

# NFU Horticulture and Potatoes

## activity update

4<sup>th</sup> May 2018



The NFU Horticulture and Potatoes board and the NFU Potato Forum work tirelessly to make a difference for growers of fresh produce, plants and flowers. This document is a snapshot of recent successes and an overview of the current work activities in key policy areas.

### Top stories

#### [This is our chance to shape this sector's future](#)

Board Chair, Ali Capper, urges horticultural and potato grower members to look at the proposals in the Government's consultation on the future of farming and respond. She emphasises that, whether you produce edibles or ornamentals, this consultation affects everyone. [Read more...](#)

#### [Defra is undertaking survey on seasonal workers](#)

Defra is running a new survey asking farmers and growers to provide information on their labour requirements for temporary workers. The NFU is encouraging members to respond, should they be contacted, as this survey will help showcase the seasonal labour requirements in the Horticultural Industry. [Read more...](#)

#### [New 10-point plan launched to better source workers](#)

The NFU and Association for Labour Providers (ALP) have launched a 10-point plan to help farmers and growers better recruit and retain workers for the upcoming season. The plan aims to support employers and agencies in their work sourcing labour, and offers tips and guidance to improve the chances of employment success. [Read more...](#)

#### [Respond to Command paper with easy form](#)

The Government's consultation on the future of farming closes on 8 May. Every single opinion counts, so it's important that you have your say now. With our easy-to-complete form it's now simpler than ever and takes a few minutes to submit your response direct to Defra. [Read more...](#)

Read more news at [www.NFUonline.com](http://www.NFUonline.com)

### Successes

#### [New 10-point plan launched to better source workers](#)

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#### [NFU lobbying success ensures equal treatment for nursery growers](#)

Intense campaigning by the NFU has led to a Government decision that ensures nursery growers are treated equally to other agricultural businesses regarding business rates, in a success for the industry. The move will help redress an inconsistency in legislation which currently excludes nursery grounds growing mainly or entirely under cover from the exemption.

#### [Tesco signs NFU Fruit and Veg Pledge](#)

Tesco became the fourth major retailer to sign up to the NFU's Fruit and Veg Pledge, committing to supporting British horticulture and ensuring fairness for growers and the supply chain. The pledge is a charter of best business practice that calls on retailers to back British growers and offer suppliers a fairer share of risk and reward.

#### [NFU secures grant to promote environmental benefits of plants in towns and cities](#)

The NFU and the Horticultural Trade Association (HTA) have secured EU funding to promote the environmental benefits of plants and horticulture in urban locations. The Green Cities grant will provide funding that allows the benefits plants and horticulture can offer to urban areas be promoted to policy makers, in order to further unlock support from Government to install more plants, trees and shrubs in our towns and cities.

#### [NFU reports on potato payment deductions](#)

Following a series of meetings with the industry, a new report by the NFU Potato Forum sets out goals for growers, packers and processors to deliver greater transparency in the potato supply chain and realise the potential for increasing productivity and profitability.

#### [Popular NFU Audit Pack gets an overhaul](#)

The NFU's Audit Pack has been helping hundreds of members prepare for their Red Tractor Fresh Produce audit over the last decade and has been updated once more to cover the latest standards. The Pack is totally free for members and can be requested by calling NFU CallFirst on 0370 845 8458.

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### Policy updates – in brief

**Command Paper:** The NFU Horticulture and Potatoes board is encouraging members to consider the Government's proposals on the future of agricultural policy post-Brexit and respond to the consultation. The NFU has created an easy-to-complete form to help members with their responses which takes just a few minutes to submit your response direct to Defra. The consultation closes on 8 May.

**Access to labour:** The NFU and Association for Labour Providers (ALP) have launched a [10-point plan](#) to help farmers and growers better recruit and retain workers for the upcoming season. The plan aims to support employers and agencies in their work sourcing labour, and offers tips and guidance to improve the chances of employment success. The NFU has also been providing evidence to government throughout 2017 and early 2018 to highlight the challenges members are having in securing enough labour to pick and pack their crops. It has consistently shown significant levels of shortages across the season and increases in turnover rates, non-arrivals and workers leaving before the end of their contract period. Both the NFU's Labour Providers survey and End of Season member survey have demonstrated the impacts on farm and the measures members have taken to mitigate the risks. Secretary of State, Michael Gove, praised the NFU's hard work in gathering a wealth of evidence which he said was incredibly clear.

