

REPORT on the FIRST MEETING of THE  
JOINT POTATO TRADE COUNCIL held in  
the RURAL CENTRE, INGLISTON,  
EDINBURGH at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 22  
April 1999.

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PRESENT: S.P.T.A.:- Messrs. A. M. Beattie, V. Lumb, J. R. McArthur and H. B. Edmond, the Secretary

N.A.S.P.M.:- Messrs. R. Reiss, R. Baker, I. Stirling and L. Taylor

It was agreed that this meeting would be chaired by SPTA. M. Beattie welcomed all present. Apologies were received from D. Harley.

- (1) PREVIOUS MEETING: It was agreed that the report on the previous meeting of 11 February was a true record of that meeting
- (2) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING: Arising from Item (1) R. Reiss reported on progress with the arrangements for the Arbitration Seminar. He was disappointed with the response to date with only eleven confirmed delegates so far. The NFU(E & W) and NFU(S) had not as yet shown any interest. Although there were sufficient numbers to proceed, members were asked to encourage others to participate.

Arising from Item (3) page 2 (para. 2) R. Reiss commented that in discussion in NASPM Council that it was felt that 'The new Joint Council should not have authority to make substantial changes to policy without recourse to the individual Councils'. SPTA Members present agreed this.

Also arising from the same paragraph of Item (3) it was agreed that Joint Council Meeting should be arranged to coincide with main Council meetings. Dates for both Council's meetings for the coming year had already been fixed but it was agreed that this could be organised for next year.

- (3) FORMALISING THE JOINT COUNCIL: NAME: After a few suggestions and discussion it was agreed the name of the new Council should be:-

**'THE JOINT POTATO TRADE COUNCIL' (JPTC)**

**MEMBERSHIP:-** The following was agreed:

1. There should be four members from each Association Council. (SPTA's representatives consist of Office-Bearers + J. R. McArthur).
2. The Chairman at each meeting should alternate between NASPM and SPTA.
3. The Secretary should change depending on the meeting venue.(NASPM in England, SPTA in Scotland).
4. Costs including expenses should be kept at a reasonable level.

**ROLE:-** It was agreed that the joint body would consult on major issues where both organisation had been asked for their views. The procedure would be for each Association to debate and provide the Joint Council with their findings. The Joint Council would then make the official response. (Subject to both Associations' approval). In the circumstance of an agreed view not being reached the response would have to be made accordingly. It was important that the two secretaries kept in touch to identify subjects requiring the attention of the JPTC. A list of bodies who were likely to be involved in matters requiring national consultation was to be constructed by the secretaries. These bodies were to be informed of the formation of the new Joint Council following the Press Announcement. It was also agreed that the JPTC should not only comment on GB and UK matters but should also be looking at subjects on a European basis, including ware imports and phytosanitary matters.

- (4) JOINT STATEMENT: It was agreed that Colin Ley Consultants should be contacted to deal with the Press Release. The cost would be equally shared between the two Associations. The Secretary was to deal with this and obtain a list of media, which would be used, as well as the likely cost. The deadline for the draft of the Release was 6 May. A few bullet points for the statement were suggested:-
- (a) JPTC would be a single point of contact for all industry organisations requiring the views of the trade.
  - (b) JPTC would have representation from both NASPM and SPTA.
  - (c) JPTC would give a strong single voice but still retain the individuality of both Associations.
  - (d) JPTC would be a strong influencing body on issues affecting the industry at home and abroad.
  - (e) JPTC would have strength to deal with Arbitration, Weights & Measures, SSG, Seed Legislation and Trading Standards matters etc.
  - (f) JPTC would be able to give a quick response to an issue. This facility was regarded as essential in a modern complex industry.

The subject of a logo for the new Joint Body was discussed and the members were asked to consider this and come back with some ideas. The formation of the JPTC would be announced at the NASPM Annual General Meeting on the 12 May and to SPTA Members in a Press Release.

- (5) NASPM PURCHASE CONDITIONS: R. Reiss updated the meeting on the position of their Council at present. There was a reluctance of their Council to have Conditions of Purchase. He said they had three options:
1. Adopt SPTA's Conditions.
  2. Have no Conditions of Purchase.
  3. Licence out their Conditions of Sale.

NASPM felt they would like the option to have Conditions of Purchase and requested that SPTA should allow the adoption of theirs. M. Beattie indicated that SPTA Conditions could be adopted by agreement but there were matters of copyright to consider, which could involve a fee although this would probably be nominal. The request would be put to the SPTA Council at the meeting on the 6 May. Any future changes to the Conditions would have to be agreed jointly as it was felt essential there should be no anomalies.

(6) WEIGHTS & MEASURES ISSUES: R. Baker explained his concerns in respect of this issue. He was concerned at the lack of awareness to requirements by the industry.

1. Weights & Measures (Scunthorpe Office) have advised R. Baker, that they would prosecute for short weight in excess of 5%.
2. All Scottish seed producers should be aware of the Weights & Measures Act 1985. There are a small number of growers who are not using appropriate equipment to weigh seed potatoes that are packaged in 1 tonne and larger containers. R. Baker suggested that SPTA's contact with SNFU might prevent a farmer/producer being the victim of an expensive prosecution. M. Beattie agreed that the observation had some validity and he would look into it.
3. Risk of forfeit of equipment.
4. SOAEFD official label states weights over the 1000 kgs. covered by the Act.

As issues arising from these problems were covered by legislation the course of action was to use the appropriate Act. It was felt that as the industry was moving to using larger containers this subject should be discussed with the appropriate organisations. It was therefore agreed that the subject should be on the next agenda and that Mrs Margaret Barnes should be invited to attend.

(7) ANY OTHER MATTERS: R. Reiss indicated that NASPM had received a number of letters from members expressing concern in respect of late lift<sup>ed</sup> seed. In particular who would be responsible for any problem which may arise during the growing season. M. Beattie felt there was an obligation on the seller to provide:-

1. A statement that the crop was lifted in the Spring
2. The results of a germination test.

This would then give the customer the opportunity to accept or otherwise. The official inspection does not consider germination in these circumstances.

(8) DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting would be held on the 11 August in the afternoon in either Perth or Edinburgh. This was the day prior to the SCRI Potato Plots Demonstration day at Dundee. The venue and precise time will be notified later.