

## **ANGUS FARMERS TO BUILD PORTSIDE FACILITY**

As part of the Montrose Port Authority's quayside development, plans have also been announced to build a 45,000t grain storage and handling facility on the dockside at Montrose.

This facility – which is a venture between local farming group Angus Cereals Ltd and Openfield –will benefit from a £2.26m grant support from the Scottish Executive.

Their aim is to professionally transport, condition, segregate and store grain from farms across the region, eliminating wasted cost and opening up added-value market opportunities.

The development comes at a time when there is a growing recognition that many farm and third party stores in the region do not have the correct infrastructure to meet the needs of both the grower and end-users.

This storage facility will take in a wide range of crops - including feed barley, malting barley and oilseed rape – ensuring their safe and efficient supply to the end-user.

Most Angus Cereals members will be within a 5-30 miles radius of Montrose, ensuring short journey times and fast turn round times, easing harvest bottle-necks and minimising food miles and carbon footprints.

Farmer members will make an up-front payment per tonne for that proportion of their crops they wish to see stored at the facility. Those farmer shareholders – marketing their crops under the Angus Cereals banner - will own the store, and the business will be run purely for their benefit.

The facility will be modelled on the Aberdeen Grain business, which has an expanding facility at Whiterashes, Newmachar, and the grain marketing will be conducted by Openfield, the UK's leading farmer-owned grain business.

Both Angus Cereals and Aberdeen Grain will work very closely together. Combined, the two operations will create additional marketing leverage for over 100,000t of high quality grain from farmers across Central and NE Scotland.

In addition, both Aberdeen Grain and the Montrose facility will be part of Network Grain, the UK-wide 15-store partnership supplying grain to an increasingly diverse range of end-users, who seek better quality and security of supply of grain of known provenance.

Announcing the development, farmer member, David Fairlie said that Tayside arable farmers produce in excess of 0.5 million tonnes of cereals every year including around 300,000t of potentially high quality malting barley.

“The portside development at Montrose – which we expect to be operational for harvest 2011 - will help us to properly store, condition and segregate grain in a purpose built facility rather than in ageing third party stores,” he said.

“We see Montrose as essential to secure the long term viability of our businesses, one which will improve efficiency along the supply chain and provide significant benefits for all parties,” he stressed.

Openfield’s Scottish manager and Aberdeen Grain’s general manager, Bruce Ferguson said that a key driver in the project would be the delivery of consistent quality product, conditioned, segregated and stored to the highest levels, accompanied with full traceability and provenance.

“In the past the infrastructure in Scotland has meant most growers have been forced to sell their high quality product at harvest. Unfortunately this has led to them being placed in a very weak selling position; this is an area that, within Openfield, we are continuing to develop on behalf of our growers.”

“If we couple this with eliminating unnecessary costs through more efficient use of energy for drying and handling as well as improved haulage efficiency, this will lead to significant processing and marketing benefits for growers, ,” he said.

The port facility will include flat- store storage and high capacity intake, as well as a 150t/hr grain dryer. All laboratory and office facilities will also be on site. The operation aims to ensure a maximum 72 hour collection from time of combining, seven days a week over the harvest period.

Around 25- 30 farm businesses have already signed up to the project and others interested are invited to contact Gavin Will of Openfield, Tel 07831 698714.

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