

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the  
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
in the Station Hotel, PERTH at 11 a.m.  
on Thursday, 14th JANUARY, 1982

PRESENT:

Messrs. J.H. Barr, J.E. Cook, J.G.H. Fenton, B. Fulton, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson and G. Smillie with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in attendance.

The President, Mr. J.G.H. Fenton, took the Chair and welcomed those present.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for late attendances or absence were submitted on behalf of Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.P. Deuchar, R. Doig, J. Fordyce, W. Gordon, J. Henderson, J. Logan Milne, W.E. Muirhead, T. McClung, R.G. Ramsay, and R. David Hunter (Secretary).

MINUTES:

The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 19th November, 1981 (copies of which had been sent to each Member of Council) was taken as read. It was formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS  
ARISING:

(a) Conditions of Purchase - Copies of the proposed revised Conditions of Purchase (incorporating the further amendments instructed at Council's last meeting) having been sent to each Member of Council, were considered. Subject to insertion of the words "approved by" in the parentheses below the heading (between "and" and "the National"), Council instructed the revised Conditions be submitted for that approval to the National Farmers Union of Scotland.

(b) Annual Association Accounts - Council made no comment on the audited 1980/81 Accounts, copies of which had been pre-circulated to the whole membership in readiness for the Annual General Meeting later today.

(c) Entertainments Committee - Pending a further meeting of this Committee the matters of the 1982 Golf Outing and the proposed 1982 Foreign Visit were deferred.

(d) Other Matters arising from the Minutes were deferred for inclusion in subsequent Items in today's Agenda.

SCOTTISH  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Cook reported on the meeting in London on 9th December, 1981 which he and Mr. McKenzie had attended. Arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting the NFUS representatives had pressed strongly in favour of setting up a potato research station in Scotland, envisaged as a "mini Sutton Bridge" operation. The PMB had agreed to consider forming a working party/feasibility study of the proposal.

Council discussed this point. Mr. Lindsay pointed out that Sutton Bridge's throughput capacity had now been increased from twelve to twenty thousand tonnes per annum. He felt this to be a very high tonnage for experimental purposes, more appropriate to a commercial operation and any similar Scottish operation should be resisted by S.P.T.A. It was suggested the matter should be raised at the next meeting of the Seed Trade Committee and at a meeting in Perth on 3rd February, at which it was understood that Messrs. Grantham Hitchcock and Pooley of the PMB would be present. Mr. Barr asked whether Sutton Bridge was to undertake any investigation into industrial starch and or alcohol production from potatoes and he felt resistance to a Scottish station should include counter-proposals for the proposed expenditure (e.g. increased research into blackleg).

Continuing his report, Mr. Cook referred to the mass of statistical information provided to the Committee. Oral reports had included a provisional estimate of the 1982 crop shortfall (little change on earlier/

earlier 'guesstimates'); 5,000 hectares remained unharvested at that time; Scottish Stocks were 11% down; 1982 crop planting intentions were indicated to total 167,000 hectares and a further census is to be taken. Of imported Dutch potatoes only 85 tonnes had gone into the home ware market, the remaining 95% to processors; seed imports to that date had totalled 4,500 tonnes. Mr. Sinclair had stated that no adverse reports had been received from Argentine (in respect of a small, free-of-charge, consignment of Pentland Crown). Mr. McKenzie added that compared with the previous year, yield figures given showed reductions in the North, Perthshire and Fife, but no change in Angus.

JOINT  
LIAISON  
COMMITTEE:

The Chairman reported on the meeting with NASPM which he and other S.P.T.A. representatives had attended in London on 10th December, 1981. In respect of their meeting with MAFF that morning NASPM stressed they had had no idea that Messrs. Todd and Edwards (of DAFS) had been invited.

It was soon clear that NASPM opposed the name "Super A" for the proposed improved AAL Class, arguing strongly from an export point of view in favour of the alternative name "Elite". In view of their previous agreement with other Scottish organisations S.P.T.A. had been unable to agree but had undertaken (though not unanimously) to try to prevail upon the other Scottish organisations to agree to adopt the name "Elite". NASPM also proposed that to assist exports documentation, letters of credit, etc., labels for FS stocks should omit year numbering unless the exporter specifically states that year-numbering is required. Council's discussion found this to be a most reasonable proposal but it was felt it would not enjoy D.A.F.S.' agreement.

Mr. Barr pointed out that in connection with NSDO General Licence it was possible to export CC grade but not Scotch AA. In certain overseas countries it is possible to enter CC grade into that country's inspection scheme. He felt this discriminated unfairly against Scottish AA seed but, after a brief discussion, Council's view was that it could do nothing about this situation.

In conclusion of his report Mr. Fenton explained that the name Solanex has been found to be the name of a Danish company, but this appears not to affect its adoption for the joint NSDO/PMB company. NASPM is also currently revising its Arbitration Rules and is to send a copy of its final draft to S.P.T.A. Council for information.

PANEL  
WORKING  
PARTY:

The Chairman explained that at its last meeting the Seed Potato Consultative Panel had set up a small Working Party to try to reconcile proposals re Eelworm testing changes put forward by D.A.F.S. and the industry respectively. The Working Party had met in Edinburgh on 23rd December, 1981. He read out Mr. Edwards' letter to Mr. McEwan detailing the outcome with agreed proposals for introduction for the 1983 crop and Council considered each point in sequence.

Mr. Barr felt the proposals would operate unfairly against small growers and (notwithstanding D.A.F.S.' discretion) he felt S.P.T.A. should support N.F.U.S. "to the hilt" on this. Mr. Lindsay felt that, typically, D.A.F.S. had sought to use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Council envisaged that the proposals will halve the acreage available in Fife and seriously reduce the acreage available in Angus. Mr. Fenton explained the proposals included provision that each soil test application with exclusions must be accompanied by a small sketch plan showing the intended direction of drilling and also that where part of a field had been found to be infected only resistant varieties would be permitted to be planted in adjacent parts. In reply to Mr. Cook Mr. Fenton confirmed that compulsory burning down had not been discussed, the Working Party's remit being confined to Eelworm matters.

ANY OTHER  
COMPETENT  
BUSINESS:

(a) Micropropagation - Council considered and discussed D.A.F.S.' letter of 8th December, 1981 with enclosures which had been copied to each member of Council. It was felt no special comment or reply was necessary.

(b) Ware Stocks/

(b) Ware Stocks - Mr. Fulton sought information further to the P.M.B.'s end-November census results. In a short discussion it was agreed more recent severe frost conditions would probably increase the projected shortfall of the 1981 crop.

(c) Obituaries - Council formally extended its sincere sympathy to Mr. Maxwell on the recent death of his father. In respect of the recent death of Mr. Clarence Murray the Secretariat was instructed to write conveying Council's condolences to his family.

(d) N.S.D.O. - Mr. Barr asked whether Council had any points it wished to be discussed at the next consultative meeting with N.S.D.O., due to be held during February. After brief discussion Council agreed Mr. Barr's discretion should not be restricted.

(e) Official loading ban during frost - Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of a letter from Mr. A.A. Sinclair this morning regarding suggestions that such a ban would be of valuable assistance to exporters. Mr. Smillie clearly explained exporters' dilemma of incurring either penalties for delaying loading or claims for damage caused by continuing to load in severe frost conditions. In discussion Council agreed to support the devising and introduction of a system to implement this suggestion.

(f) Date of next meeting - Council confirmed that its next meeting will be held in Perth Ice Rink at 11 a.m. on Friday, 5th March, 1982.

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

*G. Hunter*