

REPORT on the MEETING of the
JOINT (NASPM/SPTA) LIAISON COMMITTEE
held at 8, Manor Place, EDINBURGH, at
10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 15th OCTOBER,
1980.

PRESENT: NASPM - Messrs. H.N. Aves, C.J. Baker, R.J. Beeson and E.R. Sherriff.

SPTA - Messrs. J.H. Barr, J.G.H. Fenton, D.H. Lindsay, J.R. McArthur and
T. McClung, with R.D. Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant)
in attendance.

Mr. D. Hendry Lindsay (President, SPTA) occupied the Chair and welcomed the
representatives to the Meeting.

APOLOGIES: Mr. Hunter intimated apologies for absence notified on behalf of Mr.
D.H. Smith (NASPM) and Messrs. A.J. Allan and J. Henderson (SPTA).

BLACKLEG: Opening discussion of the first item (placed on the Agenda at NASPM
request) Mr. Sherriff explained the subject to be a nightmare to NASPM
members. He expressed particular concern at the adverse publicity accorded
to the subject by the agricultural Press and proposed the Committee put
pressure upon the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland
(DAFS) to counter this.

In reply, the SPTA delegates stated it was too early to expect detailed
statistical analysis of the 1980 Growing Crop Inspections and that, in
respect of this year's second inspections of A.A.1 crops, much effort had
been expended to little advantage. Despite varietal investigations in
Cambridge much more needed to be known about this disease and without which,
while DAFS would agree to impose reduced disease tolerances, several
commercially useful varieties could disappear.

There was some inconclusive discussion of development of chemical control
of this disease before agreement was reached that the Committee would not
press DAFS to introduce any changes in the Inspections tolerances, but rather
to confine the discussions to a "questions and answers" exchange of views.
In this latter respect Mr. Aves explained that Northern Ireland research
showed that, while imports of "King Edward" variety from Egypt had identified
ten varieties of Erwina (Blackleg) infection, only one of these varieties
could be identified as being of U.K. origin.

RE-
-IMPORTATION At the instance of the SPTA the Committee next discussed the re-import-
ation and planting in England of Desiree seed potatoes exported from Scotland
to (and rejected by) Algeria during the 1979/80 Season.

NASPM delegates explained this particular (singular) event had co-
incided with both the retiral of Mr. Chick and his replacement by Mr. Bodwell
in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) staffing and the
discovery of Colorado Beetle in imported consignments of Spinach. The SPTA
delegates also understood that once the re-imported seed had been re-
classified as "stockfeed" MAFF/DAFS were rendered powerless to intervene in
terms of the Seed Potato Regulations 1978, removal and surrender of DAFS
(export) seed potato labels having been (un-successfully) pursued to re-
inforce this position.

In the ensuing discussions it was revealed that, of the original
exportation about 400 tonnes had been removed in Algeria and of the remain-
ing 1800 tonnes returned, about two thirds were believed to have been planted
as seed in England. The Chairman directed attention from this historical
occurrence to prevention of its recurrence in which light it was reported
that MAFF had been both surprised at the speed with which the event had
been concluded and shocked at the force of the re-action it had engendered.
While the desirability of the return of such consignments to the port of
origin was recognised, it was agreed the event had alerted the authorities
to a different response to a future recurrence.

PALLETS:/

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This item having been proposed by SPTA, the Chairman opened discussions by highlighting the problems involved. The subsequent discussions clarified the basic incompatibility of loading ware in 25Kg bags on 4' x 4' pallets with loading seed in 50Kg bags which required pallets of 5' x 4' size. It was recognised that transfer from one pallet size to the other altogether destroyed the advantages of palletised loading and it was agreed that resolution of these problems was best left to the devices of the contractees involved.

N.S.D.O

The Committee next considered N.S.D.O proposals for development of its protected varieties in overseas markets. While evincing general agreement on the need for (export) Trade involvement in this respect there was unanimous opposition to the future creation of exclusive (and counter-productive) monopolistic rights. It was reported that, in the view of both the Northern Ireland seed export interests and the NASPM Exports Committee (the latter albeit meantime awaiting its own Council's formal endorsement), active Trade involvement in overseas presentation/development activities offered the only safeguard that monopolistic powers would not be created.

Northern Ireland interests had embodied their proposals in a Paper. SPTA Council had also considered a Paper drafted by Mr. Barr. In general these closely matched a summary tabled by Mr. Beeson for the NASPM Exports Committee as follows:-

- (1) Formation of a joint (Trade/PMB/NSDO) Committee of Management to introduce and promote NSDO varieties by designating exporters for various countries on application.
- (2) Designated exporters to be allowed say 5 years promotional period.
- (3) Thereafter freedom of variety and country open to all exporters subject to a levy, of which, for a limited period, the Committee would pay part to the original designee.
- (4) Financial assistance to be forthcoming according to circumstances.
- (5) Funds anticipated available from grant-aid bodies, subscriptions, current promotional allocations, etc.

In full discussions the meeting agreed these headings satisfied (a) broad acceptance of participation in NSDO's proposals and (b) modification of those proposals to ensure eventual freedom of general Trade participation. It was the unanimous view that (a) it would be disastrous if "financial muscle" (whether multi-national company, Dutch or any other origin) came to control the direction of (or, by default, to fail to give guidance to) plant breeding requirements for overseas markets and (b) whatever arrangements with NSDO may finally evolve they must be seen to be unquestionably open, fair and above-board. Mr. McArthur urged that NSDO should bear its proper share of financial commitment to its designated "Development" function, while Mr. Fenton pressed for financial definition of NSDO's requirements and its commitments under its proposals.

