



THE
SCOTTISH
POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION

Secretary and Treasurer R. DAVID HUNTER

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The Chairman,
Potato Marketing Board,
Broad Field House,
4 Between Towns Road,
Cowley, Oxford,
OX4 3NA.

11th. March 1994.

Dear Sir,

I refer to the meeting in Aberdeen last week between you and Messrs. Bob Doig and David Stewart, the President and Vice-president of this Association, respectively. As arranged I now write to inform you what this Association requires from your Board to enable this Association to consider holding back the making of a Demand to have a Statutory Poll of Potato Producers carried out.

That requirement is that your Board arranges for a Referendum of Potato Producers to be carried out and completed within six months of this date. Such a Referendum would seek answers to the following Questions namely:-

- (A) Do Producers want the Potato Marketing Scheme, in the "watered down" form proposed by Government, to continue until 1997 or do they want it to be discontinued forthwith ?
- (B) When the Potato Marketing Scheme is wound up do they want, or do they not want, there to be a Successor Body to the P.M.B. set up ?
- (C) If such a Successor Body is set up, what functions would they wish it to fulfil and what would Producer's priorities be with regard to allocation of expenditure on these functions ?

What this Association is seeking is for the Potato Marketing Scheme and the P.M.B. to be wound up forthwith and a Successor Body dealing with both seed and ware potatoes set up on the following basis namely:-

- (1) The new body would be geared to work within an overall Annual Budget of, say, £4M. supplemented by Government funding.
- (2) It would have Statutory power to fund its Budget by collecting levies from all sectors of the Potato Industry (i.e. not only from growers as at present). With regard to the collection of Levy from Producers it is suggested that the following mechanics could be adopted:-

- (a) The Register of Producers be retained,
 - (b) Producers be levied on a tonnage/ acreage basis,
 - (c) Producers would 'self certify' their annual tonnages/ acreages,
 - (d) There would be random checks carried out and there would be severe penalties for false certification.
- Other Sectors of the industry would be levied on a Lump Sum Basis. In addition members of the other Sectors could be charged fees in

respect of services obtained by them.

(3) The functions of the new body would be as follows, namely:-

(a) Research and Development It would not carry out 'in house' R.& D. but it would contract out work on a Tender Basis. There would be an Annual Budget for R.& D. R.& D. would include the developing of new British potato varieties.

(b) Promotion and Publicity The new body would have a Press/ Public Relations Officer but external Press and P.R. Agents would be employed on a Tender Basis. Again there would be an Annual Budget. The new body would continue the various Demonstrations presently arranged by the Board.

(c) Collecting of Statistics The new body would investigate the viability of obtaining statistical information from other sources (e.g. M.A.F.F). The only statistics which the new body would require would be :- Acreages planted, Tonnages produced, Monthly return of Stocks and possibly European statistics.

Sutton Bridge would be sold and the new body would be prohibited from Trading in any form.

(4) It would employ only a small number of full time Field Staff, say, 4/5 Officers, one based in Scotland and the others in England and Wales. Additional part-time staff could be employed as and when required (e.g. acreage /tonnage checking).

(5) The new body would have one Office located in central England. The office staff would be kept to the absolute minimum.

I am instructed by Council of this Association to state that this Association is most disappointed that your Board did not make arrangements for the sort of Referendum, which we are now proposing, to be carried out immediately following the announcement in December by Mrs. Shephard regarding the Potato Marketing Scheme, bearing in mind that her decision resulted in your Board's principle functions being removed (i.e. Support Buying and meaningful Quota Control). If there is to be any chance of the Demand, to have a Producer's Poll, being held back, your Board must be seen to be taking steps to give Producers value for money and to be taking positive steps to re-organise itself into a new structure acceptable to the Industry.

I am instructed to state that the Office Bearers of this Association will be happy to meet you and other members of your Board to discuss the proposals contained in this letter.

Yours faithfully,



(R. David Hunter)
Secretary.