

REPORT of the POTATO MARKETING BOARD
 WARE POTATO IMPORTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 held at 50 Hans Crescent, KNIGHTSBRIDGE
 on Wednesday 18 March, 1981

The Chairman of the Potato Marketing Board, Mr Geoffrey Grantham was in the Chair. The Vice-Chairman of the Potato Marketing Board, Mr John Arbuckle was in attendance.

Countries Represented: Holland, Federal Republic of West Germany, Belgium, Northern Ireland, England and Scotland.

Countries Submitting Written Reports: France and Eire.

The meeting commenced at 2 p.m. During the morning of 18 March the New Ware Imports Committee of the Potato Marketing Board met and it should be noted that the Scottish Potato Trade Association are not represented on this Committee. The Chairman introduced the afternoon meeting by giving a brief report of the morning meeting when there was discussion about potential imports of new potatoes into the United Kingdom.

EGYPT There will be imports of 80,000 tonnes as compared to 126,000 tonnes last year. All consignments from Egypt are being inspected on arrival re quality standards.

CYPRUS 117,000 tonnes maximum are anticipated which is similar to last year.

GREECE Approximately 15,000 tonnes will be available but assurances have been given to the Potato Marketing Board that there will be no hidden subsidies this year.

SPAIN Approximately 22,000 tonnes available (of which 15,000 tonnes originate from Majorca) and similarly the Spanish Authorities have assured the Potato Marketing Board that there will be no subsidies.

FRANCE Possibly 26,000 tonnes to 30,000 tonnes available.

JERSEY Approximately 30,000 tonnes available but as the Jersey crop is earlier this year it is anticipated that loadings in May will only be approximately 7,000 tonnes.

PEMBROKE - CORNWALL By the end of February 3,500 hectares were planted then there was a complete break in planting during the first half of March due to bad weather. Planting in Pembroke in 1981 is the earliest for 12 years and by 18 March, the date of the meeting, potatoes were breaking the ground in both Cornwall and Pembroke.

Peter Kerslake of the Potato Marketing Board then reported on the United Kingdom situation stating that consumption has increased by 2.5% on last year, that wastage in store is considerably higher than last year with an average of 12%. He informed the meeting that the United Kingdom Surplus is entirely covered by the first Potato Marketing Board Buying Programme.

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The 1981 target is 166,000 hectares and the Potato Marketing Board believe that this will be exceeded marginally (the 1980 target was 168,000 hectares and this was exceeded by 6,000 hectares). Mr Kerslake reported that offers under the second Potato Marketing Board Buying Programme were substantial from Scotland.

WEST GERMANY Doctor Graff reported that their main crop had been extremely light in 1980 and averaged only 26 tonnes per hectare whereas in 1979 it had been 32 tonnes per hectare. West Germany therefore have imported a substantial quantity of ware potatoes from Holland.

HOLLAND Mr Van den Top and Mr Lodewyk reported that Holland averaged 38 tonnes per hectare in 1980 whereas in 1979 their average was 36 tonnes per hectare. From the 1980 crop Holland had supplies of ware potatoes available for export amounting to 1,100,000 tonnes. Up till 10 March their exports of ware were 700,000 tonnes. It follows therefore that approximately 400,000 tonnes of ware potatoes are available in Holland for export from mid March until mid July. Mr Lodewyk was doubtful whether his Dutch Merchants could export that quantity ie: 100,000 tonnes per month and expressed the opinion that if the price of Dutch Ware which at that time was £50 per tonne graded at the packing station, sacks extra, was to ease back and the United Kingdom price of ware was to increase due to the Second Buying Programme then Holland would be looking to the United Kingdom Market. It was noted that approximately 1,000 tonnes of Dutch Ware are being imported each week by a United Kingdom processor at £75 per tonne delivered processors factory.

FRANCE - BELGIUM - EIRE Due to lack of statistical information the reports from these three countries were rather meaningless.

The meeting closed at 3.30 p.m. and the date of the next meeting was decided for Monday 12 October 1981.

D. H. Lindsay