**Potato payment deductions:** The NFU Potato Forum's report into payment deductions, '[Bridging the Gap](#),' has been welcomed across the industry with packers and processors expressing support of its recommendations to deliver greater transparency across the supply chain. Growers are encouraged to report back to the NFU if they feel they are not getting sufficient data to explain the reasons behind rejections and deductions during 2018.

**Crop Protection:** The NFU is lobbying government to redress the balance and ensure the UK has access to the same plant protection products as the rest of the EU, and to maintain this throughout any Brexit 'transition period.' Post-Brexit, the NFU is in discussions with government on what a new UK crop protection policy would look like and how that enables growers to be competitive in an increasingly global marketplace.

**Increasing productivity:** The NFU horticulture and potatoes board is seeking clarity from government on the future of funding for Producer Organisations beyond March 2019. The NFU is also exploring other potential measures that could improve productivity for UK horticulture and potatoes. The British Growers Association has published a [report on PO's](#) to demonstrate the benefits it has provided to UK businesses and the UK economy.

**Fruit and Veg Pledge:** The Fruit and Veg Pledge is a charter for best business practice in the fresh produce supply chain. It was created in 2012 as part of the NFU's Catalyst for Change initiative and four retailers have signed up (Tesco, Aldi, Lidl and Co-op). Further discussions are progressing with a view to obtaining more signatories, and to include plants and flowers under the remit of the pledge. Members should contact the NFU if their customers are not dealing with suppliers in the spirit of the Pledge and we will raise issues anonymously on their behalf.

**Plant Health fees and charges:** Defra's consultation on plant health services fees concluded in February and a [summary of responses](#) is available online. Fees will increase in a number of areas, from April 2018, to ensure all scheme costs are covered, while some schemes will see changes to the way fees are calculated and collected. The NFU responded to the consultation to call for fairness and transparency and to ensure Defra is doing all it can to find cost savings which it can pass on to growers.

**Increasing consumption of F&V:** The NFU is backing a new initiative to develop an industry marketing campaign to promote vegetable consumption. The initiative, launched by the Food Foundation and supported by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Jamie Oliver, is seeking industry and government funding to develop a campaign which will formally be launched later in the year.

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### Recent board and team activities

Members of the NFU Horticulture and Potatoes board had a teleconference to discuss the latest feedback from hort members on the command paper, plus a number of other sector matters including labour, crop protection, apprenticeships and more. In addition:

**Horticulture and Potatoes board chairman, Ali Capper**, attended NFU Policy Board and extraordinary Policy Board meetings to finalise the NFU position for the Command Paper. She also attended NFU Council.

**Horticulture and Potatoes board member, Andrew Burgess**, attended the NFU Future Environment Land Management Group, met with “Farmer Tom” Martin ...Facetime a Farmer and attended the AHDB Consumer Insight event.

**Horticulture and Potatoes board member, Tim Papworth**, had a meeting with the new County Organiser for Norfolk Young Farmers to prepare for the farm event in May, attended a Council Meeting for the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association to discuss future plans and met with Norman Lamb MP, Charles Beardall and Ian Pearson (EA) with BAWAG and Paul Hammett to discuss the issues with Licence renewals in the Bure Ant and Muckfleet catchment.

**Chief Horticulture and Potatoes Adviser, Hayley Campbell-Gibbons**, has attended a member meeting in Gloucestershire to gain feedback ahead of the NFU’s response to the command paper.

**Horticulture and Potatoes Adviser, Lee Abbey**, attended a Veg fund steering group meeting to strategize the campaign rollout. He also presented to a delegation of Chinese farmers visiting the UK, attended a meeting with the Co-op to discuss key horticultural issues and contributed to a Defra teleconference on plant variety rights.

**Horticulture Adviser, Amy Gray**, has held a series of member meetings in Cornwall to gain feedback ahead of the NFU’s response to the command paper. She has also attended a meeting with the Co-op to discuss key horticultural issues, contributed to a Defra teleconference on plant variety rights and met with the BPOA Chair to discuss the Command Paper impact on ornamental plant production and progress the BPOA Review.