

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION held in the ICE RINK,
GLOVER STREET, PERTH at 2.00 p.m. on
Thursday, 9 March, 2000.

PRESENT: Messrs. A. M. Beattie, R. J. S. Doig, T. Halliwell, D. J. Harley, C. J. Herron, V. Lumb, J. Macfarlane, J. R. McArthur, K. A. McKenzie, A. Melrose, J. L. Milne, A. J. B. Redpath, J. O. Robertson, D. Y. Stewart, J. M. Swinton along with H. B. Edmond, the Secretary.

The Association President, Mr A. M. Beattie, occupied the Chair and welcomed those present at the meeting including Mr Charlie Greenslade, Mr Wm Rennie, Mr Wm Aitken and Mrs M. Barnes from SERAD and SASA who were present for item (4) on the Agenda.

- (1) APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of J. B. Hollywood, J. M. Marshall and A. B. Pullar.

It was agreed that Item (4) should be taken first.

- (4) VOLUNTARY GENERATION MARKING SCHEME FOR SEED POTATOES:

The Chairman introduced Mr Charlie Greenslade from SERAD who indicated that legislation on generation marking of seed consignments was unlikely to come into being for sometime. He said they held the necessary information and he would agree to try and help in a voluntary scheme. Their worry was in respect of the volume of requests for information and could they cope in current circumstances if the volume was heavy. They felt they could deal with a few hundred applications but were concerned that if publicity of the scheme resulted in thousands of applications, their turn around would be unacceptably slow. R. Doig indicated many customers currently accepted verbal notification of the age of a stock and this would continue. After discussion it was agreed to let the scheme run on a voluntary basis without advertising to allow SASA to cope in the meantime. The requests would have to come from the buyers and be obtained from SASA by the grower of the stock. SASA would also prefer the application to be at the time of application for certification but would accept later requests. Mr W. Rennie would look at their system to see what could be provided automatically possibly with the stock certificate and he felt it was not unreasonable to expect to have a system operational by the 2001 crop. The chairman concluded by proposing Council should debate at a future meeting how they would like to see the information on the age of a stock shown while SERAD and SASA would investigate what their system could provide. They agreed to include a reference to the voluntary scheme in the green notes to growers issued in the spring.

Mr Charlie Greenslade then raised the subject of traceability of potatoes moved for human consumption both at home and for export to the EU. It appeared industry was not aware of the requirements. He indicated that it was a statutory requirement that they be identified with the BPC registration number. He would give the Secretary details of the legislation involved and a mention would be made in the next Members Letter.

The Chairman thanked the visitors for their attendance and valuable input into the discussions before they left the meeting.

- (2) MINUTES: The Minute of the Meeting of Council of 27 January 2000 was taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- (3) MATTERS ARISING:
- (a) Entertainment Matters: Curling – The second round of the annual Trade curling bonspiel was played at Perth Ice Rink at 3.00pm on Friday 3 March. North and South were both 6 shots up over the two games. South therefore retained the cup, as it was necessary for North to win the cup from the South. Golf – A reminder was given that this year's Golf outing is at Forfar on Thursday 18 May, teeing off at 9.30am and 2.30p.m.
- (b) Rates Assessment: Arising from item (3)par (c) the Secretary reported that McCash & Hunter had confirmed that each case was being treated on its merits by the Assessor and individual cases would have to be taken up by the individual or company concerned.
- (c) Association Subscriptions: The Secretary reported that just under 50% of the budgeted subscriptions had been received to date. £6,960 – Budget £14,290.
- (d) Association Constitution and Rules: Rule 20 of the Association's Constitution and Rules was amended earlier at an Extraordinary General Meeting to read " Ten Members shall form a quorum at all General Meetings".
- (e) Scottish Average Price: Arising from item (8) it was reported that at the BPC Forum 2000 meetings in Scotland the majority of levy payers wanted a Scottish average price published. The BPC required more traders to input prices and tonnages into the system to obtain a more reliable average. If this were forthcoming they would be prepared to publish an average.
- (f) Trade Insurance: Arising from item (10) the Secretary reported that he had not received back any risk assessment questionnaires from the membership to pass to Willis Corroon Ltd. The Chairman indicated that if members required a quote for group insurance cover, the insurance company would require to assess the risk. There was no response from the membership and the matter was left.
- (g) Derogation for Farm Saved Seed: Arising from Item (13) the Secretary reported that he had responded to the Scottish Executive, as requested. A letter was sent indicating that Council did not support the NFU(S) request for derogation and a second seeking a response and restating the Council's original request for changes to the Plant Health Regulations. The Secretary said he had received an email from Charlie Greenslade the previous night. A copy of this was circulated to the members. It indicated that our request was being considered together with the recommendations in the BPC's paper on 'Recommendations for Industry Improvements'.
- (5) SEED POTATO CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES: The consultation papers on the amendments to the Seed Potato Classification Schemes had not as yet come to hand. MAFF's was already out but it was not expected that the Scottish Executive would have theirs available for another month.
- (6) BRITISH POTATO COUNCIL: A copy of the Minute of the meeting of the British Potato Council held on 2 February 2000 had been circulated by the Secretary. Mr Stewart gave a report on the meeting. He commented further on the BPC's price reporting. He indicated that the GB weekly average price system was working well but the daily average was inaccurate due to a lack of subscribers. In respect of a Scottish average he confirmed that provided a statistically sound figure could be calculated with sufficient input a figure would