Further discussions on how effectively Trade interests can "dig in their toes" to modify NSDO proposals elicited views that NSDO is (a) currently sensitive that their "ready made" proposals are not acceptable; (b) that their existing "monopolistic" promotional/marketing arrangements are breaking down and (c) that it is suffering top level criticism of its lower level activities. In such an environment it was felt that a concerted and jointly integrated English/Northern Irish/Scottish response to the NSDO proposals would attract a greater NSDO Acceptance.

Within these various considerations the Committee agreed that the English, Northern Irish and the Scottish Associations should each write NSDO to request postponement of the deadline for submission of Papers, and postponement of the proposed date of the next Working Party meeting until mid-January, 1981. In the meantime each of the English, Northern Irish and the Scottish Association would seek the approval of their respective Councils for the next meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee to finalise a joint response to the NSDO overseas development proposals. It was also agreed that this joint response should subsequently seek the approval of an enlarged meeting of exporter interests (to include all present NSDO-licenced interests) to be arranged by NASPM prior to the next (postponed) NSDO Working/

Working Party meeting in (say) mid-January, 1981.

NASPM
WINTER
FIELD
DAY

For NASPM Mr. Sherriff explained that revival of their "Winter Field Day" event was being actively pursued and he extended a cordial invitation for SPTA participation. While the date of the event had already been fixed for 30th January, 1980 the actual venue awaited determination by NASPM Council at its meeting on 12th November, 1980. Details and Agenda would be advised immediately thereafter for promulgation in the next-subsequent SPTA News Letter.

A.O.C.B

(a) Conditions of Sale - Mr. Hunter reported receipt of a copy letter from the NASPM President (Mr. Kevin Burke) alleging SPTA infringement of copyright claimed by NASPM in respect of the jointly negotiated revised version of Conditions of Sale.

Stressing SPTA aversion to prolongation of what was clearly (in his view) a straightforward and quite genuine mis-understanding, he highlighted the salient points of difference between Mr. Burke's assertions and the facts of both his own and NASPM's own Reports of the relevant joint meetings in Manchester on 1st August, 1979 and in London on 6th November, 1979. Accepting that his own letter of _____ had added to the mis-understanding Mr. Hunter pointed out that the basic difference stemmed from NASPM's failure to advise its Council's subsequent copyright licencing decision to SPTA.

Accepting these observations, Mr. Sherriff (for NASPM) explained NASPM's over-riding pre-occupation to retain to itself the copyright of the revised Conditions. He also accepted, on behalf of NASPM, that the SPTA had no intention of usurping NASPM's copyright but nevertheless insisted that right must be established and asserted.

In ensuing discussion the Chairman re-affirmed SPTA apologies for any apparent hurt occasioned by SPTA actions in ignorance of NASPM Council's un-communicated decisions (which apologies were accepted by NASPM delegates) and supported Mr. Hunter's point that differences between the Scottish and English versions of the revised Conditions (particularly in respect of "destination" and legal competence) had significant copyright connotations. He also stressed that, on behalf of SPTA, Mr. Hunter's professional training had made a significant contribution to jointly-acceptable finalisation of the revised Conditions.

While Mr. Baker, for NASPM, acknowledged Mr. Hunter's contribution in respect of finalisation of Conditions 11 and 12, he nevertheless regarded NASPM's expectation of a copyright licensing contribution of the order of £500 to be a generous offer. For his own part, Mr. Hunter recorded that no such similar problems had arisen when NASPM had earlier adopted Conditions of Sale unquestionably devised by the former Scottish Potato Trade Executive, but he accepted that NASPM's, Legal Committee had incurred considerable legal expenses and was morally obliged to safeguard its position in this respect. He declined to state the legal position in respect of copyright considerations without further consideration.

Mr. Sherriff recorded his own initial efforts against considerable opposition to establish a joint (and co-operative) NASPM/SPTA dialogue which had led to founding of the Joint Liaison Committee. He was saddened that the current subject might detract from undoubted achievements to date but he felt bound to support the view that NASPM must establish and maintain its copyright and that SPTA should make a suitable copyright licensing contribution.

For the SPTA the Chairman was sympathetic to this view and he stressed that SPTA members were not unreasonable men. Pointing out that due regard would require to be given (a) to Mr. Hunter's considered professional opinion on copyright implications; (b) the unequal responsibilities of SPTA Members in these matters (some of whom, by virtue of being members of both SPTA and NASPM, would bear a double share of these costs, while other ware-only members should bear no share at all) and (c) the practical mechanics of any amendment of SPTA copyright, he undertook to obtain his Council's instructions. On this basis the Committee's discussion of this matter was concluded.

NEXT
MEETING:

In reply to Mr. Sherriff, the Committee agreed to hold its next meeting in the Farmers' Club in London on Thursday, 4th December, 1980. It was agreed NASPM would invite Messrs. A.A. Sinclair (PMB) and J.H. Bullock (NISPMB) to be present at a pre-lunch part of the meeting and that the post-lunch part of the meeting without them should finalise a joint Paper for circulation to all exporters (including NSDO licencees) in readiness for a subsequent (early January, 1981) meeting of them, prior to the next meeting of the NSDO Working Party.

The Committee's meeting then closed with a Vote of thanks to the Chair.