

Notes on Scottish Advisory Meeting held at the P.M.B. Office, 50 Hans Crescent on December 6th, 1985.

The Election of Office Bearers : Mr. George Lang was elected Chairman, and Mr. John Hay was elected Vice-Chairman and as Mr. Lang was unable to attend the Meeting Mr. John Hay took the chair. The Meeting agreed that a quorum would consist of 5 members.

Matters arising from the Minutes

Mr. Sprig reported that the collection of levies was roughly on a par with last year, with the Scottish level of payments being rather slower than that in England.

Protest Group

The legal process against the Scottish Action Group was gradually progressing in Scotland with the Lawson case due to be heard again in the Court of Session in March, 1986. The Board are continuing to sue Lawsons of Kirriemuir through the Limited Company for all outstanding levies and other dues

Refund claims on unlisted acreage

Refund claims on approximately 500 Hectares had been registered in Scotland and the Area Offices were proceeding to deal with these claims as speedily as possible.

D.I.S. Operation in Summer 1985

The Meeting were advised that the Board had borrowed substantially from Barclays Bank to fund the D.I.S. Operation in June, July and August of 1985.

New Member

Mr. George Hendry from Banff representing the N.F.U. was welcomed to his first Scottish Advisory Meeting..

Market Report

Ware prices in England were gradually firming in all districts partly due to P.M.B. Activity. Average prices in the week ending December 2nd had increased to £55.20 with King Edwards and Cara being quoted at anything between £45 and £90 per tonne and whites being quoted in the range £40 to £75 per tonne. Bakers in 16 Kilo boxes were wholesaling at £5.50 to £6 per box.

Scottish Report by Mr. Davie

Mr. Davie advised the Meeting that there continued to be a supply of Ware coming from the South into Scotland for customers who were seeking the cleaner and brighter samples.

Overall supply position

The crop in England had generally been put into store in dry conditions with the result that East Anglia was suffering problems with damage and bruising due to the very hard condition of the soil. Sharp frost in early November damaged some of the unlifted crop and at the date of the meeting there was still approximately 600 Hectares left to be lifted.

Dressing Waste was estimated to be between 12 and 15% higher than normal because of the high level of greening and also that the crop was smaller in the run than usual.

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It was also noted that suitable packing samples were in short supply and were enjoying a significant premium.

The stock position was estimated to show a surplus of between 100,000 and 150,000 tonnes of potatoes. This was after the Board had taken up approx. 80,000 Tonnes between D.I.S. and pre-season contract loadings.

It was expected that the processing requirements for the current season would be 400,000 tonnes by comparison with last year when it was 368,000 tonnes.

It was noted that Imports from Northern Ireland were down from 24,000 tonnes last year to approximately 5/6,000 tonnes in the current season during the same period.

These figures were compiled on the assumption that there would be a carry over of approximately 200,000 tonnes of old crop potatoes into the new potato season.

ROBIN PDOLLEY reported that processed contracts were now out of the reckoning and a 9% increase in consumption had been reported by the Ministry of Agriculture for the third quarter.

Growers who had pre-season contracts with the Board were now being offered relief from these contracts at no cost and it was anticipated that there might be a general release of contracts by Wednesday the 11th December.

Out of the pre-season contract tonnage the Processing Industry had been offered 16,000 tonnes but at the time of the Meeting only 6,000 tonnes had been taken up. English Growers were reported to be keeping more of their own Seed. This was partly due to the weather and soil conditions in Scotland resulting from the prolonged heavy rainfall which affected all growing areas north of the border.

MR DAVIE reported that the availability of Scottish Seed was similar to last year being estimated at 390,000 Tonnes for 1985 by comparison with 392,000 tonnes in 1984.

The Meeting was also advised that the national average yield had been reduced from 37 tonnes per hectare to 36.8 tonnes per hectare and that the trend was still downwards, partly as a result of the very high wastage figure in Scotland and above average wastage in England.

The 1986 planting intentions indicated a likely area to be planted of 156,200 hectares which was 1% less than target.

The Meeting's attention was drawn to the restrictions on the importation of Ware to North-South Ireland as an example of the obstacles that may be presented to deter supplies being imported from overseas. (*Phytosanitary certs*)

PRIORITIES BOARD - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Government's objective of reducing the cost to the Treasury of Research and Development by charging for services was discussed and it was concluded that the cost of Seed Inspection's for Export could be substantial.

The Meeting was then brought to an end and a vote of thanks to the Chairman proposed by Mr. McLaren.