

NFU Horticulture and Potatoes

activity update

9th February 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

[Greater clarity needed from Government](#)

Ali Capper, NFU Horticulture and Potatoes Board Chair, explores the impacts of business uncertainty and calls for Government to provide clarity on key issues for this sector. [Read more...](#)

[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. [Read more...](#)

[Your chance to join influential NFU Hort and Potatoes board](#)

NFU seeks nominations from dynamic and forward thinking members to join the Horticulture and Potatoes board and influence the key policies that impact on growers' businesses. [Read more...](#)

[Why we can have our strawberry and eat it too](#)

NFU chief horticulture and potatoes adviser, Hayley Campbell-Gibbons, has written a response to Juliet Samuel's piece in The Telegraph ('Britain must pay the price for living off the fruits of cheap EU workers' – 6 February 2018). [Read more...](#)

Read more news at www.NFUonline.com

Successes

[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.

[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 welcomes Glyphosate re-approval](#)

The uncertainty surrounding the future of glyphosate finally ended after EU member states voted to reauthorise its use for five years. Following extensive NFU activity, the UK was among 18 member states that voted in favour of reauthorisation.

[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.

[NFU secures business rates change for nursery growers](#)

The NFU secured confirmation from DCLG Minister, Marcus Jones MP, that the agricultural exemption from business rates will continue to apply to nursery growers and that the law will be amended as appropriate to ensure no further ambiguity. This follows the NFU's long-running battle to address a wording issue that would have resulted in damaging and widespread implications for nursery growers and the wider horticultural industry. Read more [here](#).

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Policy updates – in brief

Access to labour: The NFU has been providing evidence to government throughout 2017 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. In early December, a new 'End of Season Labour Survey' was launched and attracted nearly 300 responses from members who have identified the scale of the problem, the impacts on farm and the measures they have taken to mitigate the risks. Interim results were shared with the former Immigration Minister before Christmas and the NFU is in the process of arranging a meeting with the new Immigration Minister, Caroline Nokes MP, to bring her up to date and share the final survey results. Members can continue to support the NFU's work by writing to their MP, with the help of an [NFU template letter](#), especially if you reside in Caroline's constituency of Romsey and Southampton North!

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.

NFU seeks Horticulture and potatoes board appointees: The NFU is seeking nominations to join the Horticulture and Potatoes board for the period commencing March 2018 – February 2020. The NFU Horticulture & Potatoes Board consists of 12 nominated members, including an elected chairman (plus up to three additional co-options). 2018 there are six board members whose two-year term has come to an end and who now have the opportunity to seek re-appointment to the NFU Horticulture & Potatoes Board for another two years. Details of the application process are available on the NFU website.

Increasing productivity: The NFU horticulture and potatoes board is seeking clarity from government on the future of the Producer Organisation scheme beyond March 2019 and calling for the continuation of the funds in the short to medium term. 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 in the coming weeks. 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: Having lobbied against any imminent increases, the NFU is awaiting the results of Defra's consultation on plant health services fees. Proposals to increase fees and restructure how they are calculated have been presented across plant health, seed potatoes and exports and, if implemented, would see fee increases from April 2018.

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

Horticulture and Potatoes board chairman, Ali Capper, attended NFU Policy Board and a meeting on NFU plant protection and our supply chain. Ali also met with Prof Simon Blackmore, Harper Adams to discuss the future of robotics for the Fruit industry. She met Defra to discuss hop industry priorities and the AHDB to agree priorities and request a report on the increasing cost of Labour. She attending the NFU West Mids Regional Board & Hustings; chaired NFU Horticulture Board; and represented the sector at NFU Council.

Horticulture and Potatoes board member and Potato Forum Chairman, Alex Godfrey, met the AHDB Potatoes Board as part of ongoing dialogue and to discuss issues topical to our members. He also attended the Hort & Potatoes Board to represent the potatoes sector.

Horticulture and Potatoes board member, Tim Papworth, attended a meeting to discuss Abstraction Reform with the NFU Water group. He was also part of the BAWAG meeting with EA (Ian Pearson) and Natural England at Honingham Thorpe on the RSA (restoring Sustainable Abstraction) and WFD (Water Framework Directive) issues in the renewal of abstraction licences in the Broads, Ant and Muckfleet catchments.

He attended the NFU Horticulture and Potatoes Board meeting at Stoneleigh. Other commitments included the NFU East Norfolk Branch meeting and AGM; the Mardlers discussion group meeting with Paul Kenwood and Colm McKay of British Sugar; and speaking at the Suffolk Holstein Club AGM at Flixton.

Chief Horticulture and Potatoes Adviser, Hayley Campbell-Gibbons, met with Co-Op's Horticulture Technical and Development Manager to discuss challenges in the ornamentals sector and their plans for this category. She attended NFU Horticulture and Potatoes Board and also met with the Fresh Produce Journal to discuss NFU involvement in FPJ live.

Horticulture and Potatoes Adviser, Lee Abbey, attended the NFU Horticulture and Potatoes Board meeting. He also dialled into the AHDB Potatoes Market Intelligence Working Group meeting to review the quality and quantity of data made available on the AHDB website. He attended a GLAA/ALP consultation meeting on eliminating recruitment fees charged to the worker. He also met with Aldi to update them on issues for the horticultural sector and explore the work that they are doing with their supply chain.

Horticulture Adviser, Amy Gray, spoke at the BPOA AGM and Conference on NFU work for the protected ornamentals sector and the current situation on seasonal labour shortages. She also spoke at a Cambridge branch meeting on viticulture in the UK and alternative crops. She met with Co-Op's Horticulture Technical and Development Manager to discuss challenges in the ornamentals sector and their plans for this category. She attended the Wines of GB reception where progress of the new national body was presented.

She also attended NFU Horticulture and Potatoes Board; a meeting with the MAC Review to explore the seasonal labour requirements of the horticultural sector; and a meeting with the NFU Mutual to discuss insurance possibilities for growers in the event of a *Xylella* outbreak.