

REPORT on a MEETING of the  
SEED TRADE COMMITTEE held at  
17, Grosvenor Crescent, EDINBURGH  
at 2.30 p.m. on Thursday, 3rd  
JULY, 1980.

PRESENT: N.F.U.S. - Messrs. J. Hay, J. Jeffrey and J. McLaren with P. Tait  
in attendance.

S.P.T.A. - Messrs. D.H. Lindsay and J.R. McArthur, with D. Blackmore  
in attendance.

S.S.P.A. - Messrs. A. Arbuckle, J.E. Cook, G. Lyall and R. Smith.

V.T.S.C.G.A. - Messrs. J. Marshall and H.A.C. Davie.

Mr. J. Hay took the Chair.

APOLOGIES: Mr. Blackmore intimated apologies on behalf of Messrs. J.G.H. Fenton  
and R. David Hunter.

DISCUSSIONS: The Chairman proposed to take each point of the Committee's  
discussion of revision of the Seed Potato Regulations at its previous  
Meeting, in turn, for further comment. He explained briefly the  
course of joint SPTA/NFUS representations to DAFS immediately prior  
to the Committee's meeting. It was agreed this matter be deferred  
until DAFS telephoned response is received later today.

(a) V.T.S.C. Numbering - Mr. Marshall briefly outlined the history  
of the proposal to discontinue the fifth year of V.T.S.C. Grade.  
DAFS had notified that discussions with M.A.F.F. and Northern Ireland  
are continuing but elimination could only occur as part of a general  
revision of the Regulations. All other delegations voiced support  
for this proposal which the Chairman summarised as follows:-

"that third and fourth year material be numbered V.T.S.C. 1 and  
V.T.S.C. 2 and that fifth year material (V.T.S.C. 3) be dis-  
continued except in special cases in certain circumstances and  
after due consultation."

(b) F.S. Grades - Mr. Lindsay explained the S.P.T.A. view favoured  
retention of the present four year numbering system. F.S. 4 is a  
useful grade for export but the S.P.T.A. would be prepared to yield  
to strong pressure to discontinue this Grade. For the S.S.P.A. Mr.  
Arbuckle supported the status quo, Mr. Lyall adding that he favoured  
a single A.A. "catch grade" but this would require further S.S.P.A.  
consideration. For the V.T.S.C.G.A. Mr. Marshall agreed with the  
S.S.P.A. view. Mr. Hay pointed out that discontinuation of fifth year  
V.T.S.C. material should improve health levels in the F.S. Grades.  
Mr. Lindsay felt that A.A. 1 Grade should be retained for Veinal  
Necrosis reasons.

The Chairman sought the Committees views on year-numbering of  
A.A. 1 Grade. The S.P.T.A. view was this would lead to an impossible  
commercial situation, supported by SSPA (Mr. Lyall) who felt that  
changes should aim to reduce, not increase, the number of Grades.

Submitting his personal view Mr. Cook proposed that the Grade  
should comprise F.S. 1 (presently fifth-year V.T.S.C. material) and  
F.S.2 to indicate the number of years away from V.T.S.C. and to attract  
a commercial premium. Thereafter stocks should be graded F.S, without  
numbering, for as long as the tolerances can be met, failing which  
they would fall into a single A.A. "catch grade," and not be eligible  
for further entry into the Scheme. Additionally, such a structure  
would pre-empt the possible importation of doubtful material into  
Scotland, a consideration he felt is going to become very important  
in future.

The Committee's discussions indicated favour for these proposals  
and/



and it was agreed they would be taken back to each constituent Organisation for further consideration.

Mr. Lyall pointed out the vital importance of agreement between the constituent organisations in these matters - a united front must be presented to D.A.F.S. Mr. Smith sought the trade view on double inspections of A.A.1 crops. Mr. McArthur felt this was essentially politically motivated. Mr. Smith then proposed that Tobacco Veinal Necrosis should be treated as a "severe disease" (along with Leaf Roll and Mild Mosaic.)

It was felt that the introduction of double A.A.1 Inspections could be inevitable and that the proposed discontinuation of this Grade would avoid this problem. Within the F.S. Grade Mr. Smith's proposal would provide that 0.1% of T.V.N would be permitted at first inspection, to be rogued out to meet a Nil tolerance at second inspection. No change would be required to the present standards for Leaf Roll and Mild Mosaic. Mr. Smith urged the Committee to press this change to D.A.F.S. with one united voice and it was agreed the proposal be taken back by each constituent organisation for further discussion.

