

A Message from your Chairman

Dear Member,

I recently attended a meeting of Co-operative Chairmen where I had been invited to give a presentation on the journey we had been on at BATA over the last 18 months. You will be assured to know that as an agriculturally centred co-operative we are part of an extremely supportive and mutually beneficial group of 'like-minded' organisations - collectively representing many tens of thousands of farmers and rural businesses - and within which the value of sharing of experiences and best practice cannot be overstated.

Typically, the theme for our meeting was 'Leading Co-operatives in challenging times' and, as you can imagine, no one present was short of examples of really substantive issues which their business was having to deal with, alongside all the routine tasks which we all face on a daily basis. Top of the agenda, not surprisingly, were the really serious impacts of the recent Budget announcements. It is more and more obvious that there continues to be little understanding by those outside our farming and rural community, and particularly in political circles, as what it takes to produce high quality food and care for the natural environment (what we used to call the Countryside!) and just as importantly what its real commercial value is. High up our agenda must be working to ensure those of us actually working the land and caring for the livestock have equal power in the supply chain. The ambition of negotiating a sale price for our produce, rather than being price takers, or moving towards setting a price for the sale of a commodity to a particular customer must be the goal otherwise we move further and further towards being trapped as dependant businesses in high spec/low price cycle. We all need to be able to charge a proper price for the things we produce so as to make enough profit to reward our labour and to be able to re-invest in our businesses.

I continue to believe strongly that acting collectively and operating under the co-operative model, as happens much more extensively in most other parts of the world, we stand the best chance of levelling up the power balance within the supply chain - that's as much for the inputs we buy as the produce we sell. BATA was founded 130 years ago for this very reason, and it remains at the core of our operations.

Last December, I was reporting on the aftermath of the proposed de-mutualisation and the vision of our new Board of directors to put the interests of members, staff and customers at the forefront of all our decision making - in short to uphold the co-operative principles. It would be fair to say that not all was as might have originally seemed from a commercial standpoint. Nor was it obvious just how far our culture fell short of what you, the members, might rightly have expected. However, the lights are now burning brightly and, under the leadership of our new CEO, Colin Bailey, progressively a great deal of change is underway and some of the huge potential of our great business is beginning to be realised. The most valued part of that potential is our staff, who are the key players in driving our business forward and meeting the new challenges we continue to get to grips with. On your behalf I want to thank them for all their hard work and enthusiasm throughout 2024. I know Colin has mentioned more about our plans and future projects to which we as the Board are giving our full support.

You will see the notice for our AGM on 13th February for which we are very pleased to have secured Daniel Zeichner MP, Minister of State at DEFRA, as our guest speaker and I do hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend. We have particularly asked to hear how the Government intend to honour their commitment to tangibly support the co-operative sector, and by which means we would hope to return greater value to our membership.

Wishing you a happy and prosperous 2025!

Stephen Greenfield

BATA Group Chairman

Senior Leadership Team - New Starters 2025

Emma Whittaker - Head of People

Emma joins us having spent her career working in people, learning and HR roles. Jobs at Marks & Spencer in the UK, with HSBC both here and internationally, these were followed more recently with a role at Anglo American. This new role for BATA will bring consistency, clarity and quality to our people function. Our greatest asset is our team of people, Emma will help us shape, teach, grow and develop our team creating a great place to work for everyone.

Henry Breese - Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Henry has a wealth of business experience having had financial leadership roles in food and manufacturing in both privately owned and private equity backed businesses. Before joining us, he spent a year with Lincolnshire Cooperative as CFO, giving him first-hand experience of the cooperative model. Henry and his team are responsible for the distribution of accurate and timely financial information throughout the business giving us the financial data to make good decisions.

Craig Hatfield - Head of Logistics

Craig started his career with logistics roles in The Army; transport and logistics roles followed with Next, The Modern Milkman and Peak Pharmacy. He joins us having worked with a wide range of delivery, fulfilment and service models, and is qualified in leadership, change management and health and safety. Craig is reviewing our fleet of vehicles, strengthening the team and looking at how technology can help our operations.

Marc Rogerson - Head of Procurement

Marc has been involved with the grain trade for over twenty years with increasingly senior roles with Gleadall, Frontier, Humber Grain and Grainco. He brings with him knowledge of the markets, trade and farm purchasing strategies, plus the disciplines of a large-scale trading environment. Whilst ensuring our mills have all the correct raw materials Mark is also tasked with providing high-quality information to our farmers to enable them to make clear decisions about their raw material purchasing and to increase the purchase of inputs direct from farm.

