

REPORT on a MEETING of the
joint SEED TRADE COMMITTEE
held at 8 Manor Place EDINBURGH
at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday,
11th FEBRUARY, 1982.

PRESENT: N.F.U.S. Messrs. J. Hay and J. McLaren, with P. Tait in attendance.
S.P.T.A. Messrs. J.R. McArthur and J.E. Cook, with D. Blackmore in attendance.
S.S.P.A. Messrs. A.A. Arbuckle and R.A. Smith
V.T.S.C.G.A. Mr. I.R. McKenzie, with H.A.C. Davie in attendance.
Mr. J.R. McArthur took the Chair and welcomed those present.

APOLOGIES: He submitted an apology for absence on behalf of Mr. J.G.H. Fenton.

MATTERS ARISING: (S.P.T.A.). There being no matters arising from the Committee's previous meeting (on 28th October, 1981) he introduced the first item on today's Agenda.

P.C.N. CHANGES: The outcome of the two meetings of the Working Party, set up by the Seed Potato Consultative Panel (on 30th October, 1981), set out in D.A.F.S.' very recently pre-circulated Paper No. 1, were discussed. In reply to the Chair, N.F.U.S. (having not yet reported back and discussed) remained wary of the minimum area provisions. S.S.P.A. had so discussed and would support N.F.U.S. view. V.T.S.C.G.A. and S.P.T.A. felt considerable modification of D.A.F.S.' earlier over far reaching proposals had been achieved. The Committee agreed there were no specific points to be raised with D.A.F.S. at the forthcoming meeting of the Consultative Panel on 19th February, 1982. (Note: See AOCB (a) and (b) at end hereof.)

AMENDMENT of 1978 REGULATION: In considering D.A.F.S.' very recently pre-circulated Paper No. 2, Mr. Cook pointed out that at the foot of Page 33 of the accompanying draft of the proposed amended Regulation, the tolerance for Mild Mosaic for AA Class was shown as 0.5%. The Committee agreed that the Panel had decided to reduce the present tolerance of 2% to 1% for AA Class and to 0.5% for the proposed improved AAL Class. This would require to be drawn to D.A.F.S.' attention on 19th February.

On the nomenclature of the proposed improved AAL Class, Mr. Hay asked if "Elite" had been adopted, as several references seemed to indicate. As he recalled from the last Panel meeting, D.A.F.S. had appeared to favour "Elite" (apparently following N.A.S.P.M. pressure on MAFF) but had deferred a final decision until the Industry had reached its own consensus. The N.F.U.S. view remained that adoption of "Elite" will cause more confusion (among innumerable English customers than among our far fewer overseas customers) than would be caused by adoption of "Super A". To N.F.U.S. members the latter name appeared more clearly appropriate to an improved AAL grade, with the added merit of being more sequentially logical between FS and A classes than would an E ("Elite") class.

For S.P.T.A. Messrs. McArthur and Cook explained that at a London meeting between them in December, N.A.S.P.M. had argued persuasively for adoption of "Elite" to help increase exports. As most of its exporter members shared this view, S.P.T.A. had undertaken to try to persuade other Scottish interests of its validity.

In the event the majority favoured the N.F.U.S. standpoint and the Committee decided D.A.F.S. be advised on 19th February that the industry had agreed to adopt "Super A" for the proposed improved AAL Class. Mr. Hay further suggested if D.A.F.S. insist on "Elite" then the industry should press for FS to be renamed "Super Elite" to maintain logicity.

Messrs. Cook and McLaren foresaw possible problems in future if a shortage of "Super A" class should ever occur. On the expectation that crops/

crops planted with seed classified A1 in 1982 would not be accepted for inspection as "Super A" class in 1983, Mr. McLaren pointed out certain varieties could be at serious risk of non-availability and consequent loss of markets. The Committee agreed to draw this to D.A.F.S.' attention (without reference to blackleg disease) and to press for a special, one-year (of transition) facility to plant A Class seed (of threatened varieties only) for inspection as "Super A" Class in 1983, and stressing the need to avoid possible loss of markets.

