This past year has flown by, and it seems each year becomes busier than the last. The past year has not been without its challenges. Prolonged wet weather at the start of the year delayed planting for many, resulting in varied yields across the country. That said, the 2024 harvest proved to be much smoother than the previous year in most potato growing areas, offering some welcome relief. This all takes place against the backdrop of a significantly smaller potato-growing area in Great Britain compared to a decade ago - a trend that should be a cause for concern for the Government.

Looking ahead to 2025, seed availability is likely to be a key challenge. Access to preferred varieties may not be guaranteed for all, highlighting the need for greater focus on the origins of our seed and how we ensure the industry can secure its requirements. With much of our supply dependent on a small number of mini-tuber breeders and pre-basic growers, there is an urgent need to strengthen seed security for the future.

Despite these challenges, there are many reasons to remain optimistic. The journey of GB Potatoes over the past year has been one of progress and promise. By uniting the supply chain, GB Potatoes has provided a platform for collaboration, innovation, and shared problem-solving. As we move into 2025, I am confident that we can maintain this momentum and turn obstacles into opportunities in order to safeguard the future of potato production in Great Britain.

A particular highlight of the year has been the signing of the grant agreement between the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and GB Potatoes. This agreement unlocks the residual potato levy reserves, providing vital funding for projects that will benefit the entire industry. Delivering these projects over the course of 2025 marks a pivotal step forward for GB Potatoes and our collective efforts to support the sector.

As we welcome the New Year, I want to thank everyone across the potato community for your hard work, dedication, and resilience. Together, we can embrace the opportunities ahead with a shared purpose. On behalf of GB Potatoes, I wish you all a prosperous and successful 2025!