

**NORTH EAST SCOTLAND AGRICULTURE ADVISORY GROUP**

**VIRTUAL SKYPE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER, 2020**

- Present:**
- Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce** – C Philips
  - Aberdeenshire Council** – Provost W Howatson (Chair),  
Councillors S Duncan, J Ingram, D Robertson, I Taylor and J Whyte
  - Aberdeen City Council** – Councillor N MacGregor
  - Angus Council** - Councillors K Braes
  - Bank of Scotland** – P Reid
  - Food Standards Scotland** – P Smyth
  - Herd Advance Ltd** – J Grant
  - JHI** - K Thomson
  - LANTRA Scotland** – S Howden
  - Moray Council** – Councillor D Bremner
  - NFU Scotland** – C Adam and L Paterson
  - SAC Consulting** - D Ross
  - Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society** – T Bailey and J Booth
  - Scottish Forestry** – J Nott
  - Scottish Land and Estates** – F Van Aardt and D Fyffe
  - Scottish Rural College** – R Graham
  - SEPA** - P Wright
  - Visit Scotland** - J Robinson
- Apologies:**
- Aberdeen City Council** – A Scott
  - Aberdeenshire Council** – Cllr J Hutchison
  - Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate** – J Stuart
  - Angus Council** - Cllr B Myles
  - JHI** – Prof D Roberts
  - Moray Council** – Councillor T Eagle
  - Scottish Enterprise** – G Ford
  - Strutt and Parker** – L Irwin
- Officers:**
- Aberdeenshire Council** - N David, Senior Committee Officer, J Harrold, Assistant Committee Officer and D McDonald, Industry Support Executive ED & PS (Aberdeenshire Council)

**1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the meeting. Members were asked if they had interests to declare. No declarations of interest were intimated.

## 2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Partnership **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
  - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - (b) advance equality and opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
  - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment had been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

## 3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 23 SEPTEMBER, 2020

The Minute of Meeting of 23 September, 2020 was circulated and **approved** as a correct record.

## 4. MATTERS ARISING

Derek expressed that there were three previous items to be reported on. The first, a visit to Glensaugh Farm which was to be arranged after the last meeting of the Group. Due to current Covid-19 restrictions, this will be arranged for as soon as the restrictions allow. Secondly, there was a request to contact the Dimbleby Team which has now been completed with no commitment to a representative attending a meeting as of yet. Thirdly, there was to be an update on the Internal Market Bill which will follow once the bill has completed its passage through the process.

## 5. PRESENTATION: FARM CO-OPERATION: MORE RELEVANT THAN EVER BY TIM BAILEY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SAOS

Members **noted** a presentation by Tim Bailey, Chief Executive of the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society, which addressed the benefits of farm co-operation which included increased efficiency, productivity, and mitigation of risk. He provided members with an insight to how technology can help to align a business mission through providing the opportunity to increase scale and form a closer customer connection. Tim explained the barriers to a farm co-operation platform, including the perception that it is an outdated concept which aids the stagnant mindset in the agricultural industry. This concept has proven especially effective during the Covid-19 pandemic, a pulled knowledge and set of resources has allowed co-operatives to be agile and resistant. After a question and answer session, the Chair thanked Tim for an informative presentation and his contribution to the meeting.

## **6. PRESENTATION: EU EXIT – EXPORT UPDATE BY PAT SMYTH, HEAD OF IMPORTS/EXPORTS, FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND**

. Members **noted** a presentation by Pat Smyth, Head of Imports & Exports for Food Standards Scotland in which the impending EU Exit and what this may mean for exports in the agricultural industry was discussed. Pat has been working on Food Standards Scotland's Brexit negotiations for the last three years and has noted several assumptions to illustrate the possible outcomes that Brexit will bring in terms of trade. Pat then discussed (1) the UK National Listing, (2) the EU Traces System, (3) the need for certification for Export, (4) charging for Export Health Certificates and (5) the Heath and ID mark on packaging. After a question and answer session, the Chair thanked Pat for an informative presentation and his contribution to the meeting.

## **7. PRESENTATION: THE HERD ADVANCE STOCKMAN SYSTEM BY JILLY GRANT AND MURDOCH DUNCAN, HERD ADVANCE LTD**

Members **noted** a presentation by Jilly Grant, Grant and Murdoch Duncan, Herd Advance Ltd, which discussed current industry challenges and limitations, industry drives and focus, staffing shortages and new marketing opportunities. Jilly went on to discuss their new technology, the Herd Advance Stockman System and explained the benefits of using a system such as this, the industry traction and the route to market. After a question and answer session, the Chair thanked Jilly for an informative presentation and his contribution to the meeting.

## **8. BULLETIN: UK AGRICULTURE BILL**

Members **noted** an oral update report by the Industry Sector Executive on the UK Agriculture Bill, which passed into law on 11 November 2020 and although it primarily affects England it will have implications for how agriculture in Scotland is supported. This Bill will influence trade deals that will inevitably affect Scotland's agricultural sector and the importance of international trade will be highlighted.

## **9. BULLETIN: POST BREXIT POTATO EXPORTS**

Members **noted** an oral update report by the Industry Sector Executive on Post Brexit Potato Exports, which detailed the importance on potato exports in the North East. A NESAAG Seed Study revealed that Angus has 31% of the national potato area, with the importance of seed potatoes is rising with their value being higher. With Brexit looming, operators have been increasing their levels of import to ensure that exporting is certain before 1 January 2021.

## **10. A.O.C.B.**

There was no further competent business to be discussed.

## 11. PROPOSED DATES OF 2021 MEETINGS

The proposed dates of the 2021 meetings of NESAAAG are 10am on Wednesday 28 April 2021, 10am on Wednesday 15 September 2021 and 10am on Wednesday 24 November 2021. All meetings will take place via Skype unless otherwise stated. These dates were **agreed** by the Group.