

Potato Trade Topics

The Newsletter of the British Potato Trade Association

March 2013



Welcome ...

... to the first ever issue of *Potato Trade Topics* — the new irregular e-newsletter for members of the British Potato Trade Association!

The object of the newsletter is to inform the membership of matters of relevance to the UK potato trade. In this issue we cover membership activities for the coming year including the Europatat Congress, the BPTA AGM and various educational and social activities.

There is also an update on developments on a number of issues of concern to the industry.

The BPTA Council and Secretariat would welcome feedback from members on the content of the newsletter. Do you find it interesting and informative? How regular do you think the newsletter should appear? What information or features would you like to see included in future issues? Please contact the Secretariat



Andrew Skea
BPTA President

Europatat Congress 2013

The 65th Europatat Congress will take place from 30th May until 1st June 2013. The venue this year is Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) in the Czech Republic. The joint hosts — Europatat and the Czech potato association — have pleasure in extending a warm invitation to BPTA members.

The Congress Programme begins with Registration in the Grandhotel Pupp in the evening of Wednesday, 29th May and the morning of Thursday, 30th May. Thursday continues with Europatat Commission meetings on seed potatoes, early potatoes, ware potatoes and technical issues. In the evening there will be a Garden party in restaurant Poštovní Dvůr. Friday morning, 31st May sees the remaining Europatat Commission meet-



Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad)

ings on RUCIP and packers. Followed by the Europatat General Assembly. After lunch a workshop will focus on the Central and Eastern European market and the influence of the EU enlargement and developments in agricultural powerhouses such as Russia and Ukraine.

There is a complementary partnership and social programme.

More information is also available on the congress website - www.europatatcongress.eu - where you can register online.

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Highlights:

- Russian tit-for-tat reprisals cause problems for EU exporters.
- Progress at last with seed potato harmonisation.
- BPTA Free Legal Helpline available to members.
- AGM, Educational and Entertainment activities for members.
- Council Elections—vacancies.

Russia to impose import restrictions on potatoes from 1st June 2013

Roselkhozadzor, the Russian phytosanitary authority has announced restrictions on import of all EU potatoes to take effect from 1st June 2013 (originally only seed potatoes and effective from 1 April 2013).

Russia contends that it cannot continue to allow imports into Russia of potatoes from zones, places and sites of production not declared as Pest Free Areas/ Places of Production.

Negotiations between the EU and the Russian Federation are taking place in an attempt to resolve the situation.

However the Head of the Russian service has made it clear that resolution of the dispute depends on the EU and member states position on the export of Russian seed potatoes and tree nursery products to EU.

EU imports of Russian potatoes are, of course, prohibited on phytosanitary grounds and there does not seem to be any reasonable prospect of that position changing in the foreseeable future.

The EU has responded to Russia by offering greater transparency regarding checks on re-exported products and the



sharing of information on the status of certain quarantine organisms in EU Member States.

Europatat, our parent organization, is liaising with both the EU Commission and Russian Potato Association in order to facilitate an early solution.

Seed Potato Marketing Directive – a work in progress

The EU Commission has recently circulated its draft proposal to amend the Seed Potato Marketing Directive with a view to adopting the text by the end of May this year. The draft proposal which seeks the harmonisation of seed potato classes across Europe, may be viewed in the members-only area of the BPTA

website – http://www.bpta.org.uk/members_area.php

The BPTA has written to Defra and the Scottish Government to reiterate its support for the draft proposals which were the fruit of an Experts Working Group on which Dr John Kerr, Head of Potato

Branch at SASA is a prominent member.

It is now some 4 years since the proposals were first mooted and is likely to be at least another 2 years before any legislative changes are implemented in the UK.

BPTA Legal Helpline – 01775 842557

BPTA members are reminded of the availability of the BPTA Legal Advice Line, provided by Roythornes Solicitors.

The advice line offers up to half an hours' free telephone advice – usually plenty enough to resolve most issues. It is open 9am-5pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Roythornes Solicitors are one of the leading agricultural law firms in the UK and have been advisers to the BPTA for a number of years. Their experience of the industry is backed up by sound commercial knowledge and they have a well deserved reputation.

How the scheme works in three simple steps

1. Call the legal advice line on 01775 842557, explaining you are a BPTA member and giving an outline of your question. Alternatively e-mail lauragregson@roythornes.co.uk with the same details.

2. Your contact details will be taken by the call handler, and passed on to the most appropriate member of the Roythornes team, who will call you back to offer you advice.

3. The advice line offers up to half an hours' free telephone advice – usually plenty enough to resolve most issues. It is open 9am-5pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

We hope members take advantage of the advice line. In many cases an early call can save much larger problems arising at later stages.



