

REPORT on a MEETING of the
SEED TRADE COMMITTEE held in
the Station Hotel, PERTH at
2.30 p.m. on Thursday, 3rd
FEBRUARY, 1983.

PRESENT: N.F.U.S. - Messrs. J.W. Hay and J.A. McLaren, with Mrs. J. Armstrong
in attendance.

S.P.T.A. - Messrs. J.E. Cook, J.G.H. Fenton (President) and J.R.
McArthur, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore
(Assistant) in attendance.

S.S.P.D.C. - Messrs. J. Bethel (Chief Executive) and I. McKenzie.

V.T.S.C.G.A. - Messrs. I. McKenzie (President) and H.A.C. Davie (Hon.
Secretary).

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

CONDITIONS OF SALE (EXPORT): Mr. Hunter explained that Conditions of Sale (Export), drafted by S.P.T.A. for use by Scottish producers and merchants supplying an exporter, were ready for discussion with an exporters' Association. With N.F.U.S. agreement it was felt the S.S.P.D.C. should be asked to help towards this end.

In reply Mr. Bethel explained that importing countries are looking for guarantees of security of supplies. In an urgent attempt to win a supplementary export contract for the current 1982/83 Season a Merchant co-operative had been proposed. Two acceptances had been received, three other invitees' replies being awaited. Hopefully this venture could provide the vehicle for negotiating contracts with overseas importers in future years, into which home conditions could be dovetailed.

EXCLUSIVITY: Mr. Hunter reported his view of the E.E.C. decision on an appeal against exclusivity in respect of trade in (maize) seed bearing breeders rights. Although the case and its language were complex his view was that the decision upheld the appeal but maintained that such exclusivity is not contrary to the Treaty of Rome.

Mr. Hay explained that the copy decision he provided was an unofficial translation. The official translation is still awaited. He believes further test cases will be required before a clearly defined decision is established.

CONSULTATIVE PANEL: Turning to the principal purpose of today's meeting (to exchange views in readiness for tomorrow's meeting of the Seed Potato Consultative Panel in Edinburgh), the Chairman proposed to follow D.A.F.S.' Agenda.

(1) P.C.N. - The Chairman reported having ascertained from D.A.F.S. that remaining results of all soil tests timeously entered (by 31.8.82) will be known by the end of next week and the results of all late-entered tests will be known by mid-March. This was agreed to be a welcomed improvement over last year. It was also agreed to press for extension of test-
"banking" from two to three, or even four, years. Mr. McLaren pointed out that planting of winter cereal crops requires earlier P.C.N. soil test results and urged support to this end.

Mr. McArthur drew attention to D.A.F.S.' proposal to apply a "cut off" point whenever 10 dead cysts have been found in a soil sample. He felt the underlying assumption (that the presence of dead cysts meant live cysts must also be present, although not found) was illogical and the proposal would penalise the successful eradication of live cysts. Mr. Bethel suggested D.A.F.S. should be asked to test this assumption to the ultimate. For these reasons Mr. McArthur could not accept that a first test finding of dead cysts, followed by finding no cysts in a second test, could only result in a qualified clearance. He also pointed out/

out that these factors were the cause of the surfeit of supplies and resultant depressed prices for "Piper" and "Javelin" varieties which were being grown for cultural, not commercial, reasons. Mr. Cook further felt the proposals could increase the risk of running out of clean land. It was agreed Mr. McArthur should raise these points at the Consultative Panel meeting.

In discussion of descheduling tests it was agreed Mr. McArthur would also question the proposed 100 live cysts limitation (which he regarded as a double standard) and seek clarification of time limit and levels intentions. Mr. McLaren also urged pressure on D.A.F.S. to speed up tests and re-test results, the latter being automatically immediate on a first-sample failure.

(2) Revision of Regulations - The Committee considered the draft revised Regulations. In respect of "Particulars to be supplied on the Sale Note" (vide 3rd page from end) it was agreed to ask D.A.F.S. to clarify the meaning of "Sale Note" before deciding whether to press for amendments and/or deletions therein. It was agreed Mr. Hay would ask D.A.F.S. to take the Consultative Panel through the proposed changes, in particular (on Mr. Davie's suggestion) in the disease tolerances in Part 1 of Schedule 5.

(3) Disease Statistics - During discussion of D.A.F.S.' pre-circulated Paper, Mr. Hay questioned whether the reported reduction in temporary inspection staff heralded an increase in permanent staff. He wondered how this would affect comparative costs and whether this would justify an increase in inspection fees. The Committee also noted that ground-keepers had been reduced.

(4) "February Letter" - It was noted from the pre-circulated draft of D.A.F.S.' "February Letter" to Growers that no extension of burning down arrangements is proposed. In respect of increases in fees shown, Mr. McLaren objected to a charge for sealing bulk loads but Mr. Cook counselled the Committee not to "rock the boat" for the sake of 20p.

(5) Nomenclature - Mr. Hay explained that during discussions with N.F.U.S. on other matters, Mr. Todd (D.A.F.S.) had stated re-naming FS as "Super Elite" would also require V.T.S.C. to be changed to "S". The Committee agreed this latter change was irrelevant and unnecessary and noted that N.A.S.P.M. wanted FS to be changed to "Super Elite" eventually. Mr. Bethel pointed out that the current Algerian tender calls for SE and E classes, adding a brief explanation of D.A.F.S.' recently announced increased surveillance for P.C.N. in consignments destined for Algeria. The Committee unanimously re-affirmed its intention to press for simultaneous adoption of "Super Elite" for FS classes and "Elite" for (the improved) AAl class, it being agreed that Mr. Bethel would press this view to the Consultative Panel.

(6) 1983 Crop Inspections - Following discussion of D.A.F.S.' proposals the Committee agreed clarification in respect of single-person inspections (whether the same speed as two, comparison of how much ground will be walked) should be sought. It was agreed not to raise objections provided inspections output will be maintained and to ascertain whether single-person inspections will be carried out on crops of first earlies. It was also agreed inspections of early crops must be carried out earlier. N.F.U.S. agreed to support this pressure, it being explained that V.T.S.C. growers do not experience problems in this respect.

(7) Labelling Scheme Paper - The Committee agreed that the proposed changes in arrangements for the issue of labels, detailed in D.A.F.S.' pre-circulated Paper to combat reprehensible abuse and to tighten security must be accorded the Committee's full support.

(8) Crop Register - Mr. Hay referred to the extremely late publication of the 1982 Register of Basic Seed Potato Crops. Mr. Bethel explained the underlying reasons for this occurrence and the difficulties D.A.F.S. faced in overcoming them. It was unanimously agreed to continue maximum pressure/

pressure for future improvement, thereby adding full weight to D.A.F.S. efforts to this end.

The meeting then concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair.