

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

PRESENT: S.P.T.A.:- Messrs. A. M. Beattie, D. J. Harley, V. Lumb, J. R. McArthur  
and H. B. Edmond, the Secretary  
N.A.S.P.M.:- Messrs. R. Reiss, R. Baker, and P. Smith.

As agreed at the previous meeting the Chairman should alternate between the two Associations. This meeting was therefore chaired by NASPM. R. Reiss welcomed all present.

(1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from I. Stirling.

(2) PREVIOUS MEETING: It was agreed that the report on the previous meeting of 22 April was a true record. M. Beattie who chaired that meeting signed the minute.

(3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING: Arising from Item (2) R. Reiss reported on arbitration matters. He indicated that at present NASPM had only one case in progress involving the RUCIP rules. He also pointed out that a court had rejected a case in England on the grounds that their Trade Associations had arbitration facilities to deal with disputes. Kevin Burke had also been requested to attend a court to give expert opinion on trade practice.

Arising from Item (3), R. Baker felt that the press launch of the JPTC had been well handled by Colin Ley Consultants. All present agreed. Arising from the same paragraph it was agreed to formalise the arrangements for covering the cost of meetings of the JPTC. During the first year the individual organisations will bear the cost of their own members and the actual cost of the meeting (room hire, food, etc) would be shared. Nobody had come up with an idea for a joint logo. The secretaries were requested to try and put some ideas together.

Arising from Item (5) it was reported that NASPM had agreed to adopt SPTA's Conditions of Purchase subject to a change in one paragraph. A formal request would be made to SPTA for this adoption of the copyright for the agreed fee of £100.

Arising from Item (6) the members were informed that as Margaret Barnes was on holiday she could not be present. Further discussion on Weights and Measures was being postponed until the next meeting. It was suggested that the matter should be added to the agenda for the meeting with the NFU(S).

(4) SEED POTATO CLASSIFICATION SCHEME: R. Reiss opened by giving a report on discussions on the subject which had taken place the previous day at a meeting between NASPM and the NFU(E&W). It was difficult to understand the delay in progressing the changes to the scheme. All industry was awaiting a decision from the authorities. It was agreed that a united response should be

sent from the JPTC to both MAFF and SERAD encouraging them to release a final proposal as soon as possible.

There was some discussion on the NFU's Assured scheme for potatoes and on a proposal by R. Baker for a voluntary higher raised norm for tuber dressing standard with a base level for the rest. In other words raise the trading norm. A number of members felt that it was not advisable to change as competition could be affected especially in the export market. Some companies already operated higher standards. It was decided to leave the discussion in the meantime.

- (5) WARE GROWERS CONCERNS: M. Beattie updated the meeting on the progress of the subject within SPTA. NASPM members were strongly opposed to any relaxation in the Plant Health Regulation to allow the planting of twice saved seed for ware growers in the Protected Region. The membership were unanimous in expressing unease at the practice of off farm grading of potatoes by pack houses where the smalls or seed fraction was returned for planting. In respect of potatoes for planting, the loss of identity and the possibility of contamination were major concerns. It was suggested that both Associations should encourage the authorities to take action to stop or at least regulate the practice.
- (6) SALE OF SMALL WARE: M Beattie on behalf of SPTA stated that at present he was not prepared to say anything more than had been minuted in the report on their last Council meeting on the subject of the conviction of a member of SPTA for marketing unclassified potatoes for planting. R. Reiss commented that in a similar situation in the past, a NASPM member was expelled as per NASPM rules.
- (7) BONDING SYSTEM FOR TRADERS: Ron McArthur outlined his thoughts on the subject. He felt that as a trade association the organisations should be able to offer their membership assistance in ensuring a degree of financial protection. It was pointed out that risk insurance was already available. R. Reiss indicated that the response to a proposed trade indemnity had been poor in the past. After discussion it was agreed that R McArthur and V Lumb would investigate the possibility of inviting representatives of companies which dealt in credit risk insurance/trade indemnity to come to the next meeting to make a presentation to the JPTC.
- (8) ASSESSMENT OF VALUE FOR CULTIVATION AND USE OF AGRICULTURAL PLANT VARIETIES: D. Harley explained that the consultative document was proposing that VCU standards for GM plant varieties should be no lower than those for non-GM varieties with the same characteristics. There had been talk of making the standards tighter for GM crops. It was not the same authorities that decided on the VCU for potato varieties as decided on DUS and it was felt that greater focus should be put on the end users requirements. It was agreed that the JPTC should reply agreeing to the proposals in the consultation paper but making the observation that members felt that greater attention by decision-makers should be taken of the commercial aspect.

(9) ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Brown Rot: R. Reiss updated the JPTC on MAFF's progress with clearing rivers in England of contamination/host plants for the Brown Rot organism. He indicated that 90% of the rivers originally contaminated had now been cleared. M. Beattie updated the members on the meeting on Brown Rot and Ring Rot, which SERAD had had with the industry on 20 August. Since the Brown Rot Directive came into force on 21 August, SERAD could not now automatically test every import of seed from Holland. It was now up to industry its self to take its own action. A further meeting, to be organised by the NFU(S) was planned but not yet finalised. Industry was keen to continue the voluntary ban, and although there has been overall co-operation by the Dutch seed houses, there was condemnation on the information that German seed had been imported into the Protected Region. NASPM agreed to support a ban on any seed imports, which put the UK at risk from untested seed from 'risk countries'. It was agreed that NASPM would encourage members to support the ban.

(b) Seed chemical treatment: P. Smith raised a concern, which had emanated from a consultancy report on poor/non emergence of seed potatoes delivered in the late spring. The report attempted to highlight the vulnerable position of traders where certain chemicals were applied to seed late in the season and not to the chemical manufacturer's instructions. The area of most concern was the incorrect timing of application after dormancy break and the incorrect dosage. It was agreed there was an advice role for the Association in educating its members of the potential dangers of not applying chemicals in accordance with the manufacturers instructions. Mr Smith suggested that it may be appropriate to add wording to one of the current contract clauses or add another clause to cover members legally. The subject was to be put on the agenda for the next meeting of SPTA Council.

(10) DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting would be held on the 8 or 10 December in Edinburgh. The venue, date and precise time will be notified later.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.