

MINUTE OF MEETING of THE JOINT LIAISON
COMMITTEE held at 8, Manor Place, Edinburgh
at 10.30am. on WEDNESDAY 8th OCTOBER, 1975.

PRESENT: N.A.B.P.A.M. Messrs. E. Sherriff, R. Beeson, R. Fell and D. Smith,
S.P.T.A. Messrs. J. Fordyce, J. O. Robertson, I. Barr, T. McClung
and D. H. Lindsay. Mr. R. David Hunter, the Secretary of
the S.P.T.A. was in attendance, with Mr. D. Blackmore.

Mr. Ian Barr occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES: A full attendance of Committee Members required no apologies for absence
to be recorded.

DEFINITION - CONDITIONS OF SALE. Mr. Smith initiated the discussions by
explaining that against the background of increasing numbers of admixture
problems it was felt that clarification of the meaning of "purity and
health", as appearing at the end of Clause 1 (a) of Conditions of Sale,
was necessary. After discussion it was agreed that "purity" in this
context be accepted to mean true to type and not simply pure tubers.
In discussion of the admixture problem, Mr. Sherriff confirmed this was
increasing, very noticeably in this season, becoming much more important
at current very high price levels. In reply to enquiry he stated that the
problem did not arise from groundkeepers or an odd sack of seed, but
extended to complete rows within a crop. Mr. Fordyce pointed out that
increasing use of internal stores nowadays made it easier for admixture
errors to occur, Mr. Barr adding that such errors could also occur in
customers' hands. Mr. Smith felt that the best remedy would be a campaign
to draw the matter to the attention of the producers. In supporting this
course Mr. Beeson felt it should be stressed that "purity" meant true to
type and also proposed the assistance of the Department be sought in the
matter. Mr. Fordyce also undertook to include the matter in the next
S.P.T.A. News Letter.

Mr. Hunter enquired whether amendment of the Conditions of Sale was
required. Mr. Smith felt no change should be made at this time adding
that/

that, whereas RUCIP rules allow 21 days for rejection for gangrene, there is pressure within the E.E.C. to extend this period and any revision of Conditions be deferred until draft E.E.C. recommendations become available. The Committee agreed with this view and next considered the effect of the Trades Description Act on the Conditions, with particular reference to Admixtures. In Mr. Hunter's view the problem fell within the "three day rejection" rule.

METRICATION Mr. Barr read the latest letter to hand from the Potato Marketing Board which stated that whereas potato producers intended to introduce metrication for 1976 crop, ware packaging and distributive bodies favoured changeover in 1977 while retail trade bodies favoured 1978. Mr. Smith felt the Metrication Board was "dragging its feet" and should be pressurised, pointing out that agricultural chemical supplies are already metric (from 1st September). The Committee resolved that both Associations should maintain their present position to introduce metrication for the 1976 crop.

In reply to Mr. Barr's enquiry regarding adoption of standard riddle sizes, Mr. Fell stated his Association's members wanted 35 x 55mm. as the basic standard. Mr. Barr explained his Association's own members favoured 35 x 60mm., which would allow 35 x 55mm. at a premium price. Mr. Fell pointed out that automatic machinery encourages a narrowing of size range. Mr. Beeson felt that the producer would adopt a cropping plan geared to a specific riddle size but Mr. Fordyce stated that variety norms varied in course of years. The Committee agreed that the matter would be resolved by trade practice and that no recommendation would be made.

HAND POTATO GAUGES Mr. Fell explained that his Association, having agreed on a plastic design of 4 x two-holed blades covering all sizes from 25 to 60mm., had placed a bulk order for 1000 gauges. Delivery was expected in about four weeks time. They had decided to charge £1.50 each for small lots but would supply in bulk to S.P.T.A. at £1.10 each. Mr. Barr undertook to circularise for S.P.T.A. orders and write NASPAM thereafter.

CHEMICAL SPRAY LABELLING/

CHEMICAL SPRAY LABELLING Mr. Sherriff explained that resulting from investigations by ADAS Laboratories into CIPC residues it has been established that this chemical can persist in containers, buildings, vent ducting etc. for three (and probably four) years after original application. Some evidence of this effect has been found this season. Mr. Barr thought that CIPC was comparatively little used for potatoes in Scotland (its wider use in Ware Storage in the south being agreed) but accepted the risk from its use on other crops such as barley being inadvertently transmitted to potatoes in subsequent years. Mr. Sherriff reminded the Committee that, as with other problems, current and projected very high price levels made a solution of this problem much more necessary. Purchase contracts already concluded in some instances in the South specified that Seed Potatoes must not come from premises where CIPC had been used within the last three years. Mr. McClung proposed that S.P.T.A. members be circumscribed in the matter and the Committee also agreed to seek support from the Department in the same way. Mr. Sherriff further expressed concern at the crude and wastefully costly methods of application of chemicals, circumstances more than ever now requiring use of specialised precision equipment.

