

MINUTE of MEETING between  
SCOTTISH NATIONAL FARMERS'  
UNION and S.P.T.A. held at  
INGLESTON, EDINBURGH, at  
10.30 a.m. on TUESDAY, 23rd  
NOVEMBER, 1993.

PRESENT:-

S.N.F.U. Mr. W. Reid and Ms. Caroline Lang.

S.P.T.A. Messrs. R. Doig, D. Stewart and R.D. Hunter.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs. A. Strachan (S.N.F.U.) and J. Hollywood and R. McArthur (S.P.T.A.)

- (1) FUTURE OF P.M.B. Mr. Reid reported that it was now anticipated that the Minister of Agriculture would announce her decision regarding the future of the P.M.B. early in December. Mr. Reid added that it seemed likely that the P.M.B. would remain in existence in a very much watered-down form. Mr. Reid stated that it was likely that a Producers' Poll regarding the proposals concerning the P.M.B. would take place. There was general discussion regarding the retention of such a "watered-down" P.M.B. and the possibility of replacing it with a Scottish Potato Authority probably with Development Board status. It was the general feeling of the meeting that S.S.P.D.C. in its present form would not be a suitable vehicle for such a Potato Authority.

Mr. Doig reported that S.P.T.A. considered that the S.S.P.D.C.'s recent Questionnaire omitted the very important question regarding the future of S.S.P.D.C. itself. Mr. Doig added that S.P.T.A. were considering issuing a Questionnaire to all Scottish Seed Potato Growers asking the following questions:-

- (1) I/We want/do not want S.S.P.D.C. to remain in existence.
- (2) In the event of S.S.P.D.C. and P.M.B. being disbanded I/We would/would not support a Producer led Scottish Potato Authority.

Mr./

Mr. Reid stated that in principle he believed that his Union were happy that S.S.P.D.C. should proceed with the issue of its Questionnaire but suggested that it should be delayed until after the Minister had announced her decision regarding the future of P.M.B. It was agreed, however, that the Scottish National Farmers' Union would consider the matter and would get back in touch with Mr. Hunter as soon as possible.

- (2) COMMUNITY GRADES/PROTECTED REGION. Mr. Hunter reported that S.P.T.A. had, with some reservation, intimated to The Scottish Office its acceptance of the proposal to introduce more rigid tolerances for virus complaints. Mr. Hunter added that S.P.T.A. had expressed opposition to the suggestion of The Scottish Office to raise the tuber standard and apply the "Export Standards" to all trade. Mr. Reid stated that his Union agreed with S.P.T.A.'s attitude. He added that he believed that the proposal to introduce Export Standards to all trade would not be pursued by The Scottish Office. Mr. Reid stated that his Union was also concerned regarding the suggestion of the change of name of the AA Grade.
- (3) CONTROLLED VARIETIES. Mr. Reid said that it was the opinion of his Union that the Controllers had too much power. He added that the English N.F.U. had unsuccessfully raised the matter with the Monopolies Commission in England. Mr. Doig stated that he considered the Scottish National Farmers' Union's attitude to be a "over generalisation". Mr. Stewart stated that he believed that there were instances, involving controlled varieties which were formerly free, where the "mark-up" was too high.
- (3) CONDITIONS OF PURCHASE. Mr. Hunter reported that N.A.S.P.M. were under pressure from the English N.F.U. to have the periods for complaints extended even further. He also reported that S.P.T.A. were to have discussions with N.A.S.P.M. regarding the possible improvement of Arbitration Procedures. It was agreed that Mr. Hunter would keep the Scottish National Farmers' Union informed regarding these discussion.
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- (4) DATE OF NEXT MEETING. It was agreed that a further meeting between S.P.T.A. and S.N.F.U. would be held in Ingliston at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 25th January, 1994. It was agreed, however, that an earlier meeting may be convened, if required, following the Minister of Agriculture's announcement regarding the future of P.M.B.