

MINUTE of MEETING of the COMMITTEE of  
the SEED POTATO DIVISION of the SCOTTISH  
POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held in the  
Station Hotel, Perth, at 12 noon on  
THURSDAY, 31st JANUARY, 1974.

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PRESENT: Messrs. I. Barr, D.H. Lindsay, J. Fordyce, D. Maxwell, W. Gordon,  
G. Gyle, A.D. Williamson and A.K. Powrie, along with Mr. R. David Hunter,  
the Secretary, with Mr. D.I. Blackmore in attendance.

APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs. P. Peebles,  
P. Guthrie and J. George.

MINUTES. The Minute of Meeting of the Committee of the Seed Potato Division  
held on 25th October, 1973, copies of which had been previously circulated  
to Committee members was taken as read and formally approved and was signed  
by Mr. Ian Barr as Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING -

Arising out of the previous Minute, reference was made to the recent general  
meeting of the Association held in the Station Hotel, Perth, on Thursday, 17th  
January at which Mr. Douglas Smith, the President of the British Potato Trades  
Consortium, and Mr. Gordon Lyle of the Department of Agriculture were Guest  
Speakers. The Committee expressed its gratification at the good turnout of  
members who attended the general meeting. The Secretary was instructed to write  
to express the Committee's thanks to the Guest Speakers.

BRITISH POTATO TRADES CONSORTIUM. Mr. Fordyce reported on the meeting of the  
British Potato Trades Consortium held in London on 4th December, 1973. The  
Committee formally approved the Association's contribution of 15% towards the  
expenses of the Consortium for 1973.

Mr. Fordyce also reported on the meetings between representatives of the  
Consortium and representatives of the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales  
held in London on 21st January. At that meeting the following matters had been  
raised:-

- (a) The N.F.U. were seeking Conditions of Sale for ware potatoes to include  
a time limit for rejection. The Trade representatives hoped that this  
matter could remain in abeyance for some time yet.

(b)/

- (b) Price Review - The Farmers' Union were seeking a guaranteed price of £22 for potatoes in the forthcoming price review. The Consortium representatives were unable to support the Farmers' Union in this matter for the reason that it would be contrary to the previously expressed attitude of the Consortium.
- (c) It was agreed to press for a more easy transfer of basic acreage to enable "professional" growers to increase their acreages.
- (d) Central Grading Stations - It was agreed to request the Ministry to introduce provisions for financial Grants to be available for merchants to assist with the setting up of Central Grading Stations.

Mr. Fordyce then reported on a meeting between representatives of the Consortium and the Ministry of Agriculture also in London on 21st January. At that meeting the following matters were discussed:-

- (a) The Trade suggested to the Ministry that there should be a reduction in the P.M.B. excess acreage contribution for potatoes.
- (b) The Ministry rejected the proposal that there should be a Grant available to merchants towards the cost of Central Grading Stations.
- (c) It was reported that a pre-crop soil test for eelworm was to be introduced in England in 1974.
- (d) The estimated acreage of potatoes to be planted in 1974 was discussed.
- (e) It was announced that there was an increase in the current consumption of potatoes in the United Kingdom as compared with previous years.
- (f) It was reported that imports of potatoes were in line with those of previous years.

J.C.C. Mr. Fordyce reported on the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee of the Potato Marketing Board held in London on 6th January, 1974. At that meeting the Board had given to members details of their estimate of the stocks of potatoes in the United Kingdom at that time

SEED POTATO WORKING PARTY. Mr. Ian Barr reported on the meeting of the Seed Potato Working Party held in Edinburgh on 30th January, 1974. The following matters had arisen:-

- (a)/

- (a) Seed Potato Regulations - The Department had announced that no Ministerial instructions had yet been issued with regard to the introduction of the new potato regulations to comply with Common Market Regulations. The new regulations would certainly not come into effect for 1974. It was doubtful if they would come into effect for the 1975 crop.
- (b) Dutch Varieties - The Department announced that they have available clones of most of the popular Dutch varieties of potatoes.
- (c) Leafroll - The Department observed that there was an increase in crops downgraded for Leafroll. This was attributable to climatic conditions. Doctor Todd had expressed the opinion that a possible source of the Leafroll infection was greenfly in chitting trays.
- (d) Foundation Stock - The Department pointed out that 1975 was the last year of ordinary F.S. stocks.
- (e) Alterations to Certification Scheme.
- (i) In 1974 the former "A" would be known as "AA".
- (ii) The tolerance for severe virus diseases would be reduced from 0.5% to 0.25%.
- (iii) The "twenty yard" Rule is to be discontinued in 1974 provided that the normal separation requirements are observed between adjacent crops.
- (iv) Veinal Necrosis - The Department had stated their intention to introduce a tolerance of 0.05% for "AA" Grade (10 plants per acre) for veinal necrosis for Record only. Stocks derived from crops containing Veinal Necrosis within the permitted tolerance would not be permitted to be sold for planting ~~outwith~~<sup>within</sup> Scotland. Such crops would be identified in the Potato Register. The Trade objected most strongly to the proposal that the tolerance should be restricted to Record only. The National Farmers' Union who had been present at the meeting expressed the wish to refer the matter back to their Potato Committee to obtain further instructions. The Department accordingly agreed to defer a final decision until the Farmers' Union had had an opportunity of considering the matter further. In the meantime, the Secretary was instructed to write to/

to the Department confirming the views of the Trade representatives as expressed at the meeting. It was also agreed to lobby the support of the members of the N.F.U. Seed Potato Committee that the tolerance should extend to all varieties.

