

REPORT on a MEETING between the JOINT (NASPM/SPTA) LIAISON COMMITTEE and THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES FOR SCOTLAND in Chesser House, EDINBURGH at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 28th OCTOBER, 1987.

PRESENT: D.A.F.S. - Messrs. I.V. McEwan, D. Hall (East Craigs) and A. Robb (Inspectorate), with Mrs. M. Barnes in attendance.  
N.A.S.P.M.- Messrs. H.N. Aves (Vice P. Smith), C.J. Baker and J.B. Hollywood.  
S.P.T.A. - Messrs. G.S. Brass, J.E. Cook, J.R. McArthur (vice J.H. Barr), T. McClung and K.A. McKenzie, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

Mr. I.V. McEwan chaired the meeting and welcomed those present.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were tendered on behalf of Messrs. E.F. Sherriff and P. Smith (NASPM) and Messrs. J.H. Barr, D.H. Lindsay and J.O. Robertson (vice Mr. Lindsay) (all SPTA).

RHIZOMANIA: Mr. Brass reported an outline of the Committee's discussion during its morning meeting. It was accepted that with no sugar beet crops in Scotland to sustain it, rhizomania would have less scope to thrive but the Committee would be glad to have DAFS views.

The Chairman stated that the soil tolerance for all imported root crops had been reduced from 2% to 1%. Consideration of a further reduction to 0.5% assumed the industry's support. A Nil tolerance was accepted to be impracticable. Statutory control of the disposal of processor's waste is also in train, on which DAFS is to issue a Paper shortly. These measures are regarded as the limit of what is possible. Since 1st September, staff have been instructed to take soil samples whenever possible from all imported root crops. In reply to Mr. McKenzie, the Chairman also stated that ware imports to meet Futures Contracts are to be tested up to one half of the delivery, but he explained that testing soil samples for rhizomania takes six weeks.

Further discussion included the topic of Ring Rot and Danish efforts to secure acceptance of its produce in other EEC member States, in which respect Scotland's High Grade Seed Area status provided adequate safeguards. In conclusion, in reply to Mr. Brass, the Chairman explained the imminence of legislation precluded re-issue of the Code of Practice on a stop-gap basis.

CO-ORDINATION OF REGULATIONS INTERPRETATIONS: The Chairman reported that progress towards improved co-ordination of interpretations is continuing. Mr. McArthur stated the principal difficulties occurred when subjective decisions were involved and he sought assurance that this aspect is receiving attention. Mr. Robb reported that ongoing discussions to achieve a parity are taking place, in which respect actual samples and/or photographs are being sought. Mr. Hollywood pointed out that sizing problems are not subjective and are a source of much embarrassment both to the merchant and to the Department, but Mr. Robb assured him that this problem had now been rectified. Mr. Baker urged that all inspected bags should be obviously marked for identification and Mr. Cook regarded this as an important adjunct to the Inspectorate's follow through activities. Mr. Robb admitted that the Inspectors' productivity is not measured, but this is being looked into, the Chairman elaborating on the targetting of the Inspectorate's efforts. Mr. Robb added that he was attracted by the idea of marking inspected bags, not frightened by it.

A.O.C.B.:

- A.O.C.B.:     (a) Russet Burbank - The Committee reported on the points raised during its morning meeting and enquired whether any limitation is applicable to the permitted area for an approved stock. In reply, Mr. Hall explained that this particular variety had originally been entered for National Listing as long ago as 1979. There had been several "hiccups" during multiplication since then, but the variety had now been added to the Common Catalogue via Spain. DAFS is now looking into limitation (in view of Generation Control of 'Elite' class). This led to a prolonged general discussion during which Mr. Hall agreed that a distinctive label was a good idea and the Chairman undertook to look into this.
- (b) Telephone Ordering of Labels - Mr. Cook reported that difficulties over signatures and payments are being experienced when ordering labels by telephone and asked why this has come about. The Chairman explained this problem had been raised at a meeting yesterday - the Department is currently looking into the procedures and will make an announcement in due course.
- (c) Sales of uncertified seed - The Chairman reported the Department has been carrying out a survey of Season 1986/87 and will be discussing this with MAFF soon, with a view to making an announcement in about a month's time.
- (d) Publicity - Mr. Baker drew attention to Dutch publicity activities and asked whether DAFS provided any equivalent material. The Chairman replied in the negative, explaining that SSPDC produces this which DAFS uses with its own Plant Health information. The meeting agreed this is essentially a promotional matter and therefore an Industry, not a Department, responsibility.
- (e) Mini tubers - Mr. Baker also asked if mini tuber production is licensed. In reply, the Chairman explained there are two systems currently operating, one of which produces 20mm. tubers and the other 10mm. tubers. In effect these are "licensed", although this produce is not marketed but is treated as pre-basic material for V.T. raisers, providing a two-years shorter timetable. This may eventually require changes to be made to the EEC Marketing Directive.

          On behalf of the Committee and supported by Mr. Aves, Mr. Brass proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Chair and to the Department for its hospitality, which was passed unanimously.