. For example this includes support given to the development of promotional material and collaboration with organisations like Bright Crop (www.brightcrop.org.uk).
5. Raise the profile of the potato industry through activities and publications that put the industry in front of policy makers, researchers, funders and the general public.
6. Ensure that Potato Council delivers skills and training initiatives that levy payers demand and are consistent with AHDB Skills Strategy.
7. Support industry-led initiatives such as 'Open Farm Sunday' that raise awareness through visits on farm and practical demonstrations.

Potato Council must demonstrate value for money to the levy payer.

Through research, development, knowledge delivery and communications, Potato Council must meet the needs of the industry, drive strategy and plan campaigns that tackle future challenges and opportunities.

In order to demonstrate the value of levy invested, it is imperative that Potato Council monitor, measure, review and assess the impact of that knowledge delivered to levy payers.

In January 2013, the AHDB Board and Senior Executive Team developed five core priorities that future corporate and sector plans would be structured around to support levy payers over the 5 – 10 years.

In addition to demonstrating value to levy payers, Potato Council will also deliver against AHDB's priorities.

How will Potato Council assess impact?

To truly understand the impact of Potato Council's research, development and knowledge delivery, Potato Council will focus on two key elements of impact assessment:

- Did the right recipient get the right message at the right time?
- What Potato Council-funded knowledge have levy payers put into practice and what was the benefit of doing so?



1. Potato Council will join the AHDB information and impact assessment group that will capture, analyse and disseminate industry information. This group will encourage cross AHDB participation to demonstrate value across industry.
2. Potato Council will benchmark current awareness of brands, products and services and develop campaigns to improve awareness.
3. Potato Council will evaluate the efficiency of communication channels and use this information to develop new channels or improve existing channels.
4. Carry out impact assessment campaigns to measure the level of uptake and implementation of knowledge of received from Potato Council.
5. Potato Council will produce case studies to demonstrate and encourage uptake of science and innovation.
6. Progress reports will be issued at the end of each year and priorities will be reviewed in consultation with industry. A complete review will be conducted at the end of 2018.

Impact assessment.

To demonstrate value for money to the levy payer, Potato Council must set industry relevant priorities and deliver against AHDB's core priorities.

The current Potato Council business plan can be found at www.potato.org.uk/about-us/governance/corporate-plan

		How do Potato Council's priorities deliver against AHDB's core priorities				
		Potato Council priorities				
		1. Knowledge delivery	2. Communications	3. Industry profile	4. Skills and careers	
How will AHDB support levy payers over next 5-10 years?	AHDB priorities	1. Help levy payers improve productivity and cost management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource management • Climate change • Soils and water • Managing market volatility 	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2. Help levy payers prevent and manage disease	✓	✓		✓	
	3. Help levy payers with market development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Export development • Promoting quality products to differentiate against imports • Market information and analysis 		✓	✓	✓	
	4. Help levy payers understand and respond to the regulatory and policy development	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	5. Help levy payers with the labour market and skills development	✓	✓	✓	✓	

The Potato Council Team

The Potato Council has a small communications and knowledge delivery team of skilled individuals passionate about the potato industry. Their aim is to work closely with levy payers associations, trade bodies and other stakeholders to ensure that every project, communication, publication or strategy development is carried out for the benefit of the levy payer and wider potato industry.

For information on the Potato Council team visit our website: www.potato.org.uk/about-us



The potato industry continues to evolve by rising to considerable challenges across subjects as diverse as finding the best consumer solutions, responding to rising input costs, making best use of the crop protection armoury and preparing for a changing climate. The brief for Potato Council is simple; agree, prioritise and deliver high quality R&D that drives the evolution ensuring value for money by sharing the challenges and actions across AHDB.



In itself this provides the raw ingredients but not the cake. We must communicate the outcomes of R&D in such a way that our levy payers understand what is being delivered, how to take part in the programme, how to access the results and how to apply within their businesses in a way that delivers benefit. In doing so we must recognise the individual needs and preferences of levy payers and find the right blend of products to help them achieve these, from field days to tweets. We must also work across the blurred lines that mingle the purely technical with the other skills and representational needs.

The clarity of thought within this strategy enables us to focus on what we must do to point our limited resources at the right target. Enacting the strategy provides the impact that drives the evolution.

Rob Clayton

Director, Potato Council

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Potato Council is a division of
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