

REPORT on a MEETING of the joint
SEED TRADE COMMITTEE held at
8, Manor Place, EDINBURGH, at
2 p.m. on Tuesday, 4th MARCH, 1960.

PRESENT: N.F.U.S. - Mr. J. Hay, with Mr. P.J. Tait in attendance;
S.P.T.A. - Messrs. D.H. Lindsay, JGH Fenton and J.R. McArthur, with
D. Blackmore in attendance;
S.S.P.A. - Messrs. A.A. Arbuckle, J.E. Cook and J. Jeffreys, with G. Lyall
in attendance;
V.T.S.C.C.A. - Mr. J. Marshall, with Mr. H.A.C. Davie in attendance.

Mr. D.H. Lindsay occupied the Chair.

V.T.S.C. YEAR-NUMBERING: The Meeting first considered revision of the V.T.S.C. arrangements, Mr. Lyall explaining the points underlying his own views following the Growers' Association's recent A.G.M. Mr. Marshall pressed for (a) immediate adoption of a classification of three numbered years, (b) possibly reducing to two years following further review (say five years) later. In reply he explained the need to spread the changes over a period (cropping plans, micropropagation etc). It was agreed that VTSC Stocks should not be sold furth of Scotland, (unless "down-labelled" - see below)

Messrs. Jeffreys and Arbuckle felt the problems of complete changes now would not be overcome by adopting a two stage change. Indeed the expected increase in the number of Raisers would increase those problems (it was later pointed out that the necessary time lag for statutory changes would provide up to two years for adjustment, in any case.) It was also agreed to provide for exemptions under an immediate two year classification for certain varieties unduly affected by an immediate complete change-over.

There being confusion on the outcome of the Growers' A.G.M. it was agreed the matter be considered further by the Growers' own Committee in the light of views expressed today.

F.S. GRADES: There was full discussion of suggested discontinuation of year-numbering of F.S. Stocks which led on to attendant discontinuation of AA1 Grade (by combining it with AA Grade), to provide that only F.S. Stocks be planted to produce further seed in Scotland. In turn, consideration was also given to the introduction of a ban on the planting of uncertified seed in Scotland.

It was agreed that each constituent would take back the preferred recommendation that the grades be revised to FS1 FS2 (un-numbered) FS (for as long as its standards can be maintained), with only an AA Grade (with a V.N. Exemption certificate for export purposes when required). Views are also to be sought on "down-labelling" (for commercial reasons), particularly in respect of V.T.S.C. and F.S.1 to (un-numbered) FS for stocks moving furth of Scotland.

BURNING DOWN: The meeting was not in favour of the introduction of a compulsory burning down programme. Mr. Lyall explained that while no case could be made for a programme based on control of aphid-borne virus diseases, a programme to control Blackleg might have some merit. He had asked for the views of DAFS' Scientific Services on this aspect. The meeting agreed to await the reply to this Enquiry.

PLANTING OF UNCERTIFIED SEED: There was unanimous agreement the need for a ban on planting of uncertified seed in Scotland. It was agreed a ban should exclude small plots and private gardens and should progress area by area/

(under successive Orders by the Secretary of State) across the Whole of Scotland except the South West. In reply to the Chair, Mr. Lyall explained DAFS will have to heed a united demand from the whole industry, failing which a campaign to bring political pressure to bear can be mounted.

PLANTING RESTRICTIONS ON VTSC FARMS: The Committee next considered a reported DAFS intention to restrict the growing of V.T.S.C. stocks to farms where only V.T.S.C and FS1 stocks are being planted. Mr. Marshall felt this was less essential in the case of a V.T.S.C. Raiser multiplying his own "clone pyramid" (who is most unlikely to import troubles by buying in), than a grower buying in V.T.S.C. seed to plant for (as it must be) an FS1 crop. Mr. Lyall felt the intention was meaningless unless it incorporated the (more important) separation of storage and handling aspects. Mr. Arbuckle agreed with the (expanded) intention; he felt the restriction should apply to any incoming seed on V.T.S.C. growing farms but DAFS should provide scientific "back-up" evidence in support of concrete proposals.