BPTA AGM – Tuesday 25th June 2013

Members should note that the BPTA AGM 2013 has been brought forward by one day to Tuesday, 25th June 2013 and will take place at SASA, Roddinglaw Road, Edinburgh EH12 9FJ commencing with a buffet lunch at 1pm.

If there is sufficient interest the AGM will be followed by a guided tour of the

world renowned potato plots at nearby Gogarbank Farm.

This is members opportunity to influence the policies of the Association and /or question Council and the Secretariat on any matter of Association business. Please make a point of attending.

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BPTA Growing Crop & Tuber Training 2013

The Association will, once again in conjunction with SASA, offer members the opportunity to attend Growing Crop Classification Training and Tuber Classification Training Courses in 2013.

Last year Council decided that in future it would run full 2 day courses every 2 years with a one day refresher course in alternate years. This year we will offer full 2 day courses.

The Growing Crop Classification Train-



ing Course will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, 2nd and 3rd July

2013. Participants will be given the opportunity to indicate whether they would wish more field based training as opposed to the usual indoor element on day 2.

Looking further ahead Tuesday and Wednesday, 5th and 6th November 2013 have been earmarked for the Tuber Classification Training Course.

Further information will be circulated shortly.

BPTA Golf, Fishing and Curling Competitions

Each year the BPTA organises a golf and a fishing competition for members and their guests. These usually rotate in location between Scotland and England.

In 2013 the Fishing Competition is taking place at Rutland Water, Edith Weston, Oakham, Leicestershire on Wednesday, 29th May.

The Golf has been timed to fit in with the Potato Council's Potatoes in Practice event. The competition will be held at Glenisla Golf Course, Pitcrocknie, Alyth, Perthshire on Wednesday, 7th August 2013.

If neither golf nor fishing is to your taste you might find that the ancient Scottish sport of curling is your gambit. Bonspiels take place twice yearly in Novem-

ber and February with the former at Murrayfield Ice Rink in Edinburgh and the latter at Dewar's Ice Rink in Perth.

Why don't you make the effort to get involved in one, two or all three BPTA competitions? Not only would you be made most welcome and have an enjoyable day out with a chance to win a trophy and prize, you would also be able to participate in a great networking opportunity.

Ever thought about standing for Council?

Each year at least 3 members of Council are required to retire although they may put themselves forward for re-election.

This year we have 2 vacancies in any event due to the resignation of two members for constitutional reasons. So there is no better time to get elected.

New blood is essential to maintain the

vitality and vigour of any organisation and BPTA is no different.

The Council meets four times a year and, if elected, you would be expected to take some part on one of its committees. Not an onerous task, but essential to the smooth running of the Association. Travel expenses are available to all Council members, if required.

A letter inviting nominations will shortly be hitting your inbox so please consider standing.



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The BPTA Office is open Monday-Thursday between the hours of 8.30am and 1.30pm



Charlie Greenslade
BPTA Secretary

Hello. I am Charlie Greenslade, Secretary of the British Potato Trade Association. If you have any questions about the Association or your membership then please do not hesitate to contact me at the times and address noted above.

Be Part of The Association

“How many people does it take to market potatoes?”

“At least it gave me a chance to see the little-known but intriguing Potato Marketing Board building at Cowley, into whose car park I pulled to turn around when I realized that I was utterly lost. The building was a substantial 1960s edifice, four storeys high and large enough to accommodate 400 or 500 workers. I got out to wipe the wind-screen with some pages torn from an owner’s manual I found in the glove box, but was soon staring at the arresting grandeur of the Potato Marketing Board HQ. The scale of it was quite astounding. How many people does it take to market potatoes, for goodness sake? There must be doors in there marked ‘Department of King Edwards’ and ‘Unusual Toppings Division’, people in white shirts sitting around long tables while some guy with a flip chart is telling them about exciting plans for the

autumn campaign for Pentland Squires. What a strange circumscribed universe they must live in. Imagine devoting the whole of your working life to edible tubers, losing sleep because somebody else was made No. 2 in Crisps and Re-constituteds or because the Maris Piper graph is in a tailspin. Imagine their cocktail parties. It doesn’t bear thinking about.”

Notes from a Small Island by Bill Bryson
1995

Bill Bryson a best-selling American author of humorous books on travel, as well as books on the English language and on science.



The British Potato Trade Association (BPTA) was created from the merger of the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants (NASPM) and the Scottish Potato Trade Association (SPTA) in July 2006. This union has resulted in an Association with the widest UK potato industry representation possible.

The bulk of the tonnage of seed potatoes traded in Great Britain for both the home and export markets (between 250,000 & 300,000 tonnes annually) is handled by the 120 members of the new Association. This gives the Association greater negotiating power on behalf of its members. The BPTA covers all aspects of potato production and sales, both at home and for the export trade.