be made available but not all the year round due to a lack of movement in the early months of the crop year. A statistical sample planting intentions survey had taken place and had indicated a 7% reduction in plantings. When announcing the results they intended highlighting the encouragement of responsible growing. He also said the BPC were pleased with the rate of levy collection, which had reached 99% every year. Regional Forum meetings were now finished and the presentations had been well received. There had been a good degree of discussion although attendances had been relatively modest.

(7) SEED SECTORAL GROUP: A copy of the Minute of the meeting of the Seed Sectoral Group held on 26 January 2000 had been circulated by the Secretary. Mr Beattie gave a report on the meeting. A full discussion had taken place on the threat of Brown Rot and Ring Rot to the seed industry. They were concerned that the danger from these diseases was not getting enough prominence especially in respect of Ring Rot. There were a number of cases in Europe not yet made public and this caused concern. There appeared to be a time lag in the reporting system. The voluntary ban had worked to date and continued vigilance was required. They had discussed the BPC's working party Recommendations for Changes in the Industry but as this was on the agenda as a separate item it was left in the meantime. Some amendments to the seed potato labels had been discussed and these would be going out to industry for consultation. The minute included an item on crop check weighing information together with a questionnaire on the industry's requirements for the results including the level of detail and method of dissemination. After discussion it was decided that individuals should form their own views and return them direct to the BPC.

(8) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY IMPROVEMENTS: As a result of representations made to the British Potato Council by ware and seed growers the BPC had set up a Working Party consisting of Andy Pumfrey, Douglas Harley, Alistair Roy, Ronnie Reiss, Roger Turner, Allan Stevenson, Jim Cruickshank and Richard Watson-Jones. The Secretary had circulated a copy of the paper containing the Working Parties recommendations for the British potato industry improvement. Each of the recommendations was debated at length.

(a) Introduction of a system for collection of royalties on farm saved seed:

In general Council supported the concept but suggested that Controllers, NFU and BSPB should be left to agree their own time scale of introduction. Discussion on the mechanism of collection and the complexities involved took place. The fairness of applying royalties on controlled varieties at the point of first purchase was discussed. Council agreed that this method was worth pursuing.

(b) Voluntary certification for farm saved seed/or tighten up protocols to enhance traceability: Protocols and the influence of supermarkets were already factors influencing the requirements for traceability. Council agreed to support further debate on this proposal and approved of protocol as an aid to traceability.

(c) Improve understanding of the value of seed and the risks in developing new varieties: Council were in favour of any work carried out to improve the understanding of the value of seed and risks involved in breeding and developing new varieties.

(d) Licence packers who grade planting material of-farm and produce a code of practice for them to adhere to or stop the practice altogether: Council were not in favour of the grading of planting material of-farm particularly classified

seed. They would support the Scottish Executive in their efforts to control this practice.

(e) Whole crop marketing: Members felt this was an ideal situation but could not see it being taken up to any extent. They saw no reason why it should **not** be encouraged and debated further.

