

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
in the City Mills Hotel, PERTH at
2 p.m. on Thursday, 5th SEPTEMBER, 1985

PRESENT:

Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.H. Barr, J.P. Deuchar, B. Fulton, J. Henderson (Snr.), D. Maxwell, J. Logan Milne, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson and J.M. Swinton, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The Vice President, Mr. K.A. McKenzie, took the Chair and thanked those present for attending. It was agreed Mr. J. Henderson (Jnr.) join the meeting.

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. J.E. Cook, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, D.H. Lindsay, I. Melrose, P. Miller, P. Moffat, T. McClung and G. Smillie.

MINUTES:

The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 28th June, 1985 (a copy of which had been sent to each Member of Council beforehand) was taken as read. It was formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS

ARISING:

(a) Membership - Mr. Blackmore reported that John Craig, Hamilton, failed to pay his Annual Subscription within seven days of final notice and, as instructed, his Membership of the Association had been suspended (on 12th July, 1985).

He also reported notifications of resignation from Membership received from Messrs. Stanley Buchan (Potatoes), Montrose and Messrs. Wm. Thompson & Son, Carnoustie.

He further reported receipt of letters from two Members nominating John Steven, Wester Meathie, by Forfar for Association Membership. Council decided to accept these nominations and noted that following these changes the Membership Roll now totalled 110 Members.

Finally, Mr. Blackmore reported PMB notifications of Licence applications as follows:-

P. Scrimgeour, Dumfries	Ware
Viewfield Produce, Kirriemuir	Seed & Ware
Scotts Potatoes Ellon Ltd.	Seed & Ware
Border Potatoes Ltd. St. Boswells	Ware

Council instructed the results of these applications be reported in due course.

(b) Arbitrations Procedures - Mr. Hunter reported that following further meetings with Stewart Wrightson, the Insurers (General Accident) have still not accepted the Procedures. He felt sure this was because the Insurers do not understand the position and he had asked to meet them for clarification. The earliest dates now offered (this morning) are 1st or 2nd October. He deplored the continuing delay. Council agreed this meeting be accepted, Messrs. Barr and McKenzie to accompany Mr. Hunter.

(c) PAYE NIC - Casual harvest wages - Mr. Hunter explained developments following meetings with Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn, Q.C., M.P. and Mr. Alex. McDougall (Arthur Young). He read out the full text of a reply letter from DHSS which Mr. Fairbairn had forwarded to him. Council's discussion regarded the letter as helpful and agreed the paragraph (a) definition provided the "best fit" for potato pickers. In respect of "contracts of service" criteria, Mr. Hunter pointed out that "contracts at will" may support the DHSS view. Mr. McArthur explained his company awaited an Audit Branch reply to the company's claim that paragraph (a) definition applied.

(d)/

(d) CIPC use in England - Mr. Hunter reported the content of the PMB reply to the Association's request for information. It was agreed to ask for the further information indicated when this becomes available in due course.

(e) City Mills Charges - Mr. Blackmore reported his discussions with the Hotel Manager and the views of some Council Members. He was instructed to obtain quotations from the Isle of Skye Hotel and the Wheel Inn.

(f) Phytosanitary Certificates arrangements - This Item was deferred until later in today's Agenda.

(g) Sales of Quota - similarly deferred.

(h) Tractor fuel problems - Council discussed the legal requirements for tractors working in fields and on roads, revealing heavy pressure in this respect from H.M. Customs & Excise staff in Perth districts and elsewhere. It was agreed this was most unwelcome at a time of such intensely difficult current harvest.

S.S.P.D.C.

In the absence of précis Reports (which Association representatives agreed to take up with Mr. Bethel direct) Council received brief verbal reports on the Development Council's latest meeting. In particular, Mr. McArthur explained the background to the PMB trialling proposals. In his own view he opposed obvious duplication and double levies, since the Development Council is better placed to collect and disburse all funds for promotion of Scottish Seed exports.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Council noted the pre-circularised Reports on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee held in North Berwick on 22nd July, 1985. The Chairman reported on the projected £700,000 refurbishment at Sutton Bridge and Mr. Brass elaborated on his views regarding the PMB's published Accounts in this respect. Following discussion and including consideration of a letter from Mr. Robin Pooley, it was agreed to reply proposing a meeting between the PMB Chairman and staff with 3 or 4 Association representatives immediately following the Scottish Advisory Committee in Edinburgh on 17th October, 1985. To this end it was further agreed to ask for detailed financial Accounts separating R & D and Commercial activities by 23rd September, 1985.

INDUSTRY
FUNDING
OF R & D:

It was agreed to defer this Item until later today.

