

REPORT on a MEETING of the joint
SEED TRADE COMMITTEE held in the
Station Hotel, PERTH at 2p.m. on
Tuesday, 25th NOVEMBER, 1980.

PRESENT:

N.F.U.S. - Messrs. J.W. Hay and J.A. McLaren, with P. Tait in attendance.

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

S.S.P.A. - Mr. J.E. Cook, with Mr. R.A. Smith in attendance.

V.T.S.C.G.A. - Mr. I. McKenzie, with Mr. H.A.C. Davie in attendance.

Mr. D. Hendry Lindsay occupied the Chair. He welcomed those present at the meeting arranged expressly to consider a Paper (circulated on 14th November, 1980 by Mr. D.C. Todd (D.A.F.S.) in readiness for the Seed Potato Consultative Panel Meeting on 15th December, 1980), in the light of the package of proposals already agreed by the Seed Trade Committee at its last meeting on 13th November, 1980.

In its paragraph-by-paragraph consideration of the Paper, the Committee agreed paragraphs 1 - 4 to be simply introductory and not requiring further comment. It was further agreed that paragraph 5 was essentially the same as the Committee's own agreed V.T.S.C "time-chain" proposals and that para. 6 (micropropagation) consisted of random thoughts, not proposals.

Para. 7 - The Chairman pointed out that the possibility set out in the final sentence (compulsory chemical treatment of V.T.S.C. tubers against skinspot and gangrene) had not been envisaged by the Committee in formulating its package of proposals. Discussion included non-compulsion; providing D.A.F.S. with leverage against bad V.T.S.C. growers; and opposition to chemicals usage as such, before it was agreed by the Committee to be a landable aim but with strong reservations regarding compulsion.

Para. 8 - The Committee accepted the first two sentences as constituting a simplification, as set out in its own previously agreed package of proposals. It was agreed to seek to discuss the subsequent sentence during the Consultative Panel meeting to define D.A.F.S.' motive for its proposal. In re-discussion of the final sentence ("year grades" for F.S.) it was felt the Committee's own package of proposals (present fifth-year V.T.S.C., F.S.1 and F.S.2 to become F.S.1, F.S.2 and F.S.3 respectively), leading to higher standards for the present A1 Grade and thus requiring it to be re-named, was superior but it was agreed that, to achieve "replantability" of the renamed Grade, the Committee should be prepared to cede a combined tolerance of 0.15% for severe diseases (30 plants per ha.) compared with 2% in the present A1 Grade. The Committee also re-affirmed that the renamed Grade should have (a) a 1% tolerance for Mild Mosaic and 0.5% for Blackleg (against 2% and 1% respectively in the present A1 Grade), both subject to review in the light of experience with younger ("time-chain") stocks and (b) a Nil second-inspection tolerance for Veinal Necrosis. The Committee further re-affirmed that the new "catch grade" (to be renamed simply 'A' Grade) should have tolerances of 2% and 1% for Mild Mosaic and for Blackleg respectively (the same as for the present A1 Grade) and that stocks in which veinal Necrosis was recorded should be "starred" in the Crop Register.

Para. 9/

Para. 9 - "Replantability" - The Committee appreciated that its proposal that the renamed Grade ("Super A"?) be allowed entry into the Inspection Scheme as long as its standards can be maintained conflicted with D.A.F.S. proposal that stocks should drop one grade each year automatically. In the light that "Super A" grade will be age-equivalent to present FS3 grade and that commercial and higher standards considerations will limit its replantability much more than the present AAL grade, the Committee re-affirmed its proposal to allow "Super A" grade stocks to be entered into the Inspection Scheme.

The Committee felt the second part of para. 9 was a politically motivated attempt to bring the Scottish scheme into line with European schemes. It was recognised that as-stated second inspections of all AAL stocks would include all diseases and could be expected to incur F.S. - rate inspection fees for all crops. It was also pointed out that adoption of "Super A" grade would bring all diseases into second inspections in 1982. The Committee agreed to accept second inspections for AAL stocks in 1981 in respect of Blackleg only and re-affirmed its decision to press for early inspections.

Para. 10 - the Committee's foregoing discussions had already included the content of this paragraph (catch grade, T.V.N., etc.)

Para. 11 - It was felt that D.A.F.S.' envisaged nine year "life" for all stocks (4 V.T.S.C., 4F.S. and 1 AAL) would not be seriously upset by the practical operation of the Committee's own proposals.

Par. 12 - ban on planting of un-classified seed. N.F.U.S. representatives categorically rejected D.A.F.S.' suggestion that N.F.U.S. should act as "policeman" for a ban. Mr. Smith pointed out that the "exclusions" proposed by the Committee largely defeated D.A.F.S.' objections (which objections were contradictory, in any case, with earlier statements in the Paper). In his own view, if a ban had been introduced in the 1950's, T.V.N. could have been eradicated and the explosion of Leaf Roll in 1975 would not have occurred. The Committee agreed with these views and re-affirmed its intention to push hard for a ban to be introduced as soon as possible.

Para. 13 - eligibility of seed. It was felt production of one label would be a completely impractical and ineffective way to prevent abuse. Except that often marked "as per labels", a copy Invoice offered a better solution. In any event, if abuse does occur and the crop achieves classification the seed must have been good and no harm^{will} have been done. The Committee agreed this paragraph should be ignored.

Para. 14. - burning down. It was felt this proposal was a complete somersault by D.A.F.S. (on record that there is insufficient scientific evidence to support a compulsory programme) and would demand a fully professional inspection service. In Mr. McArthur's view, introduction of the proposal would cede the argument to the Dutch and, by surrendering the competitive edge provided by the composite nature of the whole Scottish potato crop to the Dutch, would cut the Scottish potato industry's throat. He pointed out that it would much increase costs and bureaucracy and decrease efficiency by so doing. The Committee confirmed its position is this matter as agreed at its last meeting (on 13th November, 1980).

Para. 15 - Regulation dressing standards. The Committee re-affirmed its views agreed at its last meeting.

Para. 16 - "Split-field" PCE Tests. The Committee regarded the proposal to limit splitting to where a permanent fence has been erected as quite untenable. It was felt that good husbandry provides a suitable remedy to the problem.

Mr. Davie pointed out that, except for an oblique reference, D.A.F.S. Paper did not mention "licensing" of V.T.S.C. Growers or a procedure for withdrawal of such "licences" should necessary standards/

standards not be maintained.

In conclusion the Committee agreed that each of its constituent organisations will write separately to D.A.F.S. to submit (and stating as agreed by the Seed Trade Committee) the eight points of the "package" proposals. Each organisation should thereafter add (and specify as non-agreed) any other points it may wish to submit.

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