

REPORT of MEETING with the Steering
Committee of the SCOTTISH SEED POTATO
PROMOTION ASSOCIATION held at 17,
Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh at 10.30a.m.
on WEDNESDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 1977

PRESENT:

N.F.U.S.: Messrs. M. Milne, R. Sandilands and P. Tait

S.S.P.P.A.: Messrs. J. R. Robertson, J. Henderson, I. Stirling and
A. Mackay.

P.M.B.: Messrs. J. McFarlane, D. Sinclair, C. Davie and A. A. Sinclair

S.A.O.S.: R. Rettie.

D.A.F.S.: Messrs. D. C. Todd, Dr. Hardie and E. Macdonald

S.P.T.A.: I. Barr, with D. Blackmore in attendance

Mr. Morgan Milne occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Messrs. Barclay Forrest and W.
Smith (N.F.U.S.) and J. O. Robertson and D. H. Lindsay (S.P.T.A.).

The Chairman welcomed the delegates and called on Mr. Mackay to outline
the history of the Steering Committee's activities to date, in response
to which Mr. McKay repeated his remarks to the earlier meeting on 21st
January, 1977. The Chairman commended these efforts and results,
expressed the view that a promotional organisation was both essential
and deserving of maximum support and called on Mr. Robertson to give
his views.

In reply Mr. Robertson stated the Steering Committee's preference (and
sought the meeting's support) to frame a Constitution and set up a
governing Board, rather than formulate its own Schemes for discussion.
Mr. Sandilands followed by referring to similar earlier initiatives
and the appropriate timing of current activity vis-a-vis the Union's
own impending study of E.E.C. proposals and likely effects. The Chairman
then referred to the Hay and Produce Studies reports before opening
the meeting to general comment by calling for D.A.F.S. views.

Mr. Todd pointed out that a "producer groups" set-up seemed an
inevitable outcome of E.E.C. proposals. The Department must therefore
stand clear as the Certifying Authority and remain non-commercial. In
reply to the Chair Mr. McKay next read a reply from the P.M.B. in
London affirming support for the Steering Committee's initiative,
although the Board must retain its national function. In response to
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the next call from the Chair, Mr. Barr re-stated the S.P.T.A. position and explained the arrangements made. From his personal conversations a need to define "promotion" was apparent with support for the theory, but some reservation on the practicability of parts, of the initiative. The Chairman felt a trading organisation, leading to deep waters and failure, was not envisaged. He saw the outcome in an "extra markets, extra orders" context and next called for Mr. D. Sinclair's views who, in turned felt the Steering Committee should visit every area branch of the N.F.U.S. in its area, stressing the vital importance to Scottish Agriculture of Dutch inroads into English seed and ware markets.

The Chairman next proposed that the meeting set up a joint, all-inclusive Steering Committee of its own, with no abstentions. Mr. Rettie explained he held a watching brief and would help whenever possible, Mr. Sandilands adding that in order that the current initiative must not fail, progress should be very carefully thought out beforehand. He valued the sense of urgency but cautioned the meeting against being stampeded. Mr. McFarlane referred to the Dutch situation, particularly citing a comparison on the respective pathotypes. He agreed with formation of a fully representative, all-organisation Steering Committee but felt it should be as small as possible, suggesting one member from each of the N.F.U., the Angus Group, a Producer, the Trade, an Exporter and Mr. Rettie, who should take evidence and report back,

The ensuing discussion, covering Dutch aspects and problems was summarised by pointing up the merits of the Scottish Certification Scheme and the effect of poor climate years. The Chairman added the meeting's congratulations to Mr. Henderson on the recent James Rennie award to him and called for his views. In reply, Mr. Henderson felt the Angus Group Steering Committee had been going a long time and had gone as far as possible under its own steam. He now sought wider participation to permit his Steering Committee to drop out, in which respect the earlier meeting on 21st January had, he felt, been largely abortive. Mr. Stirling supported these views, while Mr. Barr again explained the Trade's difficulty and/

and Mr. D. Sinclair repeated his view that a lot remained that the original Steering Committee could still do.

The Chairman called the meeting back to setting up its own Steering Committee by asking if any absent organisations should be present. From the following discussion it was again felt the new Committee should be kept small, should provide an outflow of information and put flesh on the bones of the Angus Group's "pink sheet". The Chairman proposed the N.F.U.S. provide secretarial services for the Committee (accepted by Mr. Sandilands) and nominated Mr. Barclay Forrest (seconded by Mr. McFarlane) to Chair the new Steering Committee. In reply to Mr. McFarlane, the Chairman felt the new Committee should determine its own brief. During further discussions Mr. Robertson stated the Angus Group wants the S.P.T.A. to participate and be represented but will not woo the trade, it being their view that the Trade must come forward to join. The Chairman agreed that the Trade must be represented and Mr. Barr repeated some of the questions to which the Trade sought answers agreeing, again in reply to the Chair, to do his best towards securing approval for two S.P.T.A. representatives for the new Steering Committee.

The Chairman next called for two nominations from the Angus Group, that of Mr. Robertson being carried. Discussion of a second nomination led Mr. McFarlane to suggest that each organisation be invited to finalise actual nominations. The Chairman also sought to avoid over-representation by area and thus proposed Mr. D. Sinclair as an individual, summing up composition of the new Steering Committee as two nominations from each of the N.F.U.S. S.P.T.A., two or three from the Angus Group, with Mr. D. Sinclair and one other. For the latter he proposed Mr. Rettie (as a non-grower, non-area, funds source) representative, to which Mr. Rettie replied with thanks. Mr. Todd wished the Department to continue in an attendant (dependant upon subject matter) consultative/advisory capacity by invitation and Mr. McFarlane offered P.M.B. staff on the same basis, the Chairman accepting these arrangements with thanks.

Mr. McFarlane next drew attention to the P.M.B. Seed Committee's visit to N. Belgium and Holland on 14th June and suggested the new Steering Committee should write the Board asking to be permitted to participate.

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The Chairman felt the N.F.U. contribution to the new Steering Committee was already big enough - he expected either Mr. Forrest or Mr. Smith would officiate as Chairman - and wished them every success in moving with discretion as fast as possible.

At the instance of Mr. Sandilands the first meeting of the new Steering Committee/Working Party was provisionally arranged (to follow the P.M.B. Scottish Advisory Committee) on the afternoon of Thursday 17th March, 1977. The Chairman next proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. McKay for all his efforts to date, which was unanimously supported by the Meeting, following which Mr. Henderson moved votes of thanks to the N.F.U.S. for the meeting facilities provided and to the Chair for so masterfully conducting the meeting, both votes being accorded the unanimous support of the Meeting, whereupon the Meeting closed.