

NBA response to last week's press statement by Scottish Officeholders.

The following response was circulated to the Scottish press last Friday (March 24th)

“The NBA has read the statement of its Scottish Council's officeholders with great interest.

It is clear they have no intention of working with the NBA or the NBA's Board of Management.

What Patrick (Lambert) and John (Cameron) have said has to be seen as the latest continuation of an eleven month long effort to disrupt the NBA and distract it from its work.

We are pleased that Patrick has said he will, at last, be discussing the issues he has raised with ALL our Scottish members and we would like him to do so as quickly as possible.

We are sure that the great majority of these will tell him, and John, that if they want to set up their own organization they should leave the NBA and do so.

We would like members who support the NBA as a UK organization to make their feelings clear to both Patrick and John by either telephone or letter. (Contact details can be found at the end of this Newsletter)

Members will also have a chance to make their views known when the Scottish Council holds its next meeting and we hope that the time, date and place of this meeting is made known to all who might wish to attend.

We would also like to remind Patrick, John, and Keith (Redpath) that NBA members in Scotland will remain members of the NBA as long as they pay their subscriptions and the NBA has every intention of continuing to represent them on both national and Scottish issues.

If Patrick, John and Keith wish to set up an independent organisation they will have to do so outside the NBA.

All the Scottish members who have contacted us so far have said they wish to remain with a National (UK) organization. This week we have also had requests for membership forms from Scottish farmers who have still to join the NBA.

We have to assume that they, and all other farmers with an interest in the NBA, wish to be associated with NBA (UK) and will continue to do so until we hear otherwise.

In the meantime the NBA continues to represent the Scottish beef farmer on a number of broad industry issues of which the struggle to earn more income from finished cattle, the

development of the about to emerge export market, and the pursuit of even better prices for OTM cattle remain the long established priorities.

* Do you agree with the formation of a Scottish Cattle Group or Scottish Cattle Association? Since April last year the NBA has been the victim of an organised campaign to disrupt it, steal its members and establish an alternative beef industry organisation in Scotland.

Despite this it has still been able to represent the interests of Scotland's beef farmers in a number of important areas including the lifting of the export ban, the removal of the OTM Rule, and the struggle to lift the value of all beef cattle – all of which are pursued at a UK level through Defra, supermarkets, and the European Commission.

Last week Keith (Redpath) finally confirmed that the organisation he and colleagues have been planning would be called either the Scottish Cattle Group or the Scottish Cattle Association.

Keith and colleagues are at liberty to try and form this new organisation if they wish. However NBA members in Scotland will be reassured to know that whatever happens they will remain members of NBA (UK) and the NBA will not give up its responsibilities to them and allow their names (and subscriptions) to be taken over.

This means individual members of the NBA remain members of the NBA until they alone decide otherwise.

Those who support the continuation of a UK organisation with Scottish representation on its Board of Directors and on the NBA's specialist national committees, as outlined by the Scottish Council's Constitution which was circulated to all of the NBA's Scottish members last week, should make their feelings known to the following individuals.

Patrick Lambert, NBA Scottish Chairman, CGG Greig Farms, Pitlochrie Farm, Castleside, Cupar, Fife. KY14 7SQ. Tel. 01337 860455. Mobile 07968 606001.

Keith Redpath, Sylaw House, Spylaw Farm, Kelso Roxburghshire, TD5 8DX. Tel. 01573 225670. Mob. 07836 630211.

Jim, Kennedy, NBA Scotland vice-chairman. Lyosnspark, Lyonstown, Maybole KA19 7HS. Tel. 01655 883 472. Mob. 0374 281 735.

John Cameron, Balbuthie, Kilconquar, Leven, Fife, KY9 1EX. Tel. 01333 730 210.

The NBA supports the continuation of a Scottish Council that represents the interests of its Scottish members on devolved issues and conducts activities specific to Scotland within Scotland itself.

However it is clear that the disruptive element dominating the current Council's

activities should be removed from office at its next AGM and replaced with other NBA members who are ready to work constructively within Scotland and also with the office holders and staff of NBA UK.

* An assessment of the NBA's financial policies. The financial management of the NBA has been identified by Keith (Redpath) as the core reason for his disagreement with the Board and others in the Association.

He claims the NBA's financial position is deteriorating and his ideas to counter this have been rejected by the Board and its chairman.

While it is correct that the NBA made a trading loss over 2005 and used reserves to maintain its services it is also true that the Board and the Chairman are satisfied with the budget for 2006 and are looking forward to increasing the reserves by the end of the year.

Members should note that over 2005 additional funds were spent on a one-off basis moving the head office from Malvern in Worcestershire to Hexham in Northumberland – a tactic that was supported by Scottish officeholders.

Redundancy payments, transport bills, and the fitting out of the new premises with new furniture and equipment were among the extra costs which in the long term will reduce running expenses and save money.

Other, quite substantial, one-off costs include legal advice on the application the NBA is about to file to the Charities Commission. If successful this will allow the Association to claim tax relief on members' subscriptions as well as making it easier to secure sponsorship and charitable donations.

Financial reserves at the end of 2005 would have been bigger if Scottish representatives had not declined to help with membership recruitment or find sponsors – even though NBA (UK) had identified a Scottish company willing to sponsor the Scottish Council.

It is understood that Keith's (and the Scottish Council's) preferred response to the 2005 income/expenditure position would have been to cut back on the services provided to members through the Cattle Health Committee and Pedigree Breeders Committee which are currently undertaken by Kim-Marie (Haywood).

This runs directly contrary to the NBA's policy of using as much of its members' subscription income as it dares to pursue activities which can directly benefit its members either by identifying ways in which they can save money or by pursuing policies that can increase their income.

At a time when farmers themselves face huge problems the NBA is not in the business of using its members' money to build financial cushions and sit on big reserves.

The Board of Management is comfortable that all the Association's current activity can

be covered by the 2006 budget and that there will be sufficient a sensible surplus to move through into 2007.

Future Meetings.