BPTA Council Report 2012

Today's report is really an update on last year's Council Report since many projects that were mentioned then have progressed during the last year and some are yet to be finalised. The most significant project - that to update the BPTA Terms and Conditions to better reflect today's trading environment – has thankfully been completed!

The following summarizes the activities of the sub committees that make up Council:

Europatat Committee:

We continue to have an input into the Europatat Commissions with concerns being raised about proposed reductions in MRL's especially with regard to Cadmium which the EU, despite industry objections is reducing by 25% (from 0.1ppm to 0.075ppm). Another area of note, that was highlighted at the Pre-Packer's Commission, are the regulations being introduced with regard to spurious health claims that are currently being made about certain food products. In future there will be strict guidelines with regard to health claims. Updated RUCIP rules have also been introduced (copies of which are on our website) for those who trade ware and/or seed under RUCIP rules.

Seed Regulations Committee:

Changes to the EU seed tolerances under Annexes I & II of the Seed Potato Directive are still under discussion at an EU level but it's looking likely that these will be amended to align more closely with the UNECE standards and in doing so create greater harmony of standards across the Community. Individual states will still have the option of applying tighter domestic tolerances should they so desire. In practice the current UK domestic tolerances will comply with most of the changes and therefore shouldn't impact too much on our trade.

Domestically, in England and Wales, Fera have implemented 'full cost recovery' for Plant Health work resulting in a 50% increase in fees for seed certification this season with further increases being implemented in the future subject to potential cost savings that can be made. These potential savings and possible impact to the SPCS are to be discussed within a working group at which we have representation.

The inaugural meeting of a Plant Health Forum took place earlier this year at which BPTA was represented as a stakeholder member. The object of this forum is to act in an advisory capacity to government with regard to Plant Health at an EU level therefore it's important that we are present at these forums to represent the potato trade.

Export Committee:

There has been some discussion with Canada with regard to the export of mini-tubers from Scotland but whilst the Canadian authorities were reasonably relaxed with this concept it is unlikely to progress due to the fear of setting a precedent for imports from other EU countries. This season's record-breaking seed exports have gone reasonably well despite the challenges of 2011 growing season with no major issues being reported. **Legal Committee:**

After nearly 3 years of meeting's, email correspondence, telephone discussion, and **24 Draft** revisions the updated BPTA Terms and Conditions for the Purchase and Sale of Seed Potatoes were made public on the 1st May, a little later than one would have liked but still in time to enable their use for the 2012/13 season. Whilst the major reason for the update was to both exclude injurious chemical injury from the 'latent defect' clause and to provide a framework for recompense in such a situation, we also took the opportunity to update a number of other clauses to better reflect today's trading environment. Importantly we have gained agreement for these Terms and Conditions from both the NFU and NFUS.

The membership has been written to advising them of the changes, including a sample letter to send to customers and suppliers to ensure incorporation of these Terms and Conditions for future trade. It is important that all

members within a chain of sales and purchases operate under these new Terms and Conditions to enable a ware grower to access a seed grower's insurance should an injurious chemical or admixture claim arise in the future.

A legal seminar was held last autumn which was very well attended and, from feedback, well received. It is intended to hold an Arbitration training day this autumn for those who are listed as Arbiters.

Ware Committee:

EU legislation has been put in place with regard to the movement of potatoes from areas known to be affected with the Epitrix Beetle to minimise the risk of spread outside of these areas. So far this impacts only upon movement of Potatoes out of Portugal and regions in the North West of Spain.

Education & Entertainment Committee:

The social activities in 2011/12 have proved to be more successful this year with the Golf, Dinner Dance and Curling all well attended. Whilst the fishing was reasonably supported the weather dampened enthusiasm; it never stopped raining! This season's Dinner Dance will be held on Friday 23rd November at the Woodlands Hotel Broughty Ferry so keep that date free!

With regard to education; the legal seminar, crop classification course, in 2011, and refresher day, in 2012, at SASA were all well attended and found to be beneficial by those attending.

Finance and Membership Committee:

Following the BPTA flyer and thanks to some lobbying the membership has increased over the year but there's still room for new members who could benefit from the services offered by BPTA.

The legal fees incurred changing the T&C's and projected fees for the corresponding changes required to the Arbitration Rules have eaten into reserves hence the proposed increase in membership fees. Assuming no further extraordinary costs and with further increases in membership we hope that fee increases can be minimal going forward.

Finally, as retiring President, I would like to thank Graeme Skinner, who retired from Council during the year, the present Council members for their support given over the past 2 years and in particular Charlie (our secretariat) for keeping me focused on the job in hand. I wish Andrew Skea all the best in his new role as President of the BPTA.

Gerard Croft