

REPORT on the meeting of

The Ware Potato Imports Advisory Committee  
held in London, on Thursday, 21st November, 1985

(from notes taken during the meeting  
and conversation with the Dutch  
representative before and during  
lunch)

Mr. Hitchcock was in the Chair.

During the British Report, waterlogging in Scotland was mentioned. I said there had been a lot of water damage and Scotland was still digging potatoes; one East Lothian grower rotovated out a complete 14-acre field; another had the soil washed from the drills and 60% potatoes were green. When dug, the soil stuck and he tried immersing a 1-tonne box of potatoes in the sea for four hours without success. Other parts of the field had been abandoned.

England expects to plant less potatoes next year, they have been harvested sound and dry. Some crops were irrigated in England before lifting because the ground was so dry. Cost of production £2,516 per hectare.

Germany - very heavy yield, price not enough, they will export some potatoes for Starch and Alcohol but not for eating. Average price for October £20 per tonne after two bad years. Next year must be better.

Dr. Graf - not confident, cost of production a little higher than last year.

Northern Ireland - expect lower imports and exports from Great Britain. Keeping quality excellent, hope to get bigger price later.

Belgium - worst ware market for 23 years no improvement except for last few months.

Ireland £100 for K. Pink, P. Dell, and Akula - unpopular varieties £60.

France - producers getting one-third of cost of production, future pessimistic they are reducing planting where ware prices are low and increase where prices are higher; average - one good year out of three before, now one good out of five. France tried to increase consumption of potatoes in recent years, have reduced their acreage by 100,000 hectares in ten years, have got less from potato crop than any other crop.

Holland - over the years Dutch farmers on average get more for potato crops. Dutch agree that Europe has too many potatoes, very hard to organise. Mr. Edmonds said the Dutch potato growing was disorganised chaos. Dutch had a surplus last year and now they grow 700 hectares extra.

Mr. Baddock asked what was the answer, I suggested reduction of planting by all countries.

Mr. Pooley said there may be a demand reduction of 10% on Barley, what will the potato position be then! The main alternative crops are potatoes, Wheat and Sugar Beet.

The Dutch representative admitted they had imported 350,000 tonnes of potatoes this season. They get up to 70 tonnes per hectare on good reclaimed land. The price for dressed ware potatoes 33 x 50 is £15, over 50 mm £30 per tonne.

The chairman then said the minutes of the meeting would be sent out promptly.

The next meetings are the 18th March, 1986  
11th November, 1986.

(Signed) Buchanan Fulton.