- (v) The Department expressed the intention to make fumigation compulsory for V.T.S.C. Grade from the 1975 crop onwards.
- (vi) Mop Top - The Department had informed the meeting that Mop Top was showing in new varieties. They are considering whether to introduce a tolerance for Mop Top within the Certification Scheme.
- (vii) 1974 Certification Fees - The Department announced the following fees:-

F.S. Grade	£2.30 per acre
A.A.	£1.80 per acre
V.T.S.C.	£2.50 per acre

- (viii) There was a discussion regarding chemical treatment for Eelworm. The likely cost would be £30 to £50 per acre which was considered to be uneconomical.
- (ix) Exports - The Department had announced that the tonnages of potatoes exported from the United Kingdom up to the end of January, 1974 were as follows:-

Seed	24,358 tons
Ware	74,000 tons (Scotland 30,000 tons)

WARE STANDARDS. The meeting considered the Potato Marketing Board's proposals for amendments to the Ware Standard. The Committee were of the opinion that the proposals did not materially improve the standards. Strong exception, however, was taken to the implication contained in the Paper issued by the Potato Marketing Board that a deterioration in standards was due to merchants' failure to examine dressing on the farm. Subject to the views of the Ware Division Committee, the Secretary was instructed to write to the Potato Marketing Board to point out that it was for the Potato Marketing Board to ensure that the dressing standards were being adhered to and that they should not endeavour to pass this burden over to merchants.

METRICATION. The Secretary reported that metrication of weights and riddle sizes/

sizes for potatoes was to be introduced on 16th May, 1976. The Committee expressed the opinion that the following metric measures would be the appropriate equivalents to the existing imperial measures:-

<u>Weights</u>	Bags	50 kilos for 1 cwt.
		25 " for half cwt.

RIDDLE SIZES.

<u>Seed Potatoes</u>	35 mm. for 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
	55 mm. for 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
	50 mm. for 2"

<u>Ware Potatoes</u>	40 mm. for 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ "
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EUROPEAN UNION. Mr. Fordyce stated that there had been a meeting of the European Union in Paris during January. At that meeting the European Merchants' Organisation had indicated their agreement to the possibility of a small degree of control as opposed to absolute free trade in potatoes. The European Union are to discuss the matter further with COPA.

STATE PENSION SCHEME. The Secretary was instructed to prepare for issue to members a circular letter to advise them of the provisions of the Social Securities Act 1973. The Secretary was also instructed, if possible, to obtain from an Insurance Company a quotation in respect of an Association Pension Scheme to be made available to members.

ROYAL SMITHFIELD SHOW. The Secretary presented to the meeting a letter which had been received from a member of the Association suggesting that the Association should take over financial responsibility for the Scotch Seed Potato Exhibitors Stand at the 1974 Smithfield Show. After discussion it was resolved that the Association should not become involved in exhibiting at the Smithfield Show. This was for three principal reasons, namely:-

- (a) A number of members of the Association already have their own Stands.
- (b) Some of the members of the Association have already resigned from membership of the Scotch Seed Potato Exhibitors and would presumably, therefore, not wish to contribute towards the expenses of an Association Stand.
- (c) The necessary levy on members would be out of all proportion to existing Association subscriptions.

EXPORTS/

EXPORTS. The meeting expressed its extreme dismay at the Government's recent introduction of a ban on the export of ware potatoes. The Secretary was instructed to draft a letter to send to the Ministry expressing the displeasure of the Potato Trade in Scotland. He was instructed to send a copy of the letter to the Department of Agriculture, the Potato Marketing Board, the British Potato Trades Consortium and Members of Parliament in Scotland for the various farming constituencies.

P.M.B. CONTRIBUTIONS. Reference was made to the recent announcement by the Potato Marketing Board of a reduction in the excess acreage contribution. The Secretary was instructed to write to the Potato Marketing Board to object to the announcement having been made without consultation with the J.C.C. It was considered that the reduction in the excess acreage contribution was a major change in policy and for that reason in terms of the Scheme the Joint Consultative Committee should have been consulted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING. The Secretary was instructed to make arrangements for the next meeting of the Committee of the Seed Potato Division to be held in the Station Hotel, Perth, at 12 noon on Thursday, 21st March, 1974.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.

*John H. Barr.*