(f) Adopt pool price contracting: Members who already operated a scheme of pool prices commented that in their experience over a number of years the system worked to the advantage of both the grower and the contractor. Trust between the parties was essential. Risk was shared and good and bad years were evened out. Council felt that the operation of the system was a commercial decision but were prepared to support and encourage its use.

The chairman summed up by agreeing that Council should join in any further discussions on the recommendations.

- (9) CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary reported that the following correspondence had been received:

Letters from the Scottish Executive headed:

- (a) "Arable Area Payment Scheme: Multi-Annual Set-Aside"
- (b) "Revision of the Food Labelling Regulations Guidance Notes: Place of Origin".
- (c) "A Right of Appeal: Proposed Appeal Arrangements for Scottish Farmers".
- (d) "The Food Standards Act 1999(Transitional and Consequential Provisions and Savings) (Scotland) Regulation 2000".
- (e) "Arable Area Payment Scheme 2000".(Explanatory Booklets - Part 1 & 2)
- (f) "World Trade Organisation (WTO) Negotiations on Agriculture".
(Comment requested – but no date mentioned)
- (g) "The Food (Peanuts from Egypt) – (Emergency Control) (Scotland) Order 2000". (Notification that the Order came into force on 24 February 2000).

Letters from MAFF headed:

- (a) "MAFF Overseas Trade Fair Report – Britain in Poland - 22 – 24 September 1999, Plac Defilad, Warsaw, Poland".
- (b) "Agriculture & Food Processing Mission – Beijing – Shandong – Shanghai 1 – 12 April 2000".
- (c) "MAFF Report on Market Assessment Visit to Shanghai, China – 1 – 5 November 1999".
- (d) "Variety Denominations"(Response sent approving of contents of Draft Regulation)

Letters from the Pesticides Safety Directorate headed:

- (a) "Important News on Pesticide Maximum Residue Levels".
- (b) "Parallel Imports of Pesticides – New Condition of Approval".
- (c) "All Approval Letters and News Updates 1999".
- (d) "Consultation on Changes in Respect of the Labelling of Agricultural Pesticides and Plant Protection Products".
- (e) "Arrangements for the Transfer of Responsibility for the Registration of Rodenticides".

Letters from British Potato Council.

- (a) "Reply to letter on Scottish Average Price".

Letter from NASPM

"Confirming acceptance of offer to use SPTA Conditions of Purchase for Seed Potatoes".

Letter from Connect Venues

"Connect Venues for Meetings and Group Accommodation". (Sent request to come of database).

Letter from Site, 10 Blenheim Place, Edinburgh

"Details and Invitation to attend the 15th Scottish Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Pub, Bar & Bistro Show – SECC Glasgow 12 – 15 March 2001".

Letter from The Big Opportunity.

"Invitation to attend the Scottish Food Conference – Already past on 16 February 2000".

Letter from Irish Potato Marketing Ltd

"Notifying change in staffing in Scotland".

Letter from Montelimar Trans'invest

"Secretary not too sure what it is about, but thinks the French are looking for Potato Companies to invest in France".

Letter from Agricultural Travel Bureau Ltd.

"Offering complete package including travel, registration and accommodation for the World Potato Congress and Potato 2000 in Holland from 4 – 8 September 2000".

Letter from The Public Ledger.

"Offer of subscription to their News, Analysis and Prices on over 700 Commodities"

(10) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was confirmed that the next meeting of Council would be held on Thursday 4 May 2000 in Perth.

(11) ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Membership Matters: Cygnet PB Ltd who have taken over PBI's potato business were proposed for membership by Agrolon Ltd and seconded by James Haggart & Sons Ltd. This was unanimously accepted as by Council.

The Secretary reported that there had been three resignations since the last meeting.

(a) Area Entered for Classification: J. Macfarlane raised the proposal that the area entered for inspection should be to two decimal places especially in respect of VTSC stocks. He said the area of some varieties was inflated because the minimum area was currently 0.1 ha when often the actual area planted was 0.01, 0.02 or 0.03 of a hectare. It was suggested that this should be an item for the Seed Consultative Panel meeting in November.

There being no further business the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

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4/5/00.