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|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Committee Name:</b> | Regional Horticultural & Potatoes Board          | <b>Meeting Date:</b> | 25 June 2018                                          |
| <b>Circulation:</b>    | NFU East Midlands Horticultural & Potatoes Board | <b>Location:</b>     | Cadas House, Wootton Road, Elsham Top, Brigg DN20 0NU |
|                        |                                                  | <b>Chairman:</b>     | Alex Godfrey                                          |
|                        |                                                  | <b>Secretary:</b>    | Danny O'Shea<br>Holland (Lincs) County Adviser        |
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## Present

Alex Godfrey (AG), Anthony Hopkins (AH), Danny O'Shea (DO), Graham Partington (GP), Louise Wright (LW), Mark Leggott (ML), Mark Nundy (MN), Simon Bartlett (SB), Sue Lamb (SL), Tim Casey (TC)

## Apologies

Andy Coaten, Andy Hammond, James Grant, John Mason, Jon Hammond, Phillip Lilley, Ruth Girdham

## Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting on 6 March 2018 were approved.

## Matters Arising

Review of Defra's consultation on proposals for future agricultural policy post-CAP (Common Agricultural Policy)  
DO circulated initial consultation board response to the board and, with AG, collated our national board submission.

### Board Elections

At our previous meeting, ML stated that there is little information available as to which boards require co-opted members. This has in turn led to members not applying for positions or flagging up their interest.

- AG to raise this issue with the national horticulture and potatoes team.

## Regional Policy Report

### Veg Advertising Campaign

It was reported at the last meeting that progress is being made to develop a new Veg advertising campaign which should be launched later this year. Led by the Food Foundation and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, stage one of the campaign will seek funding to set up a directorate which will be responsible for developing the campaign and securing onward funding for the next 5 years.

- DO was asked to find out more what NFU representation or influence will/does the NFU have over this new campaign and report back to the board. Complete – see below.

The Food Foundation's campaign to launch a new veg advertising campaign has seen pledges of nearly £100,000 from food supply chain businesses, food and health charities, celebrities and members of the public – these include £20k from Tesco, £20k from Birdseye, £10k from Ella's Kitchen, £10k from AHDB, £5k from the NFU and £5k from Sir Paul McCartney. The Food Foundation had set a target of £100k in order to kick start the campaign with the appointment of a brand manager and comms manager. With one day to go on the crowdfund, it looks set to achieve its target.

#### Good for Growers Pledge

The NFU hort team launched its new Good for Growers Pledge on 22 June at NFU member Lovania Nurseries. The launch was also attended by Aldi who has confirmed they are the first to sign up. A second retailer has agreed to sign the pledge later in the year. The board noted that Aldi has been the worst supermarket for supporting British flower growers (for example only 30% of its tulips are British, compared with 100% for many of its competitors, and the only way British growers can sell to Aldi is through the Dutch auction). However, the board expressed optimism that Aldi's signature to this pledge could be used to influence them to improve. The board also queried the communications plan for the pledge.

- AG (or LW, who will be attending the next National Horticulture & Potatoes Board meeting in his place) to find out more about how this initiative is to be promoted going forward. What is the comms plan?

#### LSA Charitable Trust Horticultural Industry Fellowship

The NFU is one of a number of horticultural industry bodies supporting the LSA Charitable Trust Horticultural Industry Fellowship, which is due to be launched at the end of June. This scheme aims to encourage the professional and personal development of young growers in the horticultural sector to become the industry leaders of the future. The NFU horticulture team will be supporting this initiative by inviting fellows to sit in on a National Horticulture Board meeting and extend invitations to industry events that may be of interest. No member of the Board was aware of the LSA Charitable Trust.

- AG/LW to find out more.

#### Defra and the Government's Actuary Service

Defra and the Government's Actuary Service (GAS) are looking at ways in which to compensate growers in the event of a Quarantine Plant Health Outbreak in the UK following pressure from the NFU and others within the industry. The UK government currently does not compensate growers for destroyed stock or lost earnings due to movement restrictions. Similarly, there is no insurance option for growers to take to protect their businesses in the event of such an outbreak. Last week, Defra and GAS held a Roundtable meeting with a wide range of insurance companies, including the NFU Mutual, to determine the current barriers to developing insurance policies for Plant Health, the potential appetite to develop such policies and the potential to develop a joint compensation scheme which includes a level of government reimbursement as well. The board welcomed this as a positive move.

