

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, 8 March, 2001.

PRESENT: Messrs. A. P. Bayne, R. J. S. Doig, D. J. Harley, R. Haynes, C. J. Herron, ~~V. Lumb~~, J. Macfarlane, J. M. Marshall, J. R. McArthur, K. A. McKenzie, A. Melrose, J. L. Milne, P. Peebles, A. B. Pullar, A. J. B. Redpath and D. Y. Stewart along with H. B. Edmond, the Secretary.

The Association President, Mr D. J. Harley, occupied the Chair and welcomed those present at the meeting with a special welcome to W. J. Rennie of SASA and C. W. Greenslade of SERAD who were present for Item (4).

(1) APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs A. M. Beattie, T. Halliwell, A. D. Lamont and J. M. Swinton. + *v. LUMB*.

At the President's suggestion it was agreed to take item (4) on the agenda first.

(4) PLANT HEALTH LEGISLATION AND VOLUNTARY DOWNGRADING OF CLASSIFIED SEED POTATO STOCKS WITHIN THE SEED POTATO CLASSIFICATION SCHEME: C. W. Greenslade of SERAD opened by giving a presentation on plant health legislation. In Scotland the Plant Health Act of 1967 gave government the power to make orders. Currently the Plant Health Order 1993, which has been amended 13 times, requires consolidating. Article 18 covers the main requirements relevant to potato production. In EC Directive 93/231/EC the EU recognise High Grade Seed Potato producing areas where restrictions are placed on what can be planted within these areas. Scotland, part of Northern England and all of Northern Ireland are High-Grade Seed areas. Only Basic Grade Seed Potatoes or one year's direct progeny of basic grade seed potatoes can be planted in these areas. A new plant health order for Scotland would give an opportunity to review these requirements. C. Greenslade suggested some options for consideration for these amendments.

1. No change – This was unlikely to satisfy ware growers.
2. Do away with the requirement altogether – This would have an impact on virus levels, the reputation of Scottish seed potatoes, the exports of seed potatoes and the threat to the high-grade seed area status of Scotland. C. Greenslade pointed out that the EU Processors Association was lobbying to ban the use of home saved seed altogether.
3. A certification scheme for home saved seed – There would be the question of who operates, who pays etc? SERAD would not.
4. Re-draw the high-grade area – This would be an EU decision not a UK. It would also allow imports of lower grades. Where would the line be drawn within the country? – Seed growers outside new area would object.
5. There may be others.

Mr Greenslade summed up by saying it was an industry issue and the seed and ware interests had to remember that although there were two sectors there was one industry and the solution was better to be industry led. There was some further discussion and questions on plant health matters. Regulation 6 was hopefully going to be tightened up so that compulsory burning down of ware crops found with high virus infection could take place. SERAD were still



considering the question of growing seed and ware on the same farm. It was generally agreed that the current requirements were outdated and that the department could better control and monitor crops if they were on the same farm. It was considered that if ware was grown in a separate field from seed crops on the same farm it would be a better arrangement than currently. Our request to SERAD was to be amended accordingly.

There followed a discussion on voluntary downgrading and re-instating of grades. W. J. Rennie stated that the advice from government lawyers had been that grades should remain as obtained at field inspection. The ability to downgrade stocks had been a useful management tool used by exporters to meet customer's requirements and for VT growers to sell surplus stocks without devaluing their high-grade material. Downgrading could also be used in the future to hang onto control of varieties for a bit longer. By preventing voluntary downgrading growers and controllers will look for ways round it. Controllers could ensure that all stocks with the exception of their multiplication stocks are classified in the field at the lowest grade, which would eliminate any need to downgrade. After a wide and deep debate covering opposing opinions Messrs Greenslade and Rennie left with a vote of thanks for their attendance and useful contribution to the debate. A lengthy discussion followed and no united view was obtained. A. B. Pullar indicated that he had had a stock re-instated to its original field grade to meet plant health requirements of other stocks on the holding. Council all agreed that downgrading was a useful management tool for the seed industry but some required the qualification of re-instating. In the end Council decided that in the meantime they would recommend that the status quo should remain and that SASA/SERAD should keep it under review.

- (2) MINUTES: The Minute of the Meeting of Council of 25 January 2001 was taken as read approved and signed by the Chairman.
- (3) MATTERS ARISING:
- (a) Entertainment Matters: Arising from Item (3)(a) The second round of the annual curling bonspiel at Perth Ice Rink on Friday 2 March had been cancelled as a precautionary measure in the light of the Foot & Mouth Disease outbreak. The annual Golf outing to Forfar Golf Course had in the past clashed with the NASPM event, so SPTA's outing was now scheduled for Thursday 7 June 2001.
  - (b) Association Subscriptions: Arising from Item (5) The Secretary reported that 20 members had so far paid their subscriptions. He also presented a letter from a member submitting their resignation. Council was disappointed to learn of this but instructed the Secretary to deal with it in the usual way.
  - (c) Seed Consultative Panel Meeting: Arising from item (8) the President reported that a letter had been received from C. Laing of SASA in reply to our letter regarding the minute of the meeting in November. Mr Laing had stated that the report on SPTA's requests for amendment to The Plant Health Order and the restrictions on the planting of seed and ware crops on the same farm was adequately recorded. It was suggested we should raise it at the next meeting in November 2001.
  - (d) Conditions of Sale: Arising from Item (9)(a) Members of the Conditions Sub-Committee had today been given copies of the correspondence on Third Party Rights and were seeking legal advice on the matter.
  - (e) British European Potato Association: Arising from Item (9)(b) The Secretary reported that there had been no response from the membership on the request from BEPA for financial assistance. A number of members were already individual members of BEPA and Council agreed that corporate membership was



not an appropriate outlay of funds for the Association. The Secretary was instructed to reply to BEPA to this effect.

