

REPORT on a MEETING of the  
SEED POTATO CONSULTATIVE PANEL  
held in Chesser House, EDINBURGH at  
10 a.m. on Friday 24th APRIL, 1981.

PRESENT: D.A.F.S. - Messrs. L.V. McEwan, D.C. Todd and A. Edwards, with E. Barschtschyk and Miss J. Garden in attendance

EAST CRAIGS - Drs. T.D. Hall and P.J. Powell and J.W. Todd, with Messrs. T. Mabbot, D. Quimmand M.J. Richardson.

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

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

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

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

S.P.T.A. - Messrs. D.H. Lindsay and J.G.H. Fenton, 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.V. McEwan took the Chair.

APOLOGIES: The Chairman intimated an apology for absence on behalf of Mr. T. Wilson (R.F.A.S.).

DISCUSSION: By way of introduction the Chairman explained that the pre-circulated Paper for consideration by the meeting included revisions arising from the Panel's previous meeting and it was the subject of simultaneous consultation in England and Wales. In broad terms it covered three main areas of concern; (a) shortening the multiplication chain; (b) improvement of tuber quality and (c) eelworm matters. Adopting a paragraph by paragraph approach (and accepting paras. 1 and 2 as explanatory only) he invited V.T.S.C.G.A. views on

PARA. 3

(a) Limitation to 4 years from clones after 1983. - Mr. Marshall was basically pleased with the adoption of this proposal provided provision is made for unusual circumstances, loss of varieties, etc. Mr. Todd explained the Regulations already provide for special licencing arrangements. In reply to Mr. Lindsay, Mr. Todd and Dr. Hall stated that to fulfill the two conventional daughter-crops requirements, micropropogated V.T. stocks could not be classified until 1982.

(b) V.T.S.C. Year-numbering - Supported by Dr. Hall, Mr. Marshall urged the earliest possible introduction of this change. Mr. Todd explained although administratively possible by 1982, legal authority would not be available until 1983.

(c) Compulsory V.T.S.C. burn-off 1981 - Mr. Marshall accepted the principle but felt varietal extensions of time could be required. Mr. Edwards explained this could be arranged at local level and would be looked into, but he reserved a right to review in the light of experience gained. Commercial implications, further inspections, scientific views, register-issue delay and inspection schedules procedure were discussed without conclusion.

Later re-discussion evidenced unanimous industry disquiet and dis-satisfaction with the many aspects of the proposed burning down arrangements. Maintaining that amending legislation was not required and each extension application would be decided by permanent inspection staff,  
D.A.F.S./



D.A.F.S. declined to specify the criteria to be applied, whether extensions would incur a "should" or a "must" third inspection, how burning off will be defined, how it will be policed, or what penalties will be incurred for not conforming.

In reply to a unanimous industry demand for an immediate decision either (1) to require a third inspection or automatic down-grading of all crops not burned down within 21 days or, (2) to abandon the proposal altogether until it can be properly and uniformly implemented, D.A.F.S. insisted a decision be deferred. In summary the Chairman noted the Panel's qualified acceptance of the proposal and D.A.F.S.' undertaking to provide a written decision in about two weeks time.

(d) V.T.S.C. farm restrictions - Mr. Marshall pointed out that "farm" and "unit" are not synonymous. It was agreed the proposal could be informally implemented in 1981 pending amending legislation. Storage separation, disinfection, "bad" raisers and formulation of a code of practice were discussed, Mr. Marshall agreeing the V.T.S.C.G.A. would help in this latter respect.

(e) Compulsory chemical treatment - Mr. Marshall felt this to be a good move and that direct D.A.F.S./V.T.S.C.G.A. consultation should devise approved treatments for inclusion in a code of practice.

(f) Skin-spot on V.T.S.C. seed - Mr. Todd explained this proposal tidied up an oversight in drafting the 1978 Regulations and no problems were anticipated in its implementation.

PARA.4

(a) Limitation of F.S. to 3 years - The Panel accepted this proposal.

(b) S.S. Class - Not applicable in Scotland.

(c) Burning off of F.S. Crops - N.F.U.S. felt if V.T.S.C. posed difficult problems, F.S. problems virtually insoluble. D.A.F.S. felt V.T.S.C. experience in 1981 will permit F.S. implementation in 1982, dependant upon the availability of a "radar-trap" type capability. Following discussion, D.A.F.S. agreed to provide postcards for all 1981 V.T.S.C. growers to notify completion of burning off and the Panel to review this method thereafter.

Supported by V.T.S.C.G.A., N.F.U.S. urged caution for commercial reasons (pointless to produce "Rolls Royces" for sale at "Leyland" prices!) and again sought definition of "burning down". The scientific view was that if "Diphcol" was used the crop should be downgraded and D.A.F.S. view was that the 21 day period would refer to haulm destruction, not simply to chemical application, and pulverising/flailing would disqualify.

