

REPORT ON MEETING OF SEED POTATO WORKING  
PARTY held in CHESSER HOUSE, EDINBURGH,  
on FRIDAY, 14th MAY, 1971.

PRESENT: Department of Agriculture: Messrs. Brook (Chairman); Lyall,  
Struthers; Frayne and Hardie;  
P.M.E.: Messrs. J.Ar Buckley and Craib;  
N.F.U. Messrs. Macfarlane, Galloway and Cunningham;  
S.P.T.A. Messrs. Fulton, Williamson, Fordyce, Gray and Hunter.

Before commencing the business of the meeting the Chairman referred to the  
retiral of Mr. J.P. Struthers, the Deputy Chief Inspector, which was due  
to occur at the end of August, 1971. The meeting expressed their best  
wishes to Mr. Struthers on his retiral.

REPORT ON VISIT TO ENGLAND AND WALES. Mr. Struthers issued to the meeting  
a summary of his report on visits made by Department's Inspectors during  
March, 1971 to England and Wales. Arising out of the Report Mr. Arbuckle  
stated that it was not to be assumed that Scottish Seed must be dressed  
to 2". He stated that mechanical planters will soon be available which will  
cope with 1½" - 2¼" dressing. He added that it was generally accepted that  
a better return per ton of Seed was obtained from bigger seed. Doctor Hardie  
stated that in his opinion not sufficient attention was paid in England  
to the need for handling different varieties (e.g. Pentland Dell and Pentland  
Ivory needed entirely different handling).

LABELLING SCHEME. The Department issued statistics regarding the first  
year's operation of the Labelling Scheme. The meeting in general congratulated  
the Department on the first year's operation of the official Labelling Scheme.  
It was, however, pointed out that weather conditions had been particularly  
kind to the Department during the first year. Mr. Lyall stated that the  
Department were again proposing for 1971/72 to disregard "Thirds" so far  
as sealing was concerned. He added that it was not proposed to make any  
further decision with regard to Uncertified Seed pending the United Kingdom's  
negotiations for entry into the Common Market. The E.E.C. Regulations  
prohibit the sale of Uncertified Seed. The Department agreed to supply  
S.P.T.A. with details of the percentage of faults found in respect of consign-  
ments dressed by Grower/Dealers. There was considerable discussion regarding  
means of reducing the number of labels which were returned unused. It was  
agreed that the duration of labels should be increased from three weeks

to/



to four weeks. Otherwise the Regulations were to remain unaltered for a further year's trial. The Department agreed to consider an alteration in the method of crediting Growers and Merchants with returned labels with a view to reducing excessive book-keeping. It is likely that returned labels will be credited at eight weekly intervals. Mr. Fordyce complained that in a difficult year it would not be possible for the Department to close down their offices over the Easter weekend. The Department agreed to keep this in mind. It was also agreed that there would be no alteration in the arrangements for payment of labels. The Department, however, will tighten up on unauthorised users of credit for labels. Mr. Fulton suggested that the Department should consider making no charge for labels and making a corresponding increase in the Inspection Fees. The Department indicated that this arrangement would be agreeable to them. The National Farmers' Union were not prepared to agree to this suggestion.

Mr. Lyall stated that a smaller label would be introduced in the future to correspond with the E.E.C. Regulations. He issued to the meeting samples of a new quality of label which the Department would be introducing experimentally at the beginning of the 1971 loading season. The eyehole would, however, be round and the label would be coloured to prevent the printing showing through. The new quality labels would be discussed further at the Autumn meeting of the Seed Potato Working Party.

EXPORT LABELS. The Department stated that a similar label to the type used in connection with the official Labelling Scheme would be introduced for export. He added that it may be necessary in future years to charge for export labels. This, however, had not yet been finalised.

BAG TRIALS. Mr. Lyall stated that the Bag Trials with paper, polypropylene and hessian which had been conducted during the 1970/71 loading season had not been particularly successful for the reason that the consignments had been handled unusually carefully with the result that the use they had received had not been typical. The Department said that they would be issuing the findings of these Trials as soon as possible.

It was agreed that if the Trade wish to have double marked meal bags deleted from/

from the list of permitted containers the S.P.T.A. should write to the Department accordingly.

FROST DAMAGE. Mr. Fulton stated that the Trade considered that a tolerance of 3% for frost damage was excessive. He suggested that the tolerance should be reduced to 1%. The Department agreed to this being done but suggested that the necessary alteration to The Examination Order should be left over till the Order was due to be next amended. This was agreed to. Mr. Williamson, however, suggested that a directive should be issued to Inspectors to stop consignments showing more than 1% of frost. The Department agreed to this. A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.