### **National Board report**

- At the March meeting Ali Capper was re-elected Chair of the board for the next two years. Derek Wilkinson, of G's, was elected vice-chair, replacing Guy Poskitt.
- Amy Gray is to leave the NFU at the end of this month to pursue a PhD in the Arctic. Her replacement has been announced as Rupert Weaver, who joins from the NFU's Land Management Team
- Most of the National Board's March meeting was taken up with the Health & Harmony consultation, which members of this board will have seen the published summary of.

### 10 Point Plan on Labour

The National Board approved a 10 point plan on labour, which is billed as advice to growers on how to help themselves attract enough of the right quality labour. Nothing in it will be news to a good grower. A large part of the reason for publishing it is to demonstrate to government that the industry is already doing everything it can for itself.

- DO to circulate the plan to the board.

### Defra Labour Data Collection Exercise

AG reported that Defra has started its own labour survey which it is sending to 25,000 businesses (not just horticulture). SL confirmed that she had received this survey, and that it focus exclusively on the quantity of labour available, and not on its quality, which is at least as big an issue. AG/LW to report this back to the National Board.

### SAWS

- DO to send Sir Edward Leigh the latest briefing on what we're calling for and ask for support.

### Low Pay Commission Consultation

There is a consultation underway on the new rates of national living wage and national minimum wage, as well as conditions (e.g. whether there should be a premium for unsociable hours/zero hours contracts).

### Apprenticeship Levy

This affects businesses with a wage bill over £3m. There is some dissatisfaction about how to access the funds it generates (supposed to be used for training apprentices). If any members have concerns please ask them to contact DO.

### Crop Protection

Ali Capper and Chris Hartfield has a productive meeting with CRD In March at which they got the firm impression that there has been a culture shift in CRD and that it now wishes to support the industry more actively. Both reported that there is still a long way to go, though.

## **Items for the attention of the National Board**

None except as noted above.

## **National Potato Forum report**

### Plant Health Fees

APHA have published their response to the consultation responses, which basically ignores them all and imposes the charges it wanted to. This will have a big impact on seed potatoes, with one grower estimating it will add £1.50/t to the cost of production. Because it is based on full cost recovery, though, charges are supposed to be reviewed regularly, and in theory can go down as well as up.

### CIPC

The European Commission has recommended withdrawal of approval for CIPC, which could happen as early as 2019 (probably with a use up period).

### DMN

This sprout suppressant has been available on the continent for several years, but is still not approved for use in the UK. The latest word is that it could be approved for 2019. If CIPC is to be withdrawn this is imperative, although still not ideal for all growers to have to make an immediate switch.

- DO to ask NFU HQ to communicate that we're calling for a seamless transition to DMN's use, once CIPC is removed in 2019.

### Communications Strategy

The potato forum, and in particular LW, have developed a communications plan to improve engagement with potato growing members.

- DO to put LW in contact with the national member communications manager, Victoria Wilkins to discuss the strategy and possibly help with its implementation.

### AHDB Potato Strategy

Rob Clayton presented the progress against the AHDB Potatoes strategy to the Forum. The forum considers that in future it might pick a strand of the strategy and ask the relevant AHDB service line head to talk about it, rather than Rob Clayton, who is effectively the commissioner of the services.

### McCain

McCain have revealed further details of their whole crop contract, which will be rolled out from 2019. There is some early indication of Grower dissatisfaction, though the NFU has to be careful about getting involved in contract negotiations. ML suggested that in the past BGA has represented processing growers in such situations, and that it still has experience in this area.

- AG to find out more.

### Red Tractor

Approximately 10% of growers have received non-conformances for not having tested irrigation water for E Coli. The NFU has written to and met with Red Tractor to ask them to communicate the new rules (and the reason for the new rules) to growers clearly.

## **Items for the attention of the Potato Forum**

None except as noted above.

## **Member Engagement**

### Brassica Week

Next Brassica Week will take place 10 and 11 October 2018.

- DO and MN to meet in July to plan and deliver another NFU day-2 member meeting.

## **Any Other Business**

### Rural Connectivity Survey

A survey of our members across Lincolnshire and Holland (Lincs), focusing on rural connectivity has been sent out. Once we have the results and determine what we are calling for, the group will be in a position to lobby local government.

Vining Pea Crop

MN requested where we are with foot rot resistance.

- AG to look into this and report back to the board in due course.

**Future Meetings**

- 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (conference call)
- 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018