

REPORT on a MEETING of the JOINT
(NASPM/SPTA) LIAISON COMMITTEE
held at 8 Manor Place, EDINBURGH
at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 17th
OCTOBER, 1984.

PRESENT: 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, T. McClung
and K.A. McKenzie with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and
D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

Mr. J.E. Cook (President SPTA) took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs. J.G. Burhouse (NASPM) and J.H. Barr (SPTA).

POWDERY
SCAB: In reply to the Chair and on behalf of NASPM, Mr. Smith opened discussion of the permitted tolerance for Powdery Scab in the Seed Potato Regulations, 1984. In essence, NASPM wants to have Powdery Scab to be distinctly separated from Common Scab. Mr. Cook pointed out that (as compared with the 1978 Regulations) while the combined tolerances had been slackened, the inclusion of mis-shapen tubers (a symptom of Powdery Scab) had effectively tightened the Powdery Scab element of the combined tolerance. He felt DAFS would explain the reasoning behind these changes during today's afternoon meeting with them.

Mr. Smith felt a reduction of the surface area criterion would be helpful but in Mr. Baker's view this was somewhat insignificant. Historically, while imports were permitted one-third of surface area the internal U.K. was permitted only one-quarter. By standardising at one-third, the 1984 Regulations had restored the pre-1978 level, causing dis-satisfaction in England. However, while Regulations set legal maxima and minima levels, these can be voluntarily improved. He felt this to be the way to overcome this problem and should be encouraged by both Associations. He also pointed out that a shift in the dominance of growing towards less resistant varieties had probably encouraged an increased incidence of this disease.

Following wide discussion it was agreed Mr. Cook would speak to this Item at the afternoon meeting with DAFS and the Committee would urge that DAFS and ADAS should "speak with one voice".

TREATMENT
OF SEED: Mr. McKenzie reported on the meeting of DAFS' Technical Committee which he had attended (as the invited representative of SPTA) in Edinburgh on 23rd August, 1984. Among the findings of that meeting he mentioned that half-dose applications of Tecnazene are useless for disease control and DAFS is considering whether this chemical should be removed from the Approved Chemicals list.

Mr. Blackmore recounted the history of the setting up of the (essentially DAFS/Colleges co-ordinating) Technical Committee. Trade and NFUS were restricted to one representative each by invitation only when the Committee met to discuss chemicals matters referred to it.

Mr. Baker was encouraged by the "change of heart" that has occurred since 1978. Mr. Cook pointed out that a total ban on Tecnazene within the Regulations would create enormous practical problems and Mr. Baker felt that tuber testing as in N.Ireland would be acceptable. The Committee agreed to try to establish a minimum biologically significant level for the presence of Tecnazene.

Mr. Sheriff drew attention to the manufacturers' disclaimer/warranty withdrawal in the brochure issued by Uniroyal in respect of its "Fasor" product. He felt this should be sufficient to prevent inclusion of this product/

product in the Approved Chemicals list. The Committee also felt that "Roundup" is a potentially far more damaging product and agreed to urge DAFS to exercise the strictest possible control over such products.

The Chairman read from a disclaimer letter sent by a NASPM member to an SPTA member seeking to impose exhaustive "chemicals" conditions in respect of his purchases of Seed potatoes. In reply, Mr. Hunter felt that such conditions would not be sufficiently reasonable as to be upheld at law. In Mr. Smith's view such conditions could result in the writer being unable to find sellers willing to accept them.

Mr. Sherriff explained Monsanto had circularised its refutation of DAFS' allegations to all NFU Branch Secretaries. He shared Mr. Baker's concern to keep current awareness actively alive in the future, but he felt that the whole subject of chemicals had been sufficiently "blown up" already and further developments should be awaited.

In respect of glyphosate, Mr. Smith understood only two test capabilities were available and both were manufacturer tests and extremely expensive. Mr. Baker understood that whereas a Tecnazene test cost £35, a glyphosate test costs £270 at ADAS. The Chairman explained the SSPDC had donated £500 to DAFS for glyphosate testing but he did not have full details. Mr. Fenton reported double-dose "Roundup" residues had been found in England, although Monsanto denied any soil persistence (which denial Mr. Sherriff did not accept). It was agreed that NASPM would speak to Chemicals matters at the afternoon meeting with DAFS.

PROPOSED
INSURANCE:

Mr. Hunter explained SPTA had conducted extensive negotiations to obtain Product Liability Insurance for Seed Potatoes. Cover options and premium rates have now been quoted. Mr. Sherriff reported NASPM had also been investigating this subject but was still at a talking, "melting pot" stage (although Mr. Smith reported receipt of a quotation within the last 48 hours which he had not had time to study).

Further discussion was inconclusive, both Associations having still to report back to their respective Councils. The Chairman proposed that the two Associations should liaise more closely in this matter.

P.M.B.
SCHEME:

Mr. Sherriff expressed NASPM support for NIPMA representations in respect of indications that the PMB was going to be able to trade directly in seed potatoes. The PMB has since given assurances that it has no intention of doing so.

Mr. Cook reported on an abortive meeting with the Board which was adjourned until 31st October, 1984. He explained that the British Potato Trades Consortium is extremely concerned that the PMB is going to trade directly with the Processors.

Mr. Sherriff also explained NASPM supported the nomination of Mr. C.W. Login as a candidate for appointment as a special member of the Board to represent Trade interests.

BRITISH
RAIL:

Mr. Sheriff explained that British Rail is patently dis-interested in Potato Traffic. They had recently announced that demurrage will be charged for all time in excess of 24 hours after arrival. Mr. Baker stated that British Rail is actively divesting itself of siding, warehousing and distributive assets and operations. The Committee agreed it could take no appropriate action in such a situation.

A.O.C.B.:

Date of next meeting - Mr. Sheriff wondered if one meeting possibly in May of each year would better serve the Committee's work, rather than two meetings so close together at the end of each year. While agreeing this deserved further thought, the Committee felt that Insurance matters made a further meeting in December desirable and it was decided to meet again in London on Wednesday, 5th December, 1984 after the P.M.B.'s A.G.M.

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