Potato Trade Topics

The Newsletter of the British Potato Trade Association

October 2013

Welcome ...

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

I hope you all managed a good break this summer and that those of you involved in harvesting have enjoyed this fair autumnal weather.

In this issue we celebrate the launch of the new BPTA website, report on developments in Europe, on various BPTA activities and look forward to our premier event of the year - the BPTA Dinner & Dance aka 'The Tattie Ball'. While this is an excellent social event it is also a rare opportunity to meet up with colleagues and share experiences and hopes. I look forward to seeing you all there!

Don't forget to let the BPTA Secretariat know of your views on *Potato Trade Topics,* the new BPTA website or any other issue for that matter. The BPTA exists to serve its members so don't be afraid to make contact even if you just want to say 'hello'.

Andrew Skea
BPTA President

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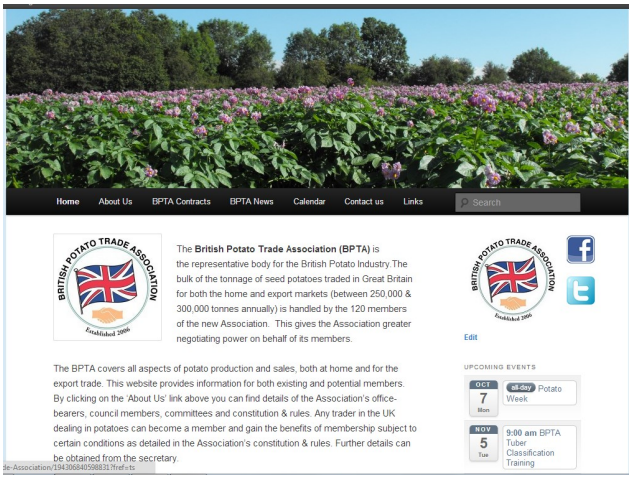
New BPTA Website Launches!

Earlier this year the BPTA website, which had served the Association well since its inception in 2006, was seriously hacked and fatally compromised. BPTA Council took the decision to create a new website using WordPress.

Although operational the new BPTA website is still a work in progress and the BPTA Secretariat will be gradually developing it over the coming months. We would welcome any comments, suggestions etc from members. Please take the opportunity to have a surf through the website and report any broken links or incorrect or incomplete information.

In addition to regular features brought forward from its predecessor the new website now includes an electronic Calendar which will cover all events for the UK Potato Industry which you can integrate with your own one.

As with the old website the new one features a password protected members-only area. What's new is that any employee of a member company can apply for their own individual login username and password. This will hopefully widen use of the new website and through that develop a better understanding of BPTA .



Screen shot of the home page of the new BPTA Website

www.bpta.org.uk

Highlights:

- Europatat Congress 2014.
- Russian import restrictions.
- Report on the July Standing Committee on Plant Health.
- Anyone for Psalmon?
- Profiles of Council members: Philip Burgess & Tony Barnes.
- Events, events, events!
- Start of the "Scheme".

News from Europatat

The Europatat Board has decided that, in alternate (even) years beginning with next year 2014, the **Europatat Congress** will be a business-only event located in Brussels and without a social or accompanying person programme. This follows a survey of attendees at the 2013 Congress in Karlsbad, Czech Republic where 80% of respondents supported this approach which it is hoped will keep costs down and better attract keynote speakers.

The 2014 Congress will therefore take place in at the Van der Valk Brussels Airport Hotel on 22-23 May. It is envisaged that Commission meetings will take place on Thursday 22 May with the AGM and workshop on Friday morning, 23 May. It is planned to host a dinner on the Thursday evening.to permit networking between attendees.

The Europatat Secretariat and the European Commission have been working hard to resolve the **Russian import restrictions** applied to potatoes *inter alia* . This included the provision to the Russian phytosanitary authority - Rosselkhoznadzor - of a draft Memorandum of Understanding which dealt with all of the issues raised by the Russians. Unfortunately this has not yet been agreed and this and the fact that, due to a poor harvest, Russia is short on potatoes suggests that the ban has little to do with phytosanitary concerns and more to do with political trade matters against the backdrop of possible EU trade agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine - countries whom the Russians want to join with them and Belarus and Kazakhstan as members of the Russian-led Custom Union. Paradoxically the Russian Potato Union is currently considering membership of Europatat.

The July European Commission **Standing Committee on Plant Health** traditionally focusses on potato plant health issues. This year's meeting on 17th – 18th July was no different. Among the matters discussed were:

Presentation by the Commission of the final report of an audit carried out in The Netherlands from 8 to 12 October 2012 in order to evaluate the plant health controls in the potato sector. The audit found that plant health controls are being implemented correctly and a number of recommendations are being satisfactorily addressed.