(c) Planting restrictions on V.T.S.C. Farms - Mr. Marshall reported that his Association is not opposed to the proposal that a V.T.S.C. Grower can grow his own material on to all Grades but shall not be allowed to buy in anything below V.T.S.C. Grade. Mr. McArthur added the rider that the restriction would apply to the particular farm, not the V.T.S.C. Raiser himself who could still buy in and grow other than his own material on a separate (second) farm.

This proposal was unanimously agreed.

(d) Burning Down - There was unanimous support from the constituent organisations to oppose the introduction of any scheme for compulsory burning down of potato crops in Scotland. It was agreed D.A.F.S. be asked to provide evidence of the effect of burning down in reducing Blackleg disease.

(e) Planting of unclassified seed - The constituent organisations were in full agreement with the general premise that such planting should be prohibited. With the full support of Mr. Jeffreys, Mr. McArthur felt the matter should be treated as a first priority. The Committee felt that a prohibition should be in full operation throughout Scotland within five years. Mr. Arbuckle's view was that it should also apply to gardens. After discussion this was felt to be impractical. Mr. Lyall warned that this aspect alone would ruin the whole proposal. It was agreed to keep Mr. Arbuckle's view in front of mind throughout the long term, a public relations, guidance-giving campaign providing a more practical solution to the gardens problem.

Mr. Smith questioned a progressive county-by-county, North to South introduction (Mr. Arbuckle pointed out this approach creates its own particular difficulties) and suggested the first step embrace the whole area north of the Tay. Mr. McLaren supported this suggestion but Mr. Jeffreys preferred the prohibition be introduced throughout Scotland (with the agreed exceptions) in one step. Mr. Lyall pointed out this method could be adopted by giving two years prior notice and, as an alternative, suggested the ban could be introduced in three stages, say, north of the North Esk, between the Forth and the North Esk and finally, south of the Forth. Allowing for legislative time lapses, either alternative would meet the agreed five-year time limit.

The Committee agreed these alternatives be taken back for further discussion by the constituent organisations.

(f) Disease tolerances - Reporting back on the Department's proposed reductions for Blackleg and Mild Mosaic, the S.P.T.A. and S.S.P.A. opposed any reductions until D.A.F.S. could supply Blackleg-free V.T.S.C./



V.T.S.C. material; V.T.S.C.G.A. favoured no change in tolerances in the F.S. Grade but, in .A.A.1 Grade tolerances could be reduced from 1% to 0.5% for Blackleg and from 2% to 0.5% for Mild Mosaic; the NFUS view was that efforts should be concentrated on improving tuber health rather than plant health standards.

In reply to Mr. Lyall, Mr. Blackmore confirmed he had written to D.A.F.S. on 4th March, 1980 to notify the Committee's unanimous opposition to any change in disease tolerances.

(g) Tuber Health - The Chairman recalled that the Committee's last meeting had agreed that tuber health should be improved. For the S.P.T.A Mr. Lindsay stated the view that the tolerances for frost and for soft rots in other than V.T.S.C. Grade (Sch. 5. Part 1) should be reduced from 1% to 0.5%. He was concerned to note that the V.T.S.C.G.A favoured a ("terribly final") nil tolerance for frost in V.T.S.C Grade (Sch. 5. Part 11)

For other than V.T.S.C. Grade (Sch. 5. Part I), the S.S.P.A. proposed that frost damage be transferred out of Group 1 into Group 2 wherein (along with soft rots etc.) each individual tolerance should be reduced from 1% to 0.5%, with an overall Group 2 tolerance reduced from 1% to 0.5% and the Collective Group (2 to 5) tolerances reduced from 6% to 5%. The N.F.U.S. and the S.P.T.A. representatives agreed with this proposal.

For V.T.S.C. Grade (Sch. 5. Part II) the V.T.S.C.G.A. proposal to reduce all individual tolerances in Group 2 from 0.5% to 0.25%, the overall Group 2 tolerance from 1% to 0.5% and the Collective Group (2 to 5) tolerances from 5% to 4% was agreed.

