Agronomists’ Conference
7 to 8 December 2016
Agronomists’ Conference
Wednesday 7 December 2016
Peterborough Arena, East of England Showground

AHDB Potatoes Programme*

Day 1

11:00 Registration, refreshments and exhibitions

11:30 Chair’s welcome
   Fiona Fell, Chair of AHDB Potatoes

11:40 The view from the field in 2016
   John Sarup, SPUD Agronomy & Consultancy Ltd

11:55 Blight population dynamics
   David Cooke, James Hutton Institute

12:15 Future blight control: inspiring, innovating, and integrating solutions
   Siobhán Dancey, James Hutton Institute

12:35 Q&A on blight papers

12:45 Lunch

13:40 Potato cyst nematode population dynamics
   Matthew Back, Harper Adams University

14:05 Potato cyst nematode: know your enemy
   Sebastian Eves-van den Akker, University of Dundee

14:30 Q&A on PCN papers

14:40 Future access to water for potato growers
   Jenny Bashford, AHDB

15:00 Refreshments and exhibitions

15:30 Helping agronomists deliver for their clients (workshop)
   Philip Burgess and Rob Clayton, AHDB

16:05 Putting the three ‘Is’ into commercial practice
   James Daw, SPot Farm West and W B Daw & Sons

16:25 Delivering change to benefit growers: lessons for agronomists
   Mark Stalham, NIAB CUF

16:45 Chair’s closing remarks
   Fiona Fell

17:00 Close

* details correct at time of publication, subject to change
Speaker biographies

Conference Chair
Fiona Fell, Chair of AHDB Potatoes sector board, member of the AHDB Board.

Fiona Fell has been on the Board of AHDB and Chair of AHDB Potatoes since 2014. She was an Independent Board member of the Potato Council for six years previously. She is currently also a Board member of CIEL (Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock), one of the new AgriTech Innovation Centres. Originally from a farming family in Worcestershire, Fiona is now based in Northumberland.

The view from the field in 2016
John Sarup, SPUD Agronomy & Consultancy Ltd

John Sarup is one half of SPUD Agronomy & Consultancy Ltd. Established by John in 2012, the company now has influence on over 10,000 acres of potatoes from the Cheshire Shropshire border in the west across to the Humber estuary and then on up to Dunbar in the north. Previously, John has occupied roles as company agronomist for B&C Farming in Norfolk and expert potato consultant with SAC Consulting, covering Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire.

Blight population dynamics
David Cooke, James Hutton Institute

Dr David Cooke is a senior plant pathologist at the James Hutton Institute who specialises in the study of diseases of potatoes, soft fruit, forests and natural ecosystems caused by Phytophthora species. His research on potato late blight (caused by P. infestans) uses genetic fingerprinting to examine population change in crops in Britain, across mainland Europe and other parts of the world. The data is used to update crop management and decision support systems to ensure best practice is adapted to the continually evolving pathogen population.
**Future blight control: inspiring, innovating, and integrating solutions**  
Siobhán Dancey, James Hutton Institute

Originally from Canada; growing up between small town Ontario and Toronto until the age of 19, Siobhán then moved to Glasgow where she worked and travelled for several years before enrolling at Glasgow University. Siobhán graduated with a 2:1 in Plant Science with honours in 2012. Following this she began a Masters of Research at the James Hutton Institute in Dundee for one year. Siobhán continued to work at the James Hutton Institute for a year following her Masters and prior to starting her PhD in 2014. Her PhD project is working with Peter Skelsley and David Cooke as supervisors to develop improved late blight management techniques using modelling and experimental methods.

**Potato cyst nematode population dynamics**  
Matthew Back, Harper Adams University

Dr Matthew Back is a Reader in Nematology at Harper Adams University. To date, he has published 21 peer-reviewed papers on a variety of topics. He is a regular presenter at scientific meetings and specialist industry events, where he is recognised for his expertise with potato cyst nematodes (PCN) and other potato pathogens. In response to tightening EU pesticide legislation and the reduction in chemical control options for PCN in particular, Dr Back has focussed his research efforts on biofumigation and has supervised several PhD projects in this area.

