

REPORT on a MEETING of the
SEED POTATO CONSULTATIVE PANEL
held in Chesser House, EDINBURGH,
at 10.30 a.m. on Monday 15th
DECEMBER, 1980.

PRESENT: D.A.F.S. - Messrs. L.V. McEwan, D.C. Todd and A. Edwards, with Mrs. M. Cuthbert, Miss G. Dickie and Miss A. Garden in attendance.

EAST

CRAIGS - Drs. T.D. Hall and P.J. Howell, Messrs. T. Mabbot, D. Quim, M.J. Richardson, J.W. Todd and Mrs. L. Turle.

C.O.S.A.C. - Mr. J. Anderson

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

P.M.B. - Mr. J. McFarlane.

S.A.O.S. - Mr. J. Arbuckle.

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. - Messrs. A.A. Arbuckle and R.A. Smith.

V.T.S.C.G.A. - Mr. J. Marshall

Mr. L.Y. McEwan occupied the Chair and welcomed those present, explaining it was foreseen that the later part of the Agenda (Future Policy) will give rise to a need for a second Panel meeting in about six to eight weeks' time.

1980
CROP
YEAR:

(a) Overall Review and (b) Disease Statistics - Mr. D.C. Todd spoke briefly and in general terms on the analysed inspections results statistics pre-circulated by D.A.F.S. to delegates. He pointed out that increased rejections were principally due to Blackleg disease and rather less than usual detail in respect of Tobacco Veinal Necrosis and Leaf Roll had been shown. He also explained that emphasis on inspections of exported stocks, coupled with costs restrictions on travelling, had reduced the overall total tonnage inspected. Mr. Edwards spoke on crop inspection experience and explained that while second inspections of A1 crops had failed 281 ha. for Blackleg, 1100 ha. had achieved the grade.

Mr. Quinn stated that, compared with 94% in the 1979 crop, 87% of F.S. crops in 1980 were free of Blackleg (1964 was 89%). Helped by the V.T.S.C. Scheme and the dry years in 1975 and 1976, the level of freedom has been 90% or above since 1973. Downgrading of V.T.S.C. stocks for this disease has declined from 22% in 1978 through 18% in 1979 to 17% in 1980, reflecting a cyclic and climatic pattern. A repetition of the 1960's disaster is not in prospect. The following general discussion covered the very high levels of failures for Blackleg in Dutch varieties, during which Dr. Hall also stated that three years figures for the performance of "sold on" V.T.S.C. stocks have now been compiled.

N.F.U.S. representatives, noting that tonnage-based tuber inspections had declined from 35% in 1978/79 to 26% in 1979/80, sought reassurance that a wider spread of current-year inspections (especially during the February/March pressure period) would not fall victim to staff and other economies. Mr. Edwards stated that by end-November 1980 visits had been made to 231 of the 309 dressing points to which labels had been issued in D.A.F.S.' largest area. A reduction of P.C.E. over-sampling would provide a helpful release of inspectorate staff to dressing work. In his following/

following remarks on soil sampling work Mr. Mabbot confirmed the degree of over-application was excessive, it being clear that much of the "banking" area being tested cannot and will not ever be used.

1981
CROP:

Mr. D.C. Todd stated the arrangements for the 1981 crop will be generally the same as for the 1980 crop, albeit some administrative changes within the Regulations may be made. In this respect he explained the need for earlier Crop-Inspection applications - to be received by, say, 1st June, (1980 was 12th May with 1st June for merchant-growers, but last few delayed until early July). While he preferred coluntary co-operation, enforcement of a closing-date sanction may be required. Mr. Lindsay felt July applications to be totally unreasonable but urged that all changes be given prominence in D.A.F.S' early-March letter to growers.

Inspection Fees. - depending on manpower decisions still to be made, Mr. D.C. Todd "guestimated" fees would be increased to £13, £12 and £10 per half hectare for 1980. Pointing out these were 25% increases Mr. Fenton urged more inspectors and more early inspections to assist growers in their rogeuing arrangements.

A.A.1 Crops - The Chairman sought the Panel's views on whether the 1980 arrangements should simply be repeated, or whether second inspections should be extended to all A.A.1 crops. While second inspections were felt to be good policy, Mr. Smith called for clear-cut instructions to ensure uniform application that A.A.1 crops burned off before second inspection will retain their grade.

Burning Off - Mr. D.C. Todd explained D.A.F.S. had resisted introduction of any compulsory burning down requirement believing such to be non-beneficial in reduction of Leaf Roll. Scientific advice is that burning down has advantages in controlling Blackleg, a view which Mr. J.W. Todd confirmed in principle. Mr. Lindsay pointed out commercial considerations dictate against compulsion, especially in certain varieties. Speaking in support Mr. Hay advocated continuation of present voluntary/advisory arrangements and Mr. D.C. Todd preferred inclusion of recommendations in D.A.F.S' early-March letter to growers. Mr. Fenton sought scientific evidence that burning down helped with other than Blackleg problems, in reply to which Mr. D.C. Todd pointed out such approach conflicts with rogeuing advice and Mrs. Turle confirmed that statistics show rogeuing has helped considerably in control of Leaf Roll over the last three years.

N.F.U.S. and S.P.T.A. delegates together stressed that "advisory compulsion" is a contradiction of terms, which the Chairman accepted as defining D.A.F.S' problem. Mr. Lindsay also pointed out that planting of unclassified seed for ware and compulsory burning down for seed cannot be reconciled. In general discussion the latter was regarded as contradiction of earlier claims; English scientific view being that lack of it forms the Achillies heel of the whole Scottish Inspection Scheme; its introduction would be a time bomb to destroy the principal advantage of Scottish seed growers over their Dutch counterparts and thereby ruin the Scottish Seed Industry; Scottish scientific view is that both burning down and lifting dates should be strictly supervised and also that haulm destruction wich acid was superior to flailing.