The meeting heard that official surveys conducted by member states on 2012 harvested tubers for potato ring rot (58,000 ware and 25,000 seed samples) and potato brown rot (56,000 ware and 24,000 seed samples) had shown that the incidence level for ring rot had increased slightly whereas the incidence level for brown rot has significantly decreased. Poland explained its internal controls to prevent the unauthorised export of potatoes to other member states without a certificate confirming absence of potato ring rot.

The Commission continues to monitor the implementation in member states of the PCN Directive and announced that in 2012 the total EU area of ware potato production surveyed for potato cyst nematodes was 22,000 ha.

Member states surveys for Epitrix confirmed its absence apart from the already demarcated areas in Portugal and Spain.

Discussions continue on a Bosnia-Herzegovinian approach to export ware potatoes to the EU. Croatia which joined the EU on 1st July this year was a major export market for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Recent interceptions of potato ring rot on potatoes imported from Turkey prompted the need for a EU technical audit the phytosanitary situation in Turkey.

Something fishy about the Charity Raffle!

With the 2013 BPTA Dinner & Dance on the horizon (see page 3) it is timely to hearken back to the 2012 event when Gerard Croft of Greenvale AP, and immediate Past President of BPTA, was successful in the Charity Raffle.

His prize, donated by Agrico UK Ltd, was a days fishing for two on the Carse Beat of the river Tay north of Aberfeldy just downstream from the confluence with the river Lyon. Gerard chose Ross Haynes of Pseedco Ltd to partner him on Wednesday, 26th June 2013.

Ross (pictured right) bagged this salmon which was estimated at 17lb before being returned to its watery home.

The BPTA holds a charity raffle each year at its Dinner & Dance with the proceeds donated to a charitable cause chosen either by the President of the Association or his honoured guest. In 2012 Andrew Skea chose Cancer Research UK and it benefited from £500 raised on the night.

Donations of charity raffle prizes from BPTA members for the 2013 draw are cordially invited. Please contact the BPTA Secretariat.

Who's who on Council (Part 2)

Philip Burgess — is Production and Technical Manager at the Co-operative Farms, a role which sees him involved in the full supply chain from growing potatoes on the Co-op's own farms to retail shelf via the Co-op's own packhouses in Scotland and the Midlands. He also advises and works with growers throughout the UK to ensure quality potato supply both packhouses. As a trained plant pathologist, he has always been interested in seed production, seeing seed quality as the key to successful quality pre-packing.

He is also a member of the PCL Research and KT committee and is the Co-op's technical representative to the Fresh Potato Suppliers Association.

Philip lives in East Lothian and is married to Anne-Marie with two sons (20 and 17yrs) and a daughter (15yrs). In his spare time he enjoys many outdoor activities but especially hill walking, sailing and travel.

Philip Burgess

Tony Barnes

Tony Barnes – is Seed Sales Manager at Pseedco Ltd. Tony started in the potato trade in 1995 with MBM Ltd and was there for 14 years in various roles from QA technician to QA Manager and eventually joined the seed team in a sales role. His next career move was to Branston Ltd and then onto Pseedco in October 2012.

Tony's role at Pseedco Ltd is primarily to sell seed to growers and the horticultural market. He is also involved in new variety development and the trialling of new varieties.

Tony lives in March, Cambridgeshire with his wife Lorraine and two sons, Carl (22 yrs) and Ashley (19 yrs). Tony enjoys playing darts, golf and taking part and hosting quiz nights at his local sports club, where he is also President.

BPTA Educational & Entertainment Activities

As winter approaches thoughts turn towards the seasonal festivities and there is no better way to begin than by attending the **BPTA Dinner & Dance.** The 'Tattie Ball', as it is affectionately known, takes place on Friday 22nd November at the Woodlands Hotel, Broughty Ferry. (Go to flyer here.) Why not take a company table and invite and impress your guests?

On 4th September BPTA in conjunction with Roythornes ran a membership seminar on the new **BPTA Arbitration Rules 2013**. If you missed out and are keen to attend a repeat event please email the BPTA Secretariat.

Also in September the BPTA hosted a training day for **RUCIP 2012** Users, Arbitrators and Experts in conjunction with the RUCIP European Committee. If you missed out and would like a copy of the PowerPoint presentation please email the BPTA Secretariat.

Unfortunately it has been necessary to cancel the **Tuber Classification Training Course** planned for 5th & 6th November 2013 at SASA, Edinburgh. This course, which complements the Growing Crop Course held in July, did not attract sufficient interest.

