

REPORT on a MEETING of the
SEED POTATO CONSULTATIVE PANEL
in Chesser House, EDINBURGH at
9.45 a.m. on Thursday, 3rd
MARCH, 1988.

- PRESENT:
- D.A.F.S. - Administrative - Messrs. G. Lyall, I. McEwan and W. Adamson, Mrs. M. Barnes and Miss D. Pearson. Mr. A.J. Stewart attended the latter part of the meeting.
 - Inspectorate - Messrs. A. Robb and M. Archibald
 - Scientific - Drs. P. Howell and I. Clayton, Messrs. T.D. Hall, C. Quinn, and M. Richardson
 - C.O.S.A.C. - Dr. R.W. Lang
 - N.F.U.S. - Messrs. J. Arbuckle and J. McLaren, with Mrs. J. Armstrong in attendance.
 - P.M.B. - Mrs. B. Gordon
 - R.H.A.S. - Mr. J. Aitchieson.
 - S.P.T.A. - Messrs. G.S. Brass and J.R. McArthur, with D. Blackmore in attendance.
 - S.S.P.D.C. - Mr. J. Bethel
 - V.T.S.C.G.A. - Mr. D. Craib

Mr. Gordon Lyall took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were recorded on behalf of Messrs. W.T. Aitken (S.A.O.S.) and H.A.C. Davie (V.T.S.C.G.A.).

MINUTES: The Panel considered the Minutes of its last meeting on 19th February, 1988 recently copied to those present.

MATTERS ARISING: 1.1. Virus V. Survey 1987 - The Panel noted a pre-circulated Report. Speaking in summary of the Report, Mr. Quinn felt the results of the Survey had been promising and indicated the problem had been "nipped in the bud". No Survey will take place in 1988.

1.2. S.A.C. Brushing Survey - In a brief updating, Dr. Lang reported that the Colleges' Survey had found no increase in Erwinia or damage after brushing, either last year or this year. Advisory Notes are planned to be issued for the forthcoming Season.

1.3. Single Man Inspections - This Item was deferred until late in today's meeting.

1.4. Crop Identification on Official Label - The Panel considered a D.A.F.S.' Paper outlining changes resulting from progress in D.A.F.S.'s computer capability expected to become operative this year. Mr. McEwan added that it would now be possible to publish the Crop Register early in October each year. In voicing general appreciation, Mr. Bethel enquired whether the draft Register (previously prepared in mid-September by S.S.P.D.C.) would now be worthwhile and the Panel agreed this would be discontinued. In reply to Mr. Craib (V.T.S.C.G.A.), Mr. McEwan explained that applications to amalgamate/

amalgamate two same-field, same-variety crops under a single classified crop number will be considered.

1.5. P.C.N. Working Group - The Chairman reported that the proposal at the Panel's last meeting to set up a D.A.F.S./Colleges Group had been implemented and the Group provided with a wide remit.

1987 CROP
INSPECTIONS
REPORTS:

Introducing the Inspectorate's Report, Mr. Robb explained that overall, the 1987 Growing Crop Inspection had been rather disjointed by weather conditions. In reply to Mr. McLaren he stated that of the 142 temporary inspectors employed, 26 had been new and that approximately one-third of the 142 had over 5 years experience, a further third had between 2 and 5 years experience and the remaining third had less than 2 years experience. He added that all areas had commented on the poor roguing standards encountered.

In discussion of diseases statistics, Mr. Arbuckle felt roguing was less relevant to the Blackleg results. Mr. Quinn agreed this to be true in wet conditions but, in other conditions roguing is helpful. During discussion, testing, hot water treatment and results on daughter crops were all considered and it was agreed the advisory role and "tread softly" course should continue until more is known. Mr. Howell's view was that earliest burning down and harvesting is still the best advice. (At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Quinn reported that three large trials of a Japanese anti-blackleg systemic "were showing much promise"). Dr. Lang pointed out that Mild Mosaic disease is increasing and reported the Colleges' advice on crop hygiene, etc. Mr. Bethel congratulated the Inspectorate on the 55% home trade tuber inspections achieved and looked for this to be bettered in 1988, but the Chairman regarded this as unlikely, as more selective inspections would reduce the tonnage inspected. Mr. McArthur proposed that 1988 results should show the number of growers visited and the tonnages seen.

INSPECTION
LABELLING
FEES:

Mr. McEwan regretted that D.A.F.S.' Paper, which was to have been tabled, was not yet ready. While increases in Inspection fees could be expected, the extent of these had yet to be determined and he was unable to give any indication meantime. In respect of labels, he felt these would be increased by 20p-25p, without any distinction between tie-hole and stitching type. The revised fees and charges would be announced as soon as possible.