**Potato cyst nematode: know your enemy**  
Sebastian Eves-van den Akker, University of Dundee

The focus of Dr Eves-van den Akker’s research is on plant-nematode interactions, and spans three main threads: Genomics – how plant-parasitism arose, and how it is continuing to evolve, and where do the vulnerabilities lie; Molecular and structural biology – the detail of how nematode effectors manipulate their plant targets to inform synthetic biology-based solutions; and Metagenetic environmental sequencing – mapping the national distribution of nematode pathotypes through environmental sequencing to inform sustainable resistance deployment and nematode management. The overarching aim of these threads is to understand, combat and ameliorate crop losses to plant-nematodes.
Future access to water for potato growers
Jenny Bashford, Knowledge Exchange Manager, AHDB Potatoes

Jenny represents AHDB Potatoes across the East of England. Jenny is an experienced specialist in soils, water, legislative change at European and national level; focusing on using and translating the latest quality research, information and intelligence available to provide growers with the right information at the right time and in the right language so they can make well-informed decisions about their business.

Helping agronomists deliver for their clients
Philip Burgess, Head of Knowledge Exchange, AHDB Potatoes

Dr Philip Burgess has been AHDB Potatoes Head Knowledge Exchange since 2014 and has been instrumental in developing the Strategic Potato Farm Programme putting research into practice. His career has followed the potato throughout, including as research pathologist but, subsequently, spending 16 years as senior technical manager and production agronomist involved in the commercial production of seed, processing and pre-pack potatoes.

Helping agronomists deliver for their clients
Rob Clayton, Sector Strategy Director, AHDB Potatoes

Having studied plant pathology at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, Rob started out as a researcher at Sutton Bridge in 1991 and moved to the potato team at SAC in Aberdeen in 1995. Rob joined what is now AHDB Potatoes in 2000 as an agronomist with a particular interest in bringing a commercial and practical perspective to R&D. In 2010 Rob moved from Head of Knowledge Transfer to Sector Director, and was appointed Strategy Director for AHDB Potatoes in August 2015. As Sector Strategy Director for AHDB Potatoes, Rob works closely with the management team and advisory committees to develop the division’s business plan and deliver on the priorities set out by and for the grower and purchaser levy payers.
Putting the three ‘Is’ into commercial practice
James Daw, SPot Farm West and W B Daw & Sons

James has been growing potatoes all his life. The family business, W.B. Daw and Son is based in Staffordshire. James also grows combinable crops and has a livestock enterprise, but potatoes form a substantial part of the farm’s activities. The crop is all grown for processing and is marketed through two grower groups which James co-founded. Alongside holding a seat on the Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee for potatoes, James Daw has also been instrumental in getting the SPot Farm programme off the ground as the first ever host.

Delivering change to benefit growers: lessons for agronomists
Mark Stalham, Research Scientist, NIAB CUF

Mark Stalham is a Senior Research Associate at NIAB CUF. Supervised by Eric Allen, he was awarded his PhD on crisp quality from Queens’ College, Cambridge in 1990. His expertise lies mainly in irrigation scheduling, control of common scab, soil and cultivation management and is currently working on AHDB Potato-funded and commercial projects on soil management within rotations. He regularly conducts training courses and seminars on the transfer of science into practical solutions for the potato industry, including the AHDB SPot Farm programme.
Agronomists’ Conference
Thursday 8 December 2016
Peterborough Arena, East of England Showground

AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds Programme*

Day 2

09:00 Registration, refreshments and exhibitions

09:30 Chair’s welcome
George Lawrie, Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee Chair, AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds

09:40 Herbicide resistance in Australia – the value of harvest weed seed control
Michael Walsh, The University of Sydney

