

REPORT on a MEETING of the JOINT
(NASPM/SPTA) LIAISON COMMITTEE with
the DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND
FISHERIES FOR SCOTLAND in Chesser
House, EDINBURGH at 2.30 p.m. on
Wednesday, 17th OCTOBER, 1984

- PRESENT:
- D.A.F.S. - Messrs. C.K. McIntosh, D. Hall (East Craigs) and
J. Hutchison (Inspectorate), with Ms. Margaret Barnes in
attendance.
- N.A.S.P.M. - Messrs. E.F. Sherriff, C.J. Baker and P.E. Smith.
- S.P.T.A. - Messrs. J.E. Cook, J.G.H. Fenton, D.H. Lindsay and
K.A. McKenzie, with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in
attendance.

Mr. C.K. McIntosh took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting. His brief review of events since the last meeting included references to the introduction of the new 1984 Regulations (which he felt would have been more speedily finalised if DAFS had negotiated direct with NASPM), chemicals problems, proposed higher voluntary standards, small-sized seed proposals and NASPM's A.G.M. in Edinburgh.

POWDERY
SCAB:

Mr. Cook explained that the Committee's morning discussions had revealed doubts about ADAS' interpretation of the tolerance for Powdery Scab and a need for an explanation of the thinking behind the tolerance changes incorporated into the new 1984 Regulations.

Discussions agreed ADAS had formerly recommended growers not to plant any seed potatoes showing any powdery scab infection. DAFS understood this recommendation has now been withdrawn. The point has not been discussed since the new Regulations came into force and DAFS agreed to take it up at their next meeting with ADAS early in December.

In reply to Mr. Cook, Mr. Hall stated that powdery scab is present in most potato soils (Mr. Hutchison adding that it was more of a problem in heavier soils) and there was no known chemical treatment for soil or seed. Mr. Baker asked for earliest notification of any chemical treatment that becomes available, Mr. Hall adding that Aberdeen University is currently working on this aspect, but the best advice still urges improved drainage. Mr. Lindsay enquired as to the effects of irrigation on the incidence of this disease and Mr. Hall felt this could have an important bearing in this, as in several other respects, also.

Mr. Hall also explained that surface areas of all diseases have been reduced to 25% in the 1984 Regulations and although the tolerance for Scab has been increased from 3% to 4%, this now includes the cankerous form of Powdery Scab (previously counted as mis-shapen). Mr. Smith pointed out that Powdery Scab is dangerous, whereas Common Scab is not, indicating that they should not share a common tolerance. The Chairman explained that the difficulties of differentiation by visual inspection rendered separate tolerances impractical. He also felt that much of the fear that is prevalent may be being overstated.

TREATMENT
OF SEED:

Mr. Sherriff explained that chemicals matters had been very fully discussed during the Committee's morning meeting. NASPM felt disappointed it had no representation on the Technical Committee but was relieved that Trade representation on chemicals matters had been provided on that Committee.

During discussion of Tecnazene, Mr. Smith wondered if some cross-contamination of Scottish seed might occur after delivery into a store in England already containing treated Ware. He felt that some indication of a biologically acceptable level of contamination would be helpful, since he was not convinced that all Tecnazene contamination occurred in Scotland. Mr. Hall explained the difficulty of trying to agree/

agree an acceptable level, especially since individual tubers could not be taken as representative of the whole consignment. He also doubted that year-to-year persistence could occur and certainly not to the same degree as CIPC, for example. Mr. McIntosh confirmed DAFS intention to carry out random sampling of stocks and he also expressed the view that while a lot was blamed on Tecnazene because it had been detected, proof that it had caused the problem complained of was usually non-existent. He undertook to try to ensure a single DAFS/ADAS voice, which Mr. Sherriff strongly supported.

Quoting from Dr. Laing's report to SSPDC (which NASPM representatives had not seen), Mr. McIntosh explained this could be used as the foundation of a case to be put to the Agricultural Chemicals Approval Scheme and/or the Chemical Manufacturers' Association. Caution was necessary, however, since certain uses of Tecnazene are beneficial and for which no alternative chemical is available. Mr. Hall firmly assured the meeting that all the Technical Committee's recommendations have been, and will continue to be, fully carried out by the Colleges. Mr. McIntosh added that DAFS intends to amend the Regulations eventually, but this would not be an easy task.

During subsequent discussion, Mr. Sherriff reported that Mr. Lapwood at Rothamstead has been made redundant. Mr. Hall explained this was part of a 23% reduction imposed on that establishment and since Mr. Lapwood had been very closely involved in research into blackleg, this was very worrying. In reply, Mr. McIntosh explained that the sum of £500 donated by SSPDC had been towards the cost of ten commercial tests for glyphosate, not to purchase equipment to carry out such tests. It was also noted that Chemical Manufacturers gave totally inadequate publicity to the possible adverse side effects of their products. In reply to Mr. Cook, Mr. Hutchison stated further chemicals trials are planned and the Colleges are to pool all knowledge that becomes available. Finally, in reply to Mr. Sherriff, DAFS now anticipated perhaps two weeks slippage in their planned publication of the 1984 Crop Register by 31st October.

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