PLANT ROYALTIES Mr. Barr gave a short résumé of the meeting between the Plant Royalty Bureau, S.P.T.A., NFUS and DOAS in Edinburgh on 29th September. The Bureau had been less concerned with changing over to tonnage-based royalty payments than being set on introducing a system of licensing merchants to trade in royalty varieties. While the S.P.T.A. accepted Bureau concern to overcome problems connected with the export of royalty varieties, they completely disagreed that a massive merchant licensing system was necessary, when a very much smaller export licensing system would suffice. The NFUS had supported this view and DOAS appeared to have been sympathetic to it.

Mr. Foll explained the Bureau are to meet NASPAM early next month. His researches have revealed strong Director-level links between the Bureau and commercial seed houses interests. Together with NSDO/Bureau arrangements, he/

he strongly suspects the inevitable Bureau monopoly capability will be exploited by those commercial interests. In support, Mr. Sherriff pointed out that NSDO varieties are developed with public funds and any future erosion of free availability would be quite contrary to the concept of NSDO (in discussions for which he had been closely involved at that time) and must be resisted. In reply to Mr. Sherriff, Mr. Barr's personal opinion was that Scottish Growers would not be totally opposed to the introduction of varieties of Dutch seed into the U.K. but would be particularly concerned to safeguard plant health Standards and if possible to ensure non-exclusive royalty arrangements. In this latter respect he proposed that our Associations should aim for representation on the Plant Royalty Bureau, while Mr. Lindsay proposed both Associations should adopt total resistance to overall merchant licencing and recommend members not to apply for Plant Royalty Bureau grower licences. The Committee agreed to discuss the matter with the DOAS during the afternoon meeting.

SCOTTISH INSPECTION VISIT 1976 The Chairman suggested this matter was more appropriate to the afternoon meeting with the Department and the Committee agreed to refer discussion until then.

OTHER CURRENT BUSINESS (a) Seed Exports Mr. Hunter explained he had written to the Ministry seeking assurance that production of Plant Health Certificates will not be made a pre-requisite for the issue of Export Certificates thus delaying ship departures. Mr. Smith explained where import regulations have been much smoothed by representation and thought S.P.T.A. pressure will, similarly, help ease seed exports.

(b) Early Varieties Inspections Mr. Pardyce explained that advances in techniques has increasingly give rise to a need to withdraw certain early varieties which matured very rapidly (particularly Javelin) from second Inspections and to burn off. The Committee agreed take the matter up with the Department.

(c) Label Colours Mr. Smith seriously deprecated the confusion that arose last season from exhaustion of supplies of red labels/

labels and substitution of blue. This was avoidable and the Committee agreed to seek Department assurance that the situation will not recur.

(d) PEB consignment inspections Mr. Sherriff drew attention to the increase in the number of complaint inspections last season, mainly due to gangrene. At current price levels a similar number of inspections this season would be still more problematical. Mr. Smith added that NASPAM's general view was that, compared with the previous season, Scottish standards had deteriorated last season. The third most common fault, "oversize", should not occur. He felt high prices should encourage improvements in standards in the current season.

(e) Use of Chemicals Mr. Beeson sought information and views on the Scottish reaction to increased use of chemicals and enquired whether the Scottish trade agreed that supervision of application should be improved. Mr. Barr explained that personally he was not intending to increase chemical use and his view was that Scottish growers were unconvinced of the efficacy of some treatments available. Mr. Beeson felt that current high prices should encourage greater use of chemicals to improve standards. He was dismayed that so little 'trial' work was being done in Scotland. Mr. Fell stated that English interest in chemical treatments was increasing, aided by trade journal "plugging", and Mr. Sherriff added his recommendation that Scottish growers should carry out experimental trials, for aphid control in particular, his own experiences in these matters having been very encouraging. Mr. Lindsay's experience however was that aphicides had been more widely used in Scotland in the current growing season.

(f) European Union A.G.M. 1976 On behalf of the British Potato Trades Consortium Mr. Smith took opportunity to express appreciation of the S.P.T.A. willingness to undertake the administrative work entailed in arranging next years event and pledged Consortium aid and assistance if required.

DATE OF NEXT MEET MEETING was agreed to be on Monday 1st December, 1975 at 12 noon in old Covent Garden, precise venue details and Agenda to be arranged/

arranged and circularised in due course.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman then concluded the meeting.