

British Potato Trade Association

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22nd May 2013

Karen McCallum-Smith
Public Health Division
Directorate for Chief Medical Officer and Public Health
Room 3.EN
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Ms McCallum-Smith

A Healthier Scotland: Consultation on Creating a New Food Body

I refer to your email of 8th April 2013 in which you invited comments on the Scottish Government's proposals to create a New Food Body in Scotland. I am writing to respond on behalf of the British Potato Trade Association which represents potato trading companies in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK.

As a UK organisation we are, by default, predisposed to UK-wide regulatory bodies where possible. We are involved with an umbrella organisation in Europe where we are regularly involved in EU consultations on harmonisation between EU states. We believe that such harmonisation makes trade easier thus allowing more trade and delivering better prices for producers in areas where we have genuine competitive advantage. At the same time easier trade provides lower prices for businesses and consumers in destination areas. We therefore see a move to fragmentation of UK regulation as contrary to the logic of greater integration between regions and countries, and are therefore sceptical of the need for a new body in Scotland for food regulation.

Potato production in Scotland forms a vital part of the arable cycle and underpins the farming economies of large parts of rural Scotland. In a good year Scotland can produce close on 1.5million tonnes of potatoes with a value of over £200m. The Scottish seed potato industry produces 0.35million tonnes, is conservatively valued at £50m per annum and exports over 100,000 tonnes of seed potatoes ex UK each year making a sizable contribution to the Scottish economy in general. Care needs to be taken to ensure that nothing is done which would undermine this vital industry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Charles W Greenslade'.

Charles W Greenslade
Secretary