

REPORT on MEETING of the SEED POTATO
WORKING PARTY held in Chesser House,
Edinburgh, at 10.30 a.m. on FRIDAY,
12th NOVEMBER, 1971.

PRESENT:-

N.F.U. Messrs. J. Ardbuckle, Gill, Galloway, MacFarlane and Cunningham.

DEPARTMENT. Messrs. Brook, Lyall, Hardie, Todd, Mackenzie, Dr. Camment and Mappen.

P.M.B. Mr. Rennie.

S.P.T.A. Messrs. I. P. Fulton, A. D. Williamson, J. Fordyce, W. Gray, and R. D. Hunter.

Mr. Brook was in the Chair.

1. DISEASE STATISTICS. A Paper giving statistics of the 1971 Growing Crop Inspection was issued to the meeting for consideration. Arising out of the statistics, Dr. Todd confirmed that in 1971 the Department had carried out a survey on the incidence of Veinal Necrosis. The survey involved a close examination of 29 crops south of the North Esk and 24 crops north of the South Esk. The varieties were Record, King Edward and Red Craigs Royal. South of the Esk 15 of the crops contained Veinal Necrosis while North of the Esk none contained Veinal Necrosis. Of crops of Record examined south of the North Esk all contained Veinal Necrosis (two-thirds very slight). In general, Veinal Necrosis appeared to be prevalent in Record and rare in King Edward. Veinal Necrosis is not easily discerned in Redskin. Of eight crops of Redskin examined in Fife and south of the Forth there was no evidence of Veinal Necrosis. The survey is to be continued in 1972. The Department indicated, however, that the incidence of Veinal Necrosis was not unduly worrying. They considered that Veinal Necrosis can be controlled by visual inspection. The position will also be improved by the limitation on the life of F.S. Stocks to four years and the apparent reduction in the acreage of "A" in favour of F.S.
2. SCHEME CHANGES. A Paper was issued giving details of the structure of certification numbers as from 1972. It was suggested that the letter "B" for second year F.S. had an unfortunate association with second quality seed. The Department agreed to reconsider the proposed lettering. Mr. Galloway for the N.F.U. requested that an "A" Certificate be granted automatically/

automatically to F.S. rejected on the second inspection. The Department would only agree to an "A" Certificate being granted if the consignment came up to the 'A' Standard on the second inspection.

There was a short discussion on the re-infection of V.T.S.C. Stocks. Dr. Hardie stated that in 1971 200 crops were certified V.T.S.C. and 70 crops failed (65 for Blackleg (nil tolerance) and 5 for Leafroll). The Department were requesting growers to complete a questionnaire in order that the Department may investigate the likely cause of the Blackleg re-infection. Possible causes were birds or implements. It had been observed, however, that the Blackleg was appearing mostly where the shaws had been damaged. This may mean that it is a separate strain of Blackleg which was appearing. This was also being investigated.

A proportion of stocks of V.T.S.C. were showing signs of Skinspot in the third and fourth years. This re-infection may be the result of Skinspot organisms surviving in the soil. It was considered that the continuous introduction of disease free stocks would result in a reduction of Skinspot organisms in the soil.

3. FEES -

- (a) GROWING CROP. - £1.40 per acre with minimum of £2.80 per unit of certification.
- (b) SOIL SAMPLING. - £4.50 per unit (15 acres) sampled. Late applications (i.e. after 31st October) £5 per application in addition.

There was a long discussion regarding the possibility of economies being effected by the Department in their inspection service.

4. E.E.C. The meeting considered a Paper previously issued by the Department of Agriculture. The Department announced that the E.E.C. Regulations would not be interpreted retrospectively with the result that the records (e.g. eelworm) obtained before the Regulations came into effect would be disregarded. "Regulations" must be strictly adhered to and "Directives" are left to individual countries to decide upon the method of implementation.

Eelworm. Chemical treatment of eelworm in Holland costs approximately £30 per acre. The application, however, was believed to be at a much lower level of intensity than would be acceptable in this country. A comparable cost would/

would be £80 per acre in the U.K. There is also the possibility that the treatment would be less effective in the United Kingdom owing to our colder climate. Mr. Rennie suggested a Government subsidy for eelworm treatment. This was not accepted by the Department.

Wart Disease. The Department considered that the E.E.C. Wart Disease Regulations would have no economic consequence in the United Kingdom. The Department stated that they were in the course of de-scheduling as much land in Scotland as possible.

Common Catalogue. The Department considered that the introduction of a Common Catalogue would have no real practical effect on the varieties grown commercially in the United Kingdom.

Seed Potato Marketing. Mr. Lyall was of the opinion that Scotland will eventually be forced to share the English seed market with Holland and France. The other Common Market countries are likely eventually to be allowed to export seed to England but only for the production of a ware crop.

Quality and Health Standards. The Department asked the meeting for its opinion with regard to the introduction of the proposed new tolerance for the 1972 crop. It was arranged that the various organisations would let the Department have their views on this suggestion before the end of 1971. The Department agreed to reconsider the "nil" tolerance for frost. It is likely that frost will be included with soft rots having a tolerance of 1%.

Labelling. The meeting pointed out to the Department the difficulty of stitching labels where potatoes are being dressed in the fields. The Department indicated that this was a problem which would be more acceptable than would be the cost of compulsory sealing. Mr. Rennie expressed doubt regarding the ability of the suppliers of stitching machines to supply an adequate maintenance service.

It was agreed that the organisations would let the Department have their observations regarding the E.E.C. proposals before the end of 1971.

5. COMMON SCAB. The Department agreed that they were willing to relax the standards for Common Scab provided that the purchaser consented. The Department agreed that it would be sufficient for the seller to give a written statement to/

to the Department that the purchaser agreed to accept the consignment notwithstanding the incidence of Scab.

6. LABELLING SCHEME. In reply to the National Farmers' Union the Department stated categorically that it was necessary to grant the eight week concession to larger growers. The Department agreed to investigate the possibility of expediting payment of credits for returned labels.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.