BAN ON
PLANTING
UN-CLASS.
SEED:

Mr. McEwan gave an updating report on D.A.F.S.' Paper circularised at the turn of the year. In essence, the E.E.C. views that retention of the High Grade Seed Area in the U.K. is incompatible with planting within it of any unclassified seed. In its efforts to retain the High Grade Seed Area the U.K. is unable to recruit any support from its fellow E.E.C. Members. In imminent further discussions, D.A.F.S. intended to try to secure agreement to planting of unclassified seed for ware production every second year (with own, once-grown seed each intervening year) and to the exclusion of small areas (gardens, allotments, etc.) from these requirements. The Chairman also explained in detail the strategy and options of the E.E.C. negotiations, which gave rise to a prolonged discussion by the Panel. Messrs. McLaren and Arbuckle gave their views for the N.F.U.S. (and in reply to Mrs. Armstrong, the Chairman felt the earliest possible introduction of any requirements would be for Season '89 plantings). For the S.P.T.A., Mr. Brass pointed out that in addition to the disadvantage any ban must impose on every Scottish ware grower vis-a-vis his English counterpart, he was also being discriminated against by being unable to buy seed of many protected varieties. (The Chairman suggested this latter point might merit an Appeal to the Controller of Plant Varieties Rights.) With Mr. McArthur's support Mr. Brass held retention/

retention of the High Grade Seed Area to be vital. He urged that any negotiations in this respect should not be rushed. The Chairman explained that D.A.F.S. will report further again in due course.

SEED
SUPPORT
SCHEME:

The Chairman explained inclusion of the proposed Seed Support Scheme in the Agenda was to review progress and to consider any appropriate changes in current disease and pest tolerances. In view of his understanding that progress of the proposals had presently reached a very sensitive stage he offered to defer any discussion until the working Party is in a clearer position.

On behalf of the Working Party, Mr. Brass expressed appreciation and acceptance of this offer and Mr. McLaren gave a brief outline of the likely future timetable for the proposals.

SEALING
1 TONNE
BOXES:

The Chairman reported a proposal that a carrot-net type of box liner, capable of being sealed at its neck, would obviate the many difficulties associated with statutory sealing requirements. Following discussion it was agreed to investigate this proposal further and, if acceptable to N.F.U.S. and S.P.T.A., to introduce it for Season 1988.

GENERATION
CONTROL OF
'ELITE':

Mr. McEwan drew the Panel's reminder attention to the introduction on this year of a three-year time limit on the classification of crops at 'Elite' level. Tabulated details of resulting annual progression of all stocks through all classes were given.

A.O.C.B.:

Mr. McEwan also announced that formal annual Inspectorate liaison visits to A.D.A.S./N.A.S.P.M. in England are to be resumed later this month. Mr. Brass added that during a visit to Peterborough a week ago he had received encouraging comment on the much improved quality of Scotch Seed.

CROPS,
HEALTH,
ETC.
REVIEW:

Introducing Mr. A.J. Stewart on his joining the meeting, the Chairman explained that a very comprehensive review of all D.A.F.S.' activities was being carried out under Mr. Stewart's supervision. Arising from his work to date, a number of points which consultation with the Panel was felt to be desirable had been identified and are presented in the form of an explanatory Paper today.

Mr. Stewart stressed that the Paper did not contain proposals as such, but rather a series of ideas for open discussion and he invited those present similarly to introduce any other ideas. During wide-ranging point by point discussion of the Paper, the following results emerged:-

- (1) Unification of DAFS/MAFF/ADAS/PHSI Inspections standards should be established.
- (2) Apart from VTSC, a second inspection of virtually disease-free crops to be dispensed with was not conclusively resolved.
- (3) NFUS and SPTA did not favour temporary inspectors working only within their home areas.
- (4) Use of "authorised" field inspectorate would be unacceptable.
- (5) "Substitute" (major-producer) tuber inspections would not be favoured in achieving 100% tuber inspections of all consignments but it was agreed this be left on the table.
- (6) It was generally felt that very little of DAFS' services could be privatised.
- (7) Inclusion of disease results of inspections with classification/

classification certificates would be welcomed.
(8) "Recommended Lists" and aphid forecasting, being Colleges' functions, were deleted from discussion, although agreed these should be continued.

In conclusion the Chairman invited further suggestions either by letter or at a further Panel meeting now likely to be necessary with today's deferred business.

On behalf of and with the unanimous support of the Panel, Mrs. Gordon proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Chair and of appreciation of the high standard of DAFS' hospitality. The meeting then concluded.