REDUCTION OF DISEASE TOLERANCES: Arising from the Consultative Panel meeting in December, 1979 when DAFS proposed reduction of the tolerance for Mild Mosaic in F.S. stocks (from 0.05% to 0.01%) and for Blackleg and Mild Mosaic in AA1 and AA Stocks (from 1% to 0.5% and from 2% to 0.5% respectively) for the 1981 Crop, the Chairman called for the meetings' views. For the S.S.P.A. Mr. Arbuckle opposed any reductions, especially in view of their possible effect on certain varieties (particularly earlies.) For the N.F.U.S. Mr. Hay opposed any reductions, although his Committee had felt the Mild Mosaic tolerance in AA1 and AA Stocks could reasonably be reduced to 1%. For the S.P.T.A. Mr. Lindsay opposed any reductions, his Council's view being that more information about Blackleg is required before its tolerance can be properly considered. The V.T.S.C.G.A. agreed that on commercial consideration the proposed reductions were not acceptable.

Mr. Tait enquired the extent of any horse-trading potential in tolerance reductions vis-a-vis tuber health as much as uncertified planting. Mr. Lyall pointed out that if earlier suggested changes can be agreed and become effective, the need for tolerance reductions (and thus "horse-trading") will not arise.

Mr. Cooks view was that the industry's first consideration must be what it is selling, not what it is growing and that a simple reduction of a tolerance had no effect whatever on the disease itself. Nevertheless, the industry must be aware of its blackleg problem and must do something about it.

In Summary the Chairman felt the meeting shared DAFS' concern over the problems but that DAFS was going the wrong way about solving them. The meeting agreed the SPTA Secretariat should write informing DAFS that the constituent organisations are not to accept the proposed tolerance reductions for Blackleg and Mild Mosaic; that the Committee will meet again in about two month's time and will thereafter write DAFS again.

TUBER HEALTH STANDARDS: Discussion then turned to improving the levels and standards of tuber health and grading. The Chairman recalled DAFS stated view that Regulations were not the answer and Mr. Lyall's lack of understanding of that view. Mr. McArhtur, supported by Messrs. Tait and Arbuckle, felt a Voluntary improvement scheme will not work and the meeting agreed to adopt a "head on" approach to DAFS in these matters.

Various proposals included export standards in selected categories, a nil tolerance for frost in commercial grades, halving of certain "grouped" tolerances (including necessary switching between categories) and a nil tolerance for any form of soft rots in VTSC stocks. It was agreed each organisation will frame and submit its own recommendations before the Committee's next Meeting.

LEVEL OF CONSIGNMENTS INSPECTIONS: There was discussion of the means of improving the level of DAFS inspections. Mr. Arbuckle stressed DAFS claim that the cost/

of the service provided for inspection of 40% of consignments, but this level was not being achieved. Mr. Lyall felt the 40% objective criterion was inhibiting and should be abandoned and that rather than tonnage, the basis should be number of visits, which latter should also be directed much more towards suspect sources. This found the full support of the Committee. In reply to the Chair there was less full support for a proposal that DAFS should use under-employed P.M.B. inspectors for more routine duties.

APPEALS PROCEDURE: The Chairman explained the background to the initiative for an Appeals Procedure and that no progress had been made. After a short discussion the Committee agreed the initiative should not be pursued further at this time.

"APPROVED" GRADING POINTS: Mr. Lyall sought the Committee's views on the possibility of ensuring that exported stocks should only be allowed from "approved" points. Approval (for grading and dressing expertise, facilities etc. considerations) could be given by DAFS. A short discussion, though unclear on details, showed much interest and it was agreed each organisation would take this back for further discussion.

The Chairman warmly thanked the Committee for its very useful discussions, whereupon the meeting closed with a Vote of thanks to the Chair.