

MINUTE of MEETING of S.P.T.A.
PRESIDENT'S SUB-COMMITTEE held
at 25 SOUTH METHVEN STREET,
PERTH at 2.30 p.m. on THURSDAY,
8th AUGUST, 1996.

PRESENT: Messrs. D.Y. Stewart, A.B. Pullar, A.M. Beattie, J.M. Marshall and K.A. McKenzie, along with Mr. R.D. Hunter, the Secretary.

PRESIDENT: Mr. David Stewart, the President, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr. V. Lumb.

(1) SEED POTATO CLASSIFICATION SCHEME: The Sub-Committee considered the terms of the letter, dated 21st May, 1996, under the heading "Seed Potato Classification Scheme" received from Mr. Gordon Brown of The Scottish Office. The Secretary explained that the expiry of the time within which comments require to be submitted had been extended until the end of August.

(a) Labels: It was agreed that in the foreseeable future it may be the wish of the Seed Potato Industry to have added to the information contained on seed potato labels a "Generation" number. It was accordingly agreed to suggested to The Scottish Office that the new computer programme should allow for the possibility of this information being added at a future date.

It was agreed also to remind The Scottish Office of the Association's previous request that consideration be given to labels being valid for two consecutive calendar months, namely the month during which they are issued and the following month rather than the present system of stating the date on which the labels are issued.

(b) Tolerances: It was considered that the present tolerances for Ground Keepers made the growing of seed potatoes a "lottery" and also encouraged undesirable husbandry practices. It was agreed to recommend to The Scottish Office that the tolerance for Ground Keepers, as opposed to Rogues and Variations, should be made the same as that for Blackleg.

The Sub-Committee considered that Severe Mosaic is completely different and much less significant from what it was some years ago when the present tolerances were fixed. It was agreed to recommend to The Scottish Office that the Super Elite tolerance for Severe Mosaic at the second inspection should be the same as that for the first inspection.

(c) Blackleg: It was agreed that Scottish Seed Potatoes had a bad reputation for Blackleg which impaired their International image. The Committee believed that when suitable technology becomes available (i.e. a tuber test with results being available within twentyfour hours) Blackleg should be ignored in the Field Inspections and replaced with Tuber Tests at the time of loading. It was considered that such an acceptable and effective Blackleg Tuber Test could be available within the next two or so years. It was agreed to suggest to The Scottish

Office that they keep in mind the possibility of the replacing of the Blackleg Field Inspection with a Blackleg Tuber Test in the foreseeable future.

(d) Registration of Potato Stores: It was accepted by the Sub-Committee that it was likely that in the foreseeable future the registration of Potato Stores will be introduced. Such registration would include minimum specifications with regard to insulation, ventilation, etc. It was agreed not to raise this matter with The Scottish Office but to keep it in mind for future discussion within Council.

(e) Classification Grades: The Sub-Committee were of the opinion that there was now no longer any need to have two VTSC Grades and that one VTSC Grade would be sufficient. It was agreed that Mr. Stewart would discuss this matter further with Association Members involved in the VTSC production before making a response to The Scottish Office.

(f) Fees for Growing Crop and Tuber Inspections: It was noted that in the letter from The Scottish Office it is suggested that an alternative computer supplier will result in increased running costs and that any such increased costs would be reflected in the Statutory Fees for Growing Crop and Tuber Inspections. It was agreed to inform The Scottish Office that the Industry cannot afford to see these charges increased and that it would resist any such increases.

(g) Access to Computer: The Sub-Committee considered that with the introduction of new technology it should be possible for individuals in the Potato Trade to access direct via their own PC's non-sensitive statistical information retained on the Department's computer. It was agreed to request that The Scottish Office make provision for such information being available.

- (2) SEED POTATOES - PROTECTED REGIONS: Mr. Stewart reported that the National Farmers' Union of Scotland and SSPDC were pursuing contacts in Europe with a view to seeking support for the restoration of the former quarantine arrangements which applied to the U.K. Protected Region prior to the creation of the single market. The Secretary confirmed that representatives of this Association will be meeting representatives of the National Farmers' Union of Scotland and SSPDC during the following week to discuss the matter further. In the meantime it was agreed that SPTA should seek the support of NASPM in this matter.
- (3) GBPO: The Sub-Committee considered the Consultative Document issued by The Scottish Office. There was some support within the Sub-Committee in favour of the new Council being funded from the outset by a tonnage contribution at the first point of sale and that there should be no area contributions. It was agreed to discuss this matter further at the next meeting of Council.

This terminated the business of the meeting.