

## **NBA Scottish Region**

### **Press Statement**

**23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2006**

The office bearers of the Scottish Regional Committee of the NBA have confirmed, that at a Board Meeting of the National Beef Association held at Hexham on Tuesday of this week, although it was not on the published agenda, the Scottish Region's Board Member for the past 6 years, Mr. Keith Redpath, was subject to a motion that he be removed from office at the next AGM (due to be held in Hexham on 24<sup>th</sup> April). Alternatively, he was given the option to resign from the board before that date. He chose not to resign, but did leave the meeting in order to take advice to consider the legal position of this move.

The motion to remove Mr Redpath from the board, who has served as Vice Chairman for seven years, was proposed by the Association's Chairman, Mr Duff Burrell, who has not yet served a year in office, and seconded by Mr. Frank Momber, south east regional representative. The motion was opposed by Mr. John Carson, the board member from Northern Ireland, where there is also considerable disquiet with the Association's recent leadership and performance. The motion was then supported by the Association's immediate past Chairman Robert Robinson and Mr. Philip Dale, the representative from Anglia. Mr. George Richardson representing the Midlands and Bill Harper, South West representative, abstained from voting. The remaining Board member, representing the Breed Societies, Mr. Iain Kerr, was absent from the meeting and has so far made no comment.

The Scottish regional committee is shocked by this most unusual decision because Keith was democratically elected by the Scottish region to be the Scottish representative on the board. Also, it is widely acknowledged that not just in Scotland but throughout the UK, in both Edinburgh and London, Keith Redpath has over the last several years done more than anyone to forward the Association's interests, and thereby the interests of beef producers, during these difficult times. Both within SEERAD and DEFRA, Mr. Redpath's contribution to Animal Health, in particular, is widely recognised. Keith has the unanimous support of the Scottish office bearers, both present and past, in the role that he plays on the board of management, and this action is only the latest in a long line of undemocratic, inept and vindictive actions taken by the NBA Chairman aided and abetted by the Association's Chief Executive.

The thought by Robert Forster that following this decision "there will be an opportunity to repair the differences between Scotland and the National organisation" is totally naive. The request for the Scottish Board member to leave the board after his clearly outstanding contribution to the membership could not be more divisive. What NBA members will now be increasingly concerned about will be the relationship we have in Scotland with the National Association's office bearers, who, with the exception of Mr Redpath,

have made no positive contribution or representations to either SEERAD or other industry representative bodies in Scotland. The National Board should be aware that with that record it can be no surprise that they have little support in Scotland, and it is perhaps the case that the National office bearers are simply not welcome and not respected in Scotland. The assertion that the Scottish Executive has strayed beyond the parameters and abandoned the constitutional objectives of the Scottish Council's Constitution is totally absurd. The Scottish Executive Committee enjoys excellent support from the industry and it ought to be remembered that such is the loyalty of Scottish producers to their organisation that 25% of the total UK membership of the NBA comes from within Scotland. However, in view of the current situation both within the association and the industry as a whole, it is not surprising that there is little interest in new membership.

More importantly, and from the Scottish region's perspective, the crux of the problem is that Mr Redpath was the first member on the board to draw attention to the Association's deteriorating financial circumstances some 11 months ago, and these concerns still remain to be addressed by the majority of the board. The accounts for the trading period covering 2005 will be presented at the Association's AGM, but it is understood that these will show a substantial loss resulting in a complete depletion in reserves over the period. This is a matter that we have been urgently drawing to the board's attention to over many months. It is a basic fact that when expenditure dramatically exceeds income over a period of time, that action must be taken to rectify the situation in the form of cuts in expenditure if there is little prospect of immediate increases in income. It has proven extremely difficult to get the majority of the NBA board to adhere to this basic business principle. The fact that Mr Redpath has very rightly been a constant critic of the financial situation has obviously not helped his standing on the Board.

The Scottish regional office bearers will not be resigning their positions, as Robert Forster so clearly wants them to do, and will take some time to consider the latest action together with the membership's response to the forthcoming release of the trading accounts for the year. We are deeply concerned by this week's events and we shall have to discuss the matter carefully and thoughtfully with our regional committee and indeed all our Scottish members. The problem, as we have seen, lies with the management and his dwindling supporters on the board". The President of the Scottish region, Mr. John Cameron, said "It is extremely disappointing that a small majority of the National Board have seen fit to take this totally unwarranted and controversial decision. It should be remembered that the present NBA was founded from the strength of the Scottish Beef Council who with support of the entire Scottish beef industry in conjunction with the NFUS and the then Scottish Office, did much to help the Beef Industry in Scotland at that critical time. Obviously, in view of recent events Scottish members will now be seriously considering whether with devolution now firmly in place, their interests would be better served through a separate Scottish organisation which could co-ordinate joint action with other UK organisations as necessary".