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**AHDB news release**

For immediate release

18 November 2024

**AHDB and GB Potatoes agree on use of residual potato levy reserves to fund seven industry projects**

The potatoes sector is to benefit from the delivery of seven industry projects funded by residual levy reserves, after a grant agreement was signed between the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and [GB Potatoes](https://www.gb-potatoes.co.uk/).

The recommendation, made by AHDB’s board earlier this year, received official approval following the wind down of levy payer activities within the sector and has been supported by the main potato membership organisations

Scott Walker, GB Potatoes Chief Executive said: “Following the wind up of AHDB Potatoes, the sector has continued to face a number of serious challenges, including threats from disease and the ongoing issue of access to necessary plant protection products.

“This grant will kickstart new initiatives and galvanise existing projects that have previously operated on an annual, uncertain basis. It offers a foundation to transform key industry projects and develop a sustainable, industry funded model for initiatives that are critical to the future of the potato sector. We are delighted that GB Potatoes has successfully secured the residual levy funds through a grant from AHDB to support projects for the benefit of the entire potato industry.

“It is a fantastic opportunity for the potato industry to now take control of its future and influence the direction of the sector by addressing industry obstacles and building resilience.”

AHDB CEO Graham Wilkinson said: “The potato sector is a vital part of UK agriculture, and we are pleased to be able to support growers and the wider industry by releasing these residual funds for projects that will significantly contribute to the industry’s success.”

The seven proposed projects are:

1. **Potato Blight Project** – addressing the significant threat of potato blight, by monitoring genetic changes and fungicide sensitivity.
2. **Aphid Monitoring Project** – supports national aphid monitoring, providing industry-wide data for decision-making.
3. **Management Tools to tackle Viruses Project** – this project proposes joining Horticulture Crop Protection (HCP) on behalf of the seed sector in order to access essential functions for sustaining high-grade seed production.
4. **Reputational Management Project** – safeguarding the industry's reputation through strategic monitoring, proactive crisis management, centralised coordination, influencer engagement, and media outreach.
5. **Bridging Information Gap Project** – provision of transparent and reliable data on potato cultivation, varieties, and national yield.
6. **CIPC Residue Monitoring Project** – to support the industry providing data to the Chemical Regulation Division (CRD) to assess chlorpropham (CIPC) residues in stores. Failure to submit data risks rendering stores with a CIPC history unusable.
7. **Updating Nutrient Management (RB209) Project** – with the industry always looking to move forward and adopt new practices there is a need to ensure revision of fertiliser recommendations reflect current technologies.

The funding will be transferred from circa £1.8m of potato reserves held by AHDB since the wind down of levy payer activities, £400k of which is set aside to cover any potential residual liabilities. The grant will be tapered over three to five years, reducing each year as GB Potatoes increases its flow of voluntary industry funding. It will comprise £1,371,880 over the first three years.

The grant for years four and five could total £426,238, but this would be dependent on a successful review and the availability of sufficient potato funds from funds set aside from residual liabilities.

Letters of support for the funding of the seven projects were received from the National Farmers Union (NFU), NFU Scotland, NFU Cymru, the British Potato Trade Association, the Fresh Potato Supplier Association and the Potato Processor’s Association.

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**Notes to editors**

GB Potatoes is a membership organisation that brings together the whole potato supply chain to collaboratively address the challenges confronting the potato industry to ensure a robust and sustainable future for potato production in Great Britain. For further information visit [GB Potatoes](https://www.gb-potatoes.co.uk/) or contact Scott Walker, CEO GB Potatoes on 07768654955 or scott.walker@scconsultancy.uk

AHDB is a statutory levy board funded by farmers and others in the supply chain. Our purpose is to be a critical enabler, to positively influence outcomes, allowing farmers and others in the supply chain to be competitive, successful and share good practice. We equip levy payers with easy-to-use products, tools and services to help them make informed decisions and improve business performance. Established in 2008 and classified as a Non-Departmental Public Body, AHDB supports the following industries: meat and livestock (Beef, Lamb and Pork) in England; Dairy in Great Britain; and Cereals and Oilseeds in the UK. For further information visit [ahdb.org.uk](file:///%5C%5Cahdb.local%5Cshared%5CAHDB%5CComms%20%26%20Market%20Dev%5CLevy%20Payer%20Communications%5CMedia%20%26%20PR%5CProactive%5C2024%20Releases%5CTEMPLATES%5Cwww.ahdb.org.uk).

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