10:10 Using fungicides effectively in wheat and barley
Stuart Knight, NIAB

10:40 Using fungicides effectively in oilseed rape
Faye Ritchie, ADAS

11:00 Latest shifts in azole/SDHI performance and implications for management
Neil Paveley, ADAS

11:15 Refreshments, networking and exhibitions

11:40 Advancing sustainable solutions for crop health and protection
Jon Knight, AHDB

12:05 How can we maintain pyrethroid efficacy?
Caroline Nicholls, AHDB

12:30 Lunch, networking and exhibitions

13:30 Whistle-stop tour of the new Recommended Lists
Simon Oxley, AHDB

13:50 Evolutions in nutrient management
Pete Berry, ADAS

14:20 The pros and cons of cover cropping and the impact on soil health
Ron Stobart, NIAB

14:50 Innovation on farm: A farmer’s perspective (soil quality)
David Walston, Farmer and Nuffield Scholar

15:10 Innovation on farm: A farmer’s perspective (crop establishment)
Russell McKenzie, Monitor Farmer and Nuffield Scholar

15:30 Chairman’s closing remarks
George Lawrie, AHDB

15:45 Close

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Speaker biographies

Conference chair
George Lawrie, Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee Chair, AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds

George grows spring barley for seed, in partnership with his brother, on their family farm in Kinross, Perthshire. He represents NFUS on the AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee. George also chairs the AHDB-led UK Partnership for Crop Nutrient Management (which is overseeing the revision of RB209) and Scottish Agronomy (a co-op based in East Scotland that provides trials and advice to members).

Herbicide resistance in Australia – the value of harvest weed seed control
Michael Walsh, Director of Weed Research, University of Sydney

Michael is an Associate Professor with the University of Sydney, where he directs weed research across the Australian Government’s Grains Research and Development Corporation’s northern cropping region. Previously, he was a senior research fellow with the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative (AHRI) at the University of Western Australia, where he focused on the introduction, development and adoption of harvest weed seed control systems.

Using fungicides effectively in wheat and barley
Stuart Knight, Director of Crops and Agronomy, NIAB

Stuart joined NIAB in 2009 when The Arable Group became part of NIAB, having worked for TAG (and previously ARC) since 1997. With over 20 years’ experience as a research agronomist, his current responsibilities include agronomy research and knowledge transfer, and regional trials delivery. Stuart’s research interests cover most aspects of combinable crop husbandry, including nutrient management and crop protection chemical evaluation. He graduated with a degree in Agriculture from Wye College (London University) and spent six years at Newcastle University working as Technical Manager for the North of England Arable Centre, before joining ARC. Stuart’s family still farms in east Kent.
Using fungicides effectively in oilseed rape
Faye Ritchie, Plant Pathologist, ADAS

With around 15 years’ experience in plant pathology, Faye’s research focuses on the epidemiology and control of soil-borne and foliar diseases of potato, cereals and oilseed rape. Recent research activity includes the evaluation of the performance of fungicides against the major diseases of oilseed rape – phoma leaf spot/stem canker, light leaf spot and sclerotinia – for AHDB and industry. She holds a BASIS certificate in Crop Protection.

Latest shifts in azole/SDHI performance and implications for management
Neil Paveley, Crop Protection Group Head, ADAS

After a PhD in plant pathology, Neil spent a decade as an agronomist, working on cereals, oilseed rape, potatoes and vegetable brassicas. This change from academia to practical agronomy emphasised the disconnect between research and practice. He now leads a research group focused on the practical challenges facing farming. A co-author of the original ‘Wheat Disease Management Guide’, Neil initiated the fungicide dose-response trials in the early nineties, which have run continuously since. These trials were the first to detect the decline in the field performance of the azoles against septoria. Dr Paveley leads research projects on resistance management for government, the levy bodies and industry, and has published over 50 peer-reviewed papers and book chapters. He is a member of the Fungicide Resistance Action Group and advises the European Plant Protection Organisation on resistance.

