

MINUTE of MEETING of the PRESS sub-COMMITTEE  
of the SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
held at 8, Kinnoull Street, PERTH at 2p.m. on  
TUESDAY, 20th MARCH, 1979

PRESENT:

Messrs. D. H. Lindsay, J.G.H. Fenton, B. Fulton, J. R. McArthur and J. Waddell with Messrs. W. Kemp (Press Officer), R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

Mr. D. H. Lindsay, the Convenor, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES:

Mr. Blackmore intimated an apology on behalf of Mr. J.H. Barr

DISCUSSIONS:

Mr. Lindsay introduced Mr. Kemp to the sub-Committee members and explained that a formal Agenda had not been prepared for today's meeting. He briefly related the first trial period experiences and the changed arrangements for the second trial period. As arranged, Mr. Kemp had already been provided with information on Exports of Scotch seed and the Association's position regarding the proposed new Scottish Seed Potato Marketing Association.

He tabled a series of press cuttings resulting from Mr. Kemp's efforts in these respects. Mr. Kemp explained he was a regular contributor to the "Scotsman", "Glasgow Herald", "Courier", Aberdeen "Press and Journal" and the "Scottish Farmer" in Scotland, as well as the "Farmers Weekly" and the "Fruit Trades Journal in England.

The sub-Committee agreed a very satisfactory coverage on these two items had been achieved. It was also agreed that while Scottish coverage, which had predominated in this instance, helped assure Association members of press capability activities, greater penetration in the English press should be sought for items whose content required it.

To this end Mr. Blackmore was instructed to prepare a list of English contracts made during the first trial period. During discussion Mr. Kemp explained that "Willing's Press Guide" provided exhaustive national information to enable a circulation list to be compiled on area, county, daily, weekly or monthly bases. It was agreed this source be utilised in preparation of the list.

Discussion turned to consideration of subject matter for further releases. Mr. McArthur offered to draft an item in respect of English growers' willingness to buy Desiree at prices inflated by competing export demand. Mr. Kemp explained that without technical knowledge he could not judge English interest in this topic but would accept all items, quotes, opinions and any immediate replies to other published items.

The sub-Committee felt Mr. Kemp should feel free to suggest and submit proposals and hoped the degree of "feed back" he had so far provided will continue. In reply to Mr. Lindsay the sub-Committee decided not to change the existing policy of not naming names in material submitted to the press.

In preparation of Press Releases Mr. Kemp advised they should not be dated and for editorial purposes should leave a large head space, wide left and right hand margins on one side only of each double spaced page. Discussion of practical procedure guidelines established that Mr. Kemp will prepare material from his own or Association sources in press format and deliver it to the Secretariat for transmission to sub Committee Members for factual and technical checking and approval. In urgent cases this procedure can be effected by telephone. Mr. Kemp will contact the Secretariat at weekly intervals to enquire for and/or submit material, the timing of issue of approved material returned to him being at his discretion and his knowledge of individual publications dates. The Secretariat agreed to provide Mr. Kemp with any typewriting and photocopying capacity he may require from time to time.

Discussion/

Discussion of financial arrangements defined that Mr. Kemp's appointment as Association Press Officer commence with effect from 1st March, 1979. Declining salary-based payments (in the light of envisaged irregularity of work flow and his remuneration from press sources for material he submitted) he accepted an initial advance of £20 to meet his out-of-pocket expenses. It was agreed this would be updated at approximately monthly intervals to take account of his actual outlays and press income derived from Association material.

Consideration of future topics agreed that the current rail-van shortage and the proposed Marketing Association be left over meantime. It was stressed that the sub-Committee's activities be directed mainly towards promotion of both seed and ware potatoes, it being strongly emphasised that the latter topic was most important in Scottish press terms.

Following upon Council's instruction of 9th March the sub-Committee next considered the subject of Plant Royalties on potatoes. The Chairman briefly explained the background and analyses by members and the Secretariat were compared. While an official announcement of the rates applicable to the 1980 crop had not been made to date, informal conversations were now known to indicate a modest overall increase is intended. The sub-Committee felt the analysed information should be given wide publicity to overcome an almost total unawareness (particularly in England) of the impact of royalty costs on producers of Scotch seed potatoes. It was also felt this could help to pre-empt the indicated increase, which the Association should resist in view of the widespread concern in the subject known to exist among its Members.

The meeting then closed with a vote of thanks to the Chair.