John Doyle - Head of Milling

John began his career in food manufacturing moving to milling in 2019, since then he has had leadership roles with AB Agri and Forfarmers. Planning, production, engineering and logistics are what make him tick, he has a track record of improving quality and consistency. John is helping us get the very best out of our mills with plans in place to improve our workplaces, our processes and our capacity; 2025 is a big year for our mills.

BATA Senior Leadership Team January 2025 – Keep in Touch!

We are here to help! If you would like to speak to us, please use our contact details below:

Colin Bailey
CEO

Email: cbailey@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07831 447555

Henry Breese
Chief Financial Officer

Email: hbreese@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07779 909502

John Doyle
Head of Milling

Email: jdoyle@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07599 238545

Craig Hatfield
Head of Logistics

Email: chatfield@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07792 374154

Neil Johnson
Head of Feed Sales

Email: njohnson@thompsons-feeds.co.uk
Tel: 07736 793697

Mike Latham
Head of Fuel

Email: mlatham@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07803 241147

Marc Rogerson
Head of Procurement

Email: mrogerson@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07766 466497

Emma Whittaker
Head of People

Email: ewhittaker@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07971 887133

Alan Williamson
Head of Retail

Email: awilliamson@bataltd.co.uk
Tel: 07776 161694

“Embracing Change in 2025” - Colin Bailey

Dear Member,

Last year we closed out a very difficult year financially in October, we have now completed the first quarter of our new financial year having made a pretty good start. It is impossible to overstate the turmoil and changes that our colleagues have faced over the last two years. We are now delivering yet more change, but hopefully it is understood to be necessary, progressive, and helping to build a business that is future proof in terms of people, product, process, and information; whilst creating an outstanding team to deliver growth across all our areas of operation. Our new board is ensuring that as an executive team we work transparently and professionally, and that the whole business is well-governed.

With wise investment in teams, equipment, and sites in our three core business areas of feed milling, fuel, and retail stores we can achieve significant growth. The increased costs of the recent Budget impact us all, the national minimum wage and NI increases are very significant. We are committed to reducing central costs and pushing any savings to the people in the front line of our business. We will invest in training, development, and new colleagues to upskill our team making individual roles and their output more valuable to us. This means we can recognise their expertise across all disciplines and reward them accordingly. We aim to be an employer of choice.

An investment plan at our Murton Mill of £1.3m over the next nine months will improve safety, efficiency, and productivity; it touches all aspects of the milling process. We are committed to an animal feed business where farmers can access topflight nutritional advice, a clear knowledge of the raw material markets, high quality production facilities, knowledgeable delivery, and competitive pricing. We want to be supply chain partners, understanding our customers and suppliers' businesses as well as our own. We are optimistic about our future in milling, we are big enough to take advantage of scale and small enough to provide the truly bespoke service that some of our customers need.

We will expand our fuel operation, and we are investigating domestic and industrial distribution options as well as retail opportunities. We are investing in industry leading software to help us manage our end-to-end fuel supply chain. We want to increase our geographical reach but equally we want to be the supplier of choice for as many of our members and account customers as possible.

We plan to redevelop our stores at Carlton and Murton. We want to increase the footfall of non-account customers across our estate, making it clear that we are not just 'warehouses' for farmers, and we will be shouting about our range of products that are useful for all.

We have three questions that shape all our decision making; Is it good for our members? Is it good for our customers? Does it help to generate a great place to work? We have created and filled four new roles to head up our procurement, milling, logistics, and people departments; we have also recruited a new Chief Financial Officer. The contact details for all our senior team are included in this pack. We are now in the process of recruiting for further roles to bolster I.T., farm cereal procurement, technical sales, feed sales, and marketing. These new people will expand and strengthen all these areas, bring in new ideas and help us drive growth and profitability.

We are ready for a challenging year in 2025 as we build our team, invest in the business, and grow our confidence. The underlying trade of our business is a fabulous testament to 130 years of farmer cooperation, great people, and great products; we want to build better, stronger, leaner, and fitter than ever before.

With best wishes,

Colin Bailey

BATA Group CEO