DAFS/COSAC
TECHNICAL
GROUP:

Council noted Mr. McKenzie's pre-circularised Report on the meeting of the Technical Group in Edinburgh on 16th August, 1985. Enlarging on his Report Mr. McKenzie did not agree that the Group had become a "sleeping paper tiger"; highlighting continuing activities in increased random sampling in 1985/6 and closer liaison with ADAS to try to standardise sampling methods.

SEED
TRADE
COMMITTEE:

Council noted the pre-circularised Report on the meeting of the Seed Trade Committee in Edinburgh on 19th August, 1985. During discussion Council agreed to maintain opposition to proposed Higher Voluntary Standards and Mr. Brass reported on the Industry Funding of R & D meeting in London on 31st July, 1985. He felt the Association should resist the proposal that the PMB should become the vehicle for collection of contributions from the industry. Council fully supported this view, but did not favour a suggestion that Royalties income should be diverted to development of new varieties.

DAFS:

The Chairman enlarged on the pre-circularised Report on a meeting between DAFS and industry Organisations in Edinburgh on 21st August, 1985 to discuss Producer Funding of Scottish R & D. Council supported the meeting's conclusion that such funding be resisted.

B.P.T.C./

B.P.T.C.

The Chairman reported at length on the meeting of the British Potato Trade Consortium in London on 2nd September, 1985. He provided details of the operation of the Direct Intervention Scheme, crop reports by areas, European Union Congress accounts, Mr. Rackley's retiral and Mr. Les Norris' appointment as Secretary of the Consortium, pressure for restoration of PMB inspections for the Futures Market and retailer "buck-passing" re printing on bags.

JOINT
CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE:

The Chairman further reported on the Meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held in London on 2nd September, 1985. To that date 30,765 tonnes (including 2,000 tonnes on 30th August alone) had been taken off the market by Direct Intervention. It was envisaged that should this rate become the "norm" the Scheme's budgeted 80,000 tonnes would quickly be exhausted. It was also stated that from a 95% Return, the planted area was 163,275 hectares and it had been estimated that the surplus this season will be bigger than 1984. Council's discussions did not accept this estimate. It had also been stated that 573 producers have contracted 417,597 tonnes to the Board and that seed cost calculations in the Board's Production Costs Bulletin are to be reviewed. Preparation of Model Farm costings was stated to cost the Board £66,000 p.a.

PHYTO-
SANITARY
CERTIFICATES:

Mr. Deuchar reported on a meeting of Exporters called by DAFS in Edinburgh on 4th September, 1985 to discuss the position regarding the future issue of phytosanitary certificates. Essentially DAFS is aiming at a Nil tolerance for PCN by progressing to a nil tolerance for soil in export consignments. During Council's prolonged discussion, a special meeting of Council to consider the problems was not favoured, it being agreed all Council Members give the matter much more thought. Mr. Swinton urged negotiations with the importing phytosanitary authorities. Council noted plans for "roadshow" evening meetings by DAFS/SSPDC for producers for export and supported attendance at any follow-up consultations.

A.O.C.B.

(a) Items for JLC Agenda - In readiness for the Joint Liaison Committee meeting in Edinburgh on 16th October, 1985 Council agreed the Agenda should include 'Advice re tecnazene to English Growers'.

(b) Annual Election to Council - Mr. Blackmore reported that Messrs. Fenton, Fulton, Melrose (co-opted for 1 year), Miller, Logan Milne, Robertson and Smillie are all due to retire on 31st October and that Messrs. Fulton, Melrose and Smillie do not wish to offer themselves for re-election. Council instructed the usual elections arrangements be put in hand.

(c) P.M.B. trialling - Mr. Blackmore reported the content of a letter from Mr. Sharpe of the P.M.B. Council instructed a reply stating the view that the proposal would best be dealt with by the SSPDC.

(d) "Record" variety - Mr. Maxwell referred to the incidence of Veinal Necrosis in Record at crop inspections. He felt rather than downgrading to AA Class, such crops could be classified as "Elite*", to denote "not to be exported". It was agreed to include this item in the Agenda for the next DAFS meeting.

(e) James Henderson, Esq. - The Chairman announced that Mr. Henderson is shortly to celebrate his sixty-year involvement in the Potato Trade. Council unanimously conveyed sincere congratulations to Mr. Henderson on his remarkable achievement.

(f) PMB Crop Comment - Mr. Moffat remarked on the complete absence of comment on trade prospects by the PMB. Though Mr. Pooley thinks there will be an overall surplus, Council agreed the silence would be best not broken at this time.

(g) Date of next meeting - Council agreed to meet again in the City Mills Hotel, Perth on Thursday, 24th October, 1985 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the usual arrangements.

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