(d) Super Elite (S.E.) Class - D.A.F.S. explained this proposal. In deference to trade views at the last Panel meeting, S.E. would initially be inspected for further S.E. classification but D.A.F.S. hoped this would become a one-year-only class as soon as possible. The Chairman stressed this (and the following proposal) would be implemented in 1983 and in reply to S.P.T.A. explained that (based on the last three years statistics) a tolerance of 0.5% for Mild Mosaic rather than the 1% wanted by the trade was regarded as easily attainable.

(e) Elite (E) Class - After discussion it was agreed D.A.F.S. would maintain a separate crop register denoting crops found to contain Veinal Necrosis, applications for reference to which could be made to Chesser House or to local offices.

PARA.5

Tuber Disease Groups and tolerances - This proposal is intended to be implemented in 1983 and required harmonisation with M.A.F.F. In reply to S.P.T.A. Mr. Edwards provided a detailed explanation of recent differences in M.A.F.F./D.A.F.S. interpretation of Powdery Scab tolerance. He was hopeful that an acceptable compromise could be reached before 1981- Crop dressing starts, but a permanent solution required a clearer definition to be incorporated into the Regulations. Also in reply to S.P.T.A./



S.P.T.A., Dr. Hall explained why the present English hyper-sensitivity to powdery scab (while not in accord with Scottish scientific views) is proving difficult to rebut in face of the synonymity of A.D.A.S. and M.A.F.F. in the minds of English growers.

PARA.6

Eelworm - The Chairman explained D.A.F.S. proposals, stemming from last year's experience of exports returned from Morocco and from the results of last year's experimental "below grader" soil sampling, reflected the intention to tighten up on testing arrangements. In general discussion it was felt that though the intention is supportable it is necessary to ensure that our Regulations equate with and are applied equitably to those of our competitors. In reply to N.F.U.S., Mr. Mabbot gave very detailed statistics of the 1979 soil-testing results. He also provided a careful explanation of the capabilities and limitations of P.C.E. soil testing and compared Scottish requirements and background with those of other countries, which was followed by a prolonged discussion of many aspects of the subject.

(a) Area entered for sampling - In reply to S.P.T.A., D.A.F.S. explained the proposed minimum was increased to avoid having to test small parts of large fields. The Panel's subsequent prolonged discussion overlapped into (and became combined with)

(b) Fencing of excluded area - which gave rise to confusion. The Chairman pointed out that (a) and (b) were quite separate proposals (which it might have been better to have been placed in, and considered in, reversed order). Mr. Mabbot stated that if only one section of Para. 6 could be agreed by the Panel, then he would be happiest if that section was

(c) planting of resistant varieties only (in non-infected areas adjacent to known infestation). The Panel found this proposal non-contentious and acceptable and, in summary, the Chairman noted D.A.F.S. agreement to take back both (a) and (b) for reconsideration.

(d) Finding 1 live or non-viable cysts - These proposed changes were explained in detail. As now, the area would be scheduled if two live cysts are found. If one live cyst is found, the present compulsory re-test (and subsequent scheduling, or not, according to the result) would be withdrawn; a P.C.E. certificate would not be issued (preventing growing of a potato crop) and a re-test would be at the option of the applicant. If dead cysts are found a P.C.E. certificate would not be issued (preventing growing of a seed crop, although a resistant-variety ware crop could be grown) and a re-test would be at the applicant's option.

(e) Root examination during inspections - In reply to S.P.T.A., D.A.F.S. confirmed this proposal would be applied to every inspected crop.

In reply to N.F.U.S., the Chairman agreed to-day's discussions of Eelworm were exploratory only and that the whole of Para.6 would be taken back for re-drafting, to be re-presented to the Panel for reconsideration at a later date.

A.O.C.B.:

(1) "Wasted" P.C.E. Sampling - Dr. Todd sought suggestions for reducing the number and proportion of wasted tests. D.A.F.S. explained the problem, with examples, citing over-banking as the principal cause.

(2) Importing Countries' standards - Mr. J. Arbuckle asked what steps were being taken to improve interpretation of importing requirements and their application before consignments are exported from the U.K. Mr. Edwards stated he is to participate in a delegation (including N. Ireland representation) visiting South America for two weeks in early May, 1981.

(3) Powdery Scab in Ware - Mr. J. Arbuckle also reported having learned that Marks & Spencers and Sainsburys had both given notice to an East Anglian packing station that from 1982, ware supplies having Powdery Scab/

Scab will be refused.

(4) Second Inspections of 1981 AAl Crops - Mr. McLaren sought clarification of D.A.F.S. "Spring Letter" to producers. Mr. Edwards stated that last year's arrangements will be repeated and, if indicated by evidence, they will be extended to all AAl Crops. Mr. McLaren urged reconsideration of a 0.5% Blackleg incidence before a second inspection is required and early consultation before any changes are made. Mr. Edwards also assured Mr. Lindsay that burning off before second inspection will be uniformly allowed.

In conclusion, the Chairman invited industry views on 1981 Scottish planting intentions. He also thanked the representatives for a useful Meeting. Mr. Lindsay reciprocated the thanks and looked forward to a further meeting with D.A.F.S. in the early summer.

The Meeting was thereupon concluded.