The **2013 BPTA Fishing Competition** was held at Rutland Water on 29th May in inclement weather. Ross Haynes again demonstrated his prowess with a rod as he bagged the best catch of 16lb 7oz. Plans are afoot to return on 28th May 2014 so get it in your diary now!

The **BPTA Golf Competition** was held on 7th August 2013 at Glenisla Golf Club, Alyth, Perthshire. This was the day before *Potatoes in Practice* at nearby Dundee and it was hoped that this might attract a bumper card. However this backfired somewhat and only 10 players were able to drag themselves away from their preparations for the event. The competition was won by Dennis Fearon of SG Baker Ltd and he was presented with the Beeson Cup (see photo below - centre). Andrew Lamont of Greenvale AP (on right) was the runner up followed by Finlay Russell a guest of McCain Potatoes.

Last but not least the **BPTA Curling Competition** first round will take place on 12th November 2013 at Murrayfield with the second round at Perth on 28th February 2014. All teams are currently complete for this popular tournament.

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The BPTA Office is open Mon-Thurs between the hours of 8.30am & 1.30pm

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.

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

Start of the "Scheme" by John Marshall

"It was in 1932 that John Marshall, now owner of the farm of Dalreoch, Dunning Perthshire decided to make a speciality of the production of *Majestic* seed potatoes. Following at first a steady progress of rogueing to maintain the standard of his stock, Mr Marshall decided to apply much more rigorous methods and in 1944 laid the foundation to build up an "elite" stock of *Majestic*.

Between 50 and 60 plants were selected from healthy stock; the product of these was planted at high land in Perthshire; 30 plants were then selected for their health, the product planted out in a turnip field at Dalreoch; again a selection was made, the product laboratory tested, and those tubers that came up to the desired health standard planted out near Dalguise, in upper Perthshire.

Now Mr Marshall has 10 acres of the stock bulk grown at Dalreoch, all stock seed standard the general plan being to maintain a constant selection of plants the tubers of which will be tested under laboratory conditions for virus, thus giving from time to time a fresh source of "elite" stock while at the same time maintain the standard of the bulk stock by general methods of inspection. The bulk stock is preserving its health and vigour well while grown under commercial conditions."

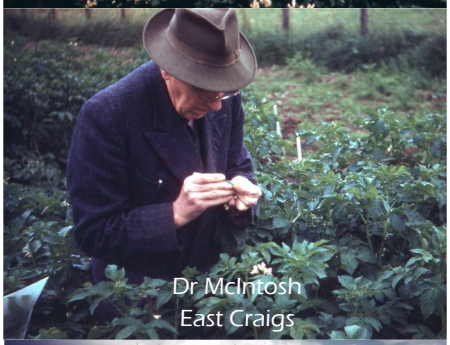
Farming News September 1949 (abbr)

What I recall

My father told it this way. "I had been toiling in the sun all day pulling out diseased plants and this "towny" with a trilby hat watched leaning on the gate". He called across "Why don't you pull the good ones out". Rather than giving him a piece of what he was thinking he listened to what the man had to say. Just a well as this was Dr McIntosh, the chief government potato scientist from East Craigs.

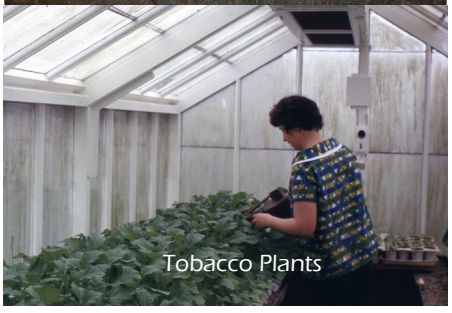
This was the birth of the Virus tested scheme which became official in 1950. Virus testing required a lot of hands so in 1955 aged 5 I entered the sweatshop, a Dalreoch greenhouse, not for tomatoes but tobacco plants! My job to lay out frozen packets of bundles of 20 potato leaves which had been collected from the plots two or three days earlier and placed in my mother's freezer. Defrosting frozen leaves produced lots of juice which was then squeezed onto young tobacco seedlings, previously rubbed with carborundum dust. The plants were left to grow for a few weeks. If virus x or y venial necrosis was present it was easily spotted on the marker plants. It was repetitive and tedious particularly in a hot July. I cannot remember seeing a diseased plant! I then made myself a promise which I was never able to keep.

Dr McIntosh
East Craigs



Dr McIntosh
East Craigs

Elite *Majestic* stocks Dalguise



Tobacco Plants