In summary, the Chairman pointed out that the only remaining difference was between the S.P.T.A and the V.T.S.C.G.A. on a nil tolerance for frost in (Sch. 5 part II) and the V.T.S.C.G.A. agreed to take this point back for re-discussion. Mr. Lyall also suggested that constituent organisations should consider whether, Sch. 5 Part III being applicable by A.D.A.S. in course of transit and trade, Parts I and II should be remodelled to become applicable only by D.A.F.S. at the inspection point at the time of grading and consignment.

(h) Dressing Inspections - The S.P.T.A. were not in favour of an increase in costs to raise the percentage of consignments inspected. For the S.S.P.A, Mr. Smith felt that, since the Inspectors themselves are well aware of the suspect dressing points, they should be allowed to decide which premises to inspect. The Committee agreed that past emphasis on percentage of tonnage, rather than numbers of premises, inspected had not taken account of the disproportionate potential of a small number of suspect dressing points. It was unanimously agreed to ensure that D.A.F.S. adopts the target of inspecting 100% of all dressing premises at least once every year.

(i) Approved Export Grading Stations - After a brief discussion showed little support for D.A.F.S' licensing of such stations, the Committee agreed not to pursue this proposal.

SUMMARY In conclusion the Chairman summarised the points agreed to taken back to the constituent organisations for further discussion as follows:-

- (1) Mr. Cook's Grades-structure proposals [Head (b) above].
- (2) Mr. Smith's proposal to treat Tobacco Veinal Necrosis as a Severe Disease [Head (b) above].
- (3) Whether, a ban on planting unclassified seed is to be introduced in three annual area-by-area steps, or one countrywide step [Head (e) above].
- (4) V.T.S.C.G.A. only - to reconsider its proposals on frost damage tolerance [Head (g) above].



A.O.C.B.

(i) V.T.S.C. Growers' authorisations - In view of reports that some laxity of standards exists, the Committee considered a suggestion that instead of being granted "for life", authority to grow V.T.S.C. material should be subject to renewal. The V.T.S.C.G.A. view favoured continuation of D.A.F.S' ongoing review arrangements. S.S.P.A. supported this view and counselled that stronger measures should stem from pressure by other organisations on the V.T.S.C.G.A. to take the matter up with D.A.F.S. The S.P.T.A. fully supported maintenance of the very highest standards for production of V.T.S.C. material and felt that renewal should be withheld on a second infringement of standards after due warning had been given on the first occasion. The Committee agreed the number of new applicants for authorisation probably reflects their dis-satisfaction with material from some existing sources. The V.T.S.C.G.A. representatives noted the Committee's views.

(ii) 1980 Crop Inspections - Further to the joint NFUS/SPTA meeting with DAFS at noon today Mr. Tait, having received Mr. McEwan's promised telephoned call in reply during the Committee's meeting, reported that DAFS is not to change its decision (to require a second inspection of all AA1 Crops in which the incidence of Blackleg was found to exceed 0.25% at normal inspection). Mr. McEwan had explained that to change the decision would create "further inequities" (in Mr. Tait's view thereby implying acceptance that the original instruction had caused inequity). Mr. McEwan had repeated an apology for the discourtesy of non-consultation and had stated that steps would be taken to try to prevent a future recurrence in this respect.

For the S.P.T.A. Mr. Lindsay expressed extreme disappointment and urged that the matter be taken further within fortyeight hours. The N.F.U.S. supported this view completely and (though not represented at the noon meeting) the S.S.P.A. voiced surprise that D.A.F.S., which should be looking at revising its "trigger-level" from 0.25% to 0.5%, had not responded to the representations.

After discussion it was agreed the combined Secretariats write a letter of complaint from the Chairman to the Minister of State for Agriculture seeking his assistance to rectify the matter. Mr. Tait pointed out that N.F.U.S. policy required that all correspondence to the Minister must be signed by the N.F.U.S. President, Mr. John Cameron. In this light it was accepted the letter would not be sent until tomorrow and Mr. Tait undertook to circulate copies of it to the constituent organisations for immediate information.

(iii) Date of next meeting - It was agreed the Committee's next meeting will be held in the N.F.U.S. offices in late August or early September, 1980.

The Meeting then closed with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.