

Scottish Advisory Meeting, 22nd July, 1985.

Chairman, A. Arbuckle.

- 1) P.M.B. could not justify expense to a final stock census in Late March.
- 2) M.A.F.F. has still not seen fit to apply quality controls on imported potatoes.
- 3) Apologies - None.
- 4) Market Reports - Early April to Mid June old crop prices were fairley stable with the demand for every good sample towards Mid June becoming difficult to satisfy. Poor quality samples going for Stock Feed, average price £65.27. Top quality Piper made up to £100 Per Tonne Ex Farm, average price at the 21st June approx £54.42.

New Crop

By week ending 24th May liftings under polythene started, 2,800 Tonnes were loaded. Increase in Tonnage over the last year was attributed to polythene. By Friday 6th June 1985 average price came down to £106 Per Tonne (France £45 Per Tonne) a drop of £100 P.M.T. during that week. Prices slipped to £77 P.M.T. by the end of June.

In July the supply increased and price dropped in the first 3 days and D.I.S. was triggered and P.M.B. waived a 3 day ruling. National average was then £66 P.M.T. - prices settled to £59 during the 1st week of July. In the 2nd week of July 15,00 Tonnes offered for D.I.S. from 11 areas. Last week 3,600 Tonnes offered but by Friday only Cornwall eligible for D.I.S. Price in Pembrokeshire - £40 - £52, Shropshire - £45 - £50, Lincoln - £40 - £80 - Average £46 P.M.T. Consignments for D.I.S. 1033 (25,250 Tonnes) 20,500 Tonnes contracted of which 1,550 Tonnes were sold back to producers, 2,800 Tonnes sold to Merchants.

Pre-season contracts, 414,680 Tonnes contracted, 30% in Scotland, this is not the final figure.

Scottish Report

Week ending the 14th June, prices slipped from £360 P.M.T. to £200 P.M.T. - during the following 2 weeks prices slipped to £135 then £100 due to increasing yield and supplying. D.I.S. operated at the end of the 1st week in July 252 Tonnes contracted in Scotland. The 2nd week in July further drop in prices. The D.I.S. took off 70 Tonnes at the end of the week at £50 P.M.T. Slight improvement in the 3rd week in July (weather effects) price range £54 @ £60 P.M.T. at the end of the week.

Problems Reported by N.F.U. with D.I.S.

- 1) Farmers needed 2/3 days to understand the operation of D.I.S.
- 2) Some growers were unable to offer to P.M.B. as they had already claimed levy relief on the grounds that lifting had been completed.
- 3) A 3-day trigger period was a problem.
- 4) Mr. A. Hitchcock intends to review D.I.S. in recognition of criticisms by producers. The Chairman pointed out that despite the criticism of the D.I.S. had put a floor in the market probably £20 P.M.T. above the level that might have been reached.

In answering a trade query, Mr. Hitchcock confirmed that Ariel Surveys had been made in certain areas to identify excess acerage. He also confirmed that

unrepresentative samples would be accepted for D.I.S. if any ^{D.I.S.} was left over for main crop.

Supply Position (New Crop)

Planting completed in most of Scotland by Mid May but in North East of Scotland some not planted until Mid June. Although top-growth looked vigorous, development below the ground was slow. Yields of earlies in South West Scotland - 20 - 40 Tonnes Per Hectare, East Lothian 30 Tonnes Per Hectare area cleared, only 67% of the area at the same time in 1984. Acreage clearance was behind 1984 by 35/40% according to district, partly due to increased yields of 30-31 Tonnes Per Hectare, (approx 4 Tonnes Per Hectare increase on same period in 1984).

Planted Area 1985 (Mr. Ives)

Based on 82% returns approx 163,120 Hectares planted including 7,000 Hectares of excess included in the total.

Overseas Areas

Holland planted 107,700 Hectares being an increase of 6,000 Hectares compared to 1984.

U.S.A. - 5% increase, Canada - 3% increase.

Seed Classification

(say) 1400/1500

Scottish acreage down by Hectares - M. Piper, H. Guard and K. Edwards all reduced. Desiree, M. Bard, Estima and Cara increased.

Production Cost

A reassessment of these costs will be undertaken and report provided at next meeting.

Legal Cases

W. Sprigge:- The Robertson case held in County Court because of sum less than £5,000 - High Court judgements apply over £5,000. After judgement of Drysdale case which was thrown out but has a 14 day appeal period. If appeal lodged then legal aid would be questionable.

Scotland - Approx 20 producers awaiting Lawson case on 15th July at Forfar. Board's Motion approved and now will be heard in Court of Session sometime after vacation and 12 week period of adjustment.

Sutton Bridge Developments

New research into storage of potatoes to commence at Sutton Bridge partly financed by contributions of £60,000 by processors and £100,000 by M.A.F.F. Also the replacement of existing weighing and packing equipment in the commercial operation, which is expected to cost £350,000. The total of new investment likely to fall between £500-£750,00.

The P.M.B. Chairman has agreed to meet trade delegation in order to justify continuation of commercial operation at Sutton Bridge and vindicate the new investment. Date not yet arranged.

At 5.45 pm meeting ended with Vote of Thanks to the Chairman.