Virus disease - aphicides - Mrs. Turle explained that in respect of early infection and spread, 1980 had been the same as 1976. Possibly due to erratic crop emergence, mysus persicae had been less common and its dominance ceded to macrocycrum euphorbii which, taking better advantage of conditions, produced heavier populations and achieved rapid colonisation, with up to 100% infection by the third week in July. From this an upsurge of Leaf Roll is to be expected in 1981 and early use of pesticides and above all early and rigorous rogeuing is strongly recommended.

Format of application forms - Suggested revisions (in respect of condensation of too-detailed variations requirements and simplification of Virus/

Virus requirements) were deferred for discussion as part of the afternoon consideration of future policy.

FUTURE
POLICY:

The Panel gave paragraph-by-paragraph consideration to a pre-circulated D.A.F.S. discussion Paper, in conjunction with proposals jointly formulated and pre-submitted by N.F.U.S., S.P.T.A., S.S.P.A., and V.T.S.C.G.A. Paras.(1)-(4) were accepted to be introductory only.

(5) V.T.S.C. Time Chain - There was general agreement that V.T.S.C. multiplication should be limited to four years (with a licensed fifth year in exceptional circumstances). Timing the change presented a problem. Dr. Hall doubted that V.T. Growers could switch in 1982 and Mr. D.C. Todd anticipated new Regulations for implementation for the 1983 crop. With support, N.F.U.S. pressed for introduction for the 1982 crop.

(6) Micropropagation- Dr. Hall explained this will mainly help to reduce the V.T.S.C. chain. To overview the risk of genetic variations D.A.F.S. would want two years field inspections before classification. Indicated costs of this method are less than present-method costs.

(7) V.T.S.C. Standards - In respect of chemical treatment of V.T.S.C. tubers against gangrene and skinspot, Mr. Marshall explained the V.T.S.C. Growers' Association already recommends such treatment.

(8)-(11) Grade Structure - On behalf of the grower/trade Associations Mr. McArthur explained their jointly-formulated complete package proposals pressed that:-

F.S. Grade - Should be limited to three years only (F.S.1, F.S.2 and F.S.3 without change of present standards of these grades) and both the present F.S.4 and A.A.1 Grades should be discontinued in favour of an entirely new grade called (say)

Super "A" Grade - with "mid-way" health standards of 1% Mild Mosaic, 0.5% Blackleg and 0.15% Severe diseases at second inspection, eligible for entry for classification so long as grade standards can be maintained.

"A" Grade -replacing (and having the same standards as) the present A.A. grade. A means should be devised for stocks containing T.V.N. to be denoted in the Register.

The Chairman noted these proposals did not accord with D.A.F.S. proposals to abandon "unlimited time" grading (A.A.1 at present, Super A as proposed). Mr. McArthur pointed out that the stricter health standards of Super A would virtually ensure a three-year limit in the grade and thus broadly accord with D.A.F.S. aim of a nine year classification life.

Mr. D.C. Todd felt the scientists should make the necessary decisions. In prolonged discussions D.A.F.S. representatives preferred Super A/A.A.1 should be ineligible for entry for classification except in special circumstances; could not agree that a small tolerance for Tobacco Veinal Necrosis should be permitted at the first (but not at the second) inspection of Super A crops; considered the effects on exports, on a community grade and on new entrants to the E.E.C., etc.

(12) Planting of unclassified Seed - The Chairman stressed the problems of policing the ban jointly proposed by the grower/trade Associations. Mr. D.C. Todd pointed out that it could meet opposition from N.F.U.S. members in certain areas and Mr. Tait stated clearly that the N.F.U.S. could not accept the task of introducing or policing such a ban so clearly a D.A.F.S. responsibility. Mr. Richardson explained he had been unable to discover some year previously what proportions of the Scottish ware crops was planted with classified or unclassified seed respectively.

(13) "Seed planted" check - In preference to D.A.F.S. proposal (to require submission/

submission or inspection of labels) it was suggested a copy Invoice would be a more practical and acceptable means of verification.

(14) Burning Down - fully discussed during the morning meeting, was not re-opened.

(15) Quality and presentation of tuber lots - The Panel noted the dilemma set out in D.A.F.S. Paper and that proposal 6 in each of the letters from the grower/trade Associations referred specifically to the matter.

(16) Field "splitting" for P.C.E. Tests - Mr. Mabbot spoke at length, with supportive diagrams, to explain the problems of operating a nil tolerance when operation of the Regulations can allow a degree of tolerance to creep in. The Panel agreed unanimously that present "splitting" arrangements were clearly being abused but the means of limitation were not decided.

Before turning to discussion of other points Mr. J.W. Todd explained he wished to return to discussion of compulsory chemical treatments (for V.T.S.C. Tubers?) at the Panel's next meeting.

Planting restrictions on V.T.S.C. Farms and V.T.S.C. Raiser Status - Mr. Marshall spoke in support of proposals 4 and 5 of the letter from each of the grower trade Associations. In respect of the latter, Mr. J.W. Todd explained he was unable to monitor the "later-chain" performance of V.T.S.C. stocks fully and consistently at present.

Order of Inspections,
Early Inspections and

Blackleg - Mr. Hay enlarged on points 9, 10 and 11 added to the (joint proposals) letter submitted by the N.F.U.S. The first two points were noted by D.A.F.S. and in reply to the third point Mr. J.W. Todd stated the scientific services enjoyed good contact with U.S. sources, excellent collaboration with S.C.R.- and some contact with counterparts in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Hay proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair and the Meeting was closed.