Advancing sustainable solutions for crop health and protection
Jon Knight, Head of Crop Health and Protection, AHDB

Jon is responsible for developing and implementing research and development strategy for pests, weeds and diseases for agricultural and horticultural crops. His team works closely with industry and government to ensure the availability of a range of suitable crop protection measures for a wide range of crops. Originally trained as an agricultural zoologist, he has worked in the broad area of pest management over the last 20 years at Imperial College and moved to AHDB at the start of 2012 to lead research for AHDB Horticulture. His research work on over 60 projects has ranged from the implementation and management of practical pest control to the development of new approaches to pest risk analysis and plant health issues. He is currently a member of the Plant Health Advisory Forum and holds an honorary position at Imperial College London.
**How can we maintain pyrethroid efficacy?**
Caroline Nicholls, Crop Protection Scientist (Pests), AHDB

Brought up on an arable farm in Essex, Caroline first got involved in the business at the age of six (when she grew her own plot of wheat in the garden) and she is still involved in the farm business today. She joined AHDB in 2008, after graduating from Newcastle University with a degree in agriculture with honours in agronomy. She is BASIS and FACTS qualified and also has the BETA certificate for biodiversity and the environment, and the Rothamsted Post Graduate Award in Current Research and Crop Protection. At AHDB, Caroline manages and conducts research on integrated pest management.

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**Whistle-stop tour of the new Recommended Lists**
Simon Oxley, Head of Crop Production Systems, AHDB

Simon heads up the Crop Production Systems team at AHDB, which includes responsibility for AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds largest project – the AHDB Recommended Lists for cereals and oilseeds (RL). He oversees the research process to ensure the RL meets the requirements of the agricultural industry. He has extensive knowledge of crop varieties and is BASIS qualified.

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**Evolutions in nutrient management**
Pete Berry, Head of Crop Physiology, ADAS

Pete has worked at ADAS for 13 years and is currently based at ADAS High Mowthorpe in North Yorkshire. Prior to this, he worked as a post-doctoral researcher in crop science at Sutton Bonington, Nottingham University. His work looks to improve performance and reduce pollution of cropping systems through an understanding of crop physiology, plant breeding and agronomy. Increasing crop yields sustainably, optimising nutrient inputs, exploitation of precision farming technologies, lodging control and plant growth regulation are his current priority research areas. His goal is to produce sound practical advice based on rigorous and high-quality research (he has authored 37 peer-reviewed research papers).
The pros and cons of cover cropping and the impact on soil health
Ron Stobart, Head of Agronomy Knowledge Transfer and Training, NIAB

Ron is an experienced research agronomist who has worked for the business since 2000. He has previous industrial experience in the agri-chem industry, the commercial seed trade and the development of speciality crops. His research interests are in the area of farming systems and soils. He has delivered a wide range of material on this subject both nationally and internationally, including NIAB TAG’s Agronomy Training workshops on Mechanisation and Soils.

Innovation on farm: A farmer’s perspective (soil quality)
David Walston, Thriplow Farms and Nuffield Scholar

David manages his predominantly arable family farm in Cambridgeshire growing wheat, barley, oilseed rape, peas, beans, oats, linseed and maize, in addition to a small herd of Wagyu cattle.

Over the past few years, he has experimented with direct drilling, cover cropping, soil nutrition and reintroducing livestock into the arable rotation. A 2015 Nuffield Scholar, David has searched the world to discover why some soils are more productive than others to help him use fewer inputs while maintaining/increasing yields.

Innovation on farm: A farmer’s perspective (crop establishment)
Russell McKenzie, Huntingdon monitor farmer and Nuffield Scholar

Russell McKenzie is the arable manager and agronomist for two family farming businesses to the west of Huntingdon (on the Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire border). Covering about 750ha of land, both owned and contracted, he grows combinable crops on mostly clay-based soils. In his battle against black-grass, he has investigated the value of cultural control techniques, including longer rotations and cover crops. Russell has recently completed an AHDB-funded Nuffield scholarship on direct drilling across a variety of soil conditions.