The Committee also agreed D.A.F.S.' Notes on its Paper No. 2 confirmed that, although ultimately intended as a one-year only class, "Super A" will initially be accepted for inspection and re-classified as "Super A" for as long as it is able to attain its standards.

Mr. Smith drew attention to the lack of clarity in Section 4 (a)(i) on page 23 of D.A.F.S.' Paper No. 2. After considerable discussion the Committee reached uncertain agreement as to its meaning (Mr. Hay supporting the Chairman's disagreement with D.A.F.S.' explanatory Note that "de-scheduled land is land of high risk") and it was decided to ask D.A.F.S. for clarification on 19th February. In consideration of Schedule 5 (tuber dressing standards) it was anticipated the increase of powdery scab tolerance from 3% to 4% (to accommodate transfer of this fault out of "mis-shapen" category) will engender argument, but Part II of this Schedule was viewed as non-controversial.

INSPECTION
STATISTICS:

During consideration of the 1981 results provided in D.A.F.S.' Paper No. 3 it was agreed to ask D.A.F.S. to issue detailed breakdown of the incidence of mild mosaic, as previously. Mr. Hay advocated continued pressure to ensure employment of a sufficient proportion of permanent inspectors. Mr. Arbuckle reported that D.A.F.S. presently has a special working party considering this very point. Mr. Smith added that new regulations are to be introduced this year to train transferred cereals inspectors to increase the present number of permanent potato inspectors (40) to 90 by 1983.

In respect of tuber inspections it was agreed to ask D.A.F.S. to give details of the number of separate premises inspected, in addition to the tonnage inspected and to seek assurance that any premises not visited in any one year are listed and given first priority visits in the following year. It was also agreed to ask for statistics for de-scheduled land. A brief discussion of the differences between tonnages labelled, inspected and despatched concluded this Item.

ANY OTHER
COMPETENT
BUSINESS:

(a) Fencing - Mr. Hay explained that Mr. Edwards' summary of the Panel Working Party's meetings omitted to clarify when any necessary fencing should be in place. The N.F.U.S. had pressed strongly for "before the start of spring cultivations" but he accepted this would admit post-previous-crop autumn ploughing objections. It was decided to raise this with D.A.F.S. again on 19th February.

(b) Soil Test Banking - The Committee also adopted Mr. Hay's further proposal to ask D.A.F.S. to extend the banking period for whole field tests and in cases where a fence is to be required, the soil test must be taken in the preceding autumn only and will not be bankable. In the event that the tested area is not planted, the test result should not be counted.

(c) Research and Development priorities - In a short discussion of this Item on the Agenda for the forthcoming Consultative Panel Meeting, it was felt to be essential to breed varieties to satisfy overseas importers' needs. It was also felt efforts should be redoubled to breed for resistance to (and /or control of) Eelworm, blackleg and powdery scab, as well as to improve control over the use of chemicals.

(d) "Solanex" Ltd. - In reply to a request from the Chair for the Committee's views on the recent formation of this Company, Mr. Arbuckle felt the announcement was very unfortunately timed. He explained the Company had reserved a seat on its Board for a member of the new Development/

Development Council in exchange for a substantial financial contribution. Mr. Cook also explained his own views and felt he would have preferred if the Company could have been offered a place on the Development Council on the same terms. Mr. Hay felt it might best be described as a "pre-emptive strike" by vested non-Scottish interests and Mr. McArthur counselled the keeping of a very close and careful watch on future developments.

(e) Official exports frost-loading ban - Mr. Cook sought the Committee's views on this recent suggestion. It was agreed to ask D.A.F.S. to adopt the suggestion in principle, to clear the way for the industry to submit "formula" proposals for consideration.

The Meeting then closed with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.