(f) NASPM Presentation: Arising from Item (9)(d) A letter from NASPM requesting a date for their presentation on amalgamation of the two Associations was presented to Council. As the agenda for the May meeting was already fairly full and there was a suggestion that the June meeting should be cancelled, the next available were the August or October meetings. The Secretary was instructed to write to NASPM offering them the August or October dates pointing out that the August meeting was normally poorly attended due to holidays.

(g) British Potato Council: Arising from Item (13)(a) the Secretary reported that a letter had been sent to the Scottish Executive on the Balance of Membership on the BPC as per the report in the minute of the last meeting.

(4) Already taken.

(5) BRITISH POTATO COUNCIL: A copy of the Minute of the meeting of the British Potato Council held on 6 February 2001 had been circulated by the Secretary. As the meeting was pressed for time Mr Stewart said there was nothing contentious in the minute but should anyone have questions he would deal with them.

(6) INDUSTRY LEVY COLLECTION WORKING GROUP: A copy of the Minute of the meeting of the Levy Collection Working Group held on 31 January 2001 had been circulated with the agenda by the Secretary. Mr Stewart said the minute was very full and as there was support for a single point of levy collection there would be a proposals document prepared by Nigel Jupe with suggestions for consultation.

(7) FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE: A copy of MAFF's advice on the movement of seed potatoes during the Foot and Mouth outbreak was laid on the table. Members could keep up to date with developments on the disease by visiting either MAFF's pages on the internet at <http://maff.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/hmd/default.htm> or by phoning SERAD on 0131 244 1910. A copy of the advice was to be sent to all members. Council felt that the repercussions on the seed industry of the disease could be immense. Restrictions on farms in England on plantings and on delivery of seed could have knock back effects on members. Would the Force Majeure clause in our conditions come into effect? Any member with problems should contact the Secretary; an emergency meeting may have to be held to deal with the situation.

(8) IDENTIFICATION OF ORGANIC SEED POTATOES: As A. J. B. Redpath had to leave the meeting earlier, it was agreed this item should be left over to the next meeting in May.

(9) ARBITRATION SEMINAR: The programme for the Arbitration Seminar in York on 30 - 31 May 2001 was not as yet to hand. The Secretary confirmed that NASPM had finalised the details and that the programme and application forms would be circulated with the March Members Letter.

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

Letters from the Scottish Office headed:

(a) "Adventitious Presence of GM Seeds in Seed of Conventional Varieties"  
(Response by 10 April 2001)

(b) "Consultation Paper: The Action Programme of Nitrate Vulnerable Zones  
(Scotland) Regulation 2001" (Response required by 27 April 2001)

- (c) "A Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture: Launch of the Strategy on Monday 5 March 2001"
- (d) "A Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture: Launch of the Strategy on Monday 5 March 2001" (Cancellation of (c) above)

Letter from SASA headed

- (a) "The Seed Potato Consultative Panel".  
(Reply to SPTA letter regarding minute of meeting)

Letters from the Pesticides Safety Directorate headed:

- (a) "Degradation of Chlorothalonil Residues Prior to Analysis".
- (b) "New EU MRLs Legislation: Impact on UK Pesticide Products".
- (c) "News Update No. 51 – EC Directive 91/414/EEC: Annex 1 Inclusion of Bentazone, Esfenvalerate, Lambda-cyhalothrin and Triasulfuron".

Letters from British Potato Council.

- (a) "British Potato 2001". (Notification of forthcoming event)
- (b) "Joanne Knowles". (Notification of leaving)

Letters from Food Standards Agency.

- (a) "Food Labelling Forum: Summary Report".
- (b) "Request for Data Regarding the Evaluation of Specifications for Certain Food Additives by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives".
- (c) "Plastic Material and Articles in Contact with Food Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2000".
- (d) "Food Standards Agency News". (February edition)

Letter from the Department of Trade and Industry

"Price Marking – Public Consultation Paper on Proposed Changes to The Price Marking Order 1999"

Letter from Brahan Farms Ltd

"Resigning from the Association".

Letter from National Association of Seed Potato Merchants

"Requesting a date for their presentation".

Letter from MBM

"Voluntary Downgrading of Classified Seed Potato Stocks within the Scottish Seed Potato Classification Scheme".

Letter from Data Protection Notification Department

"Letter regarding Registration"

The President would look over and consider letter (a) from the Scottish Executive and T. Halliwell was to be sent letter (b) for consideration and comment. If any response was necessary the Secretary was to be contacted.

- (11) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was confirmed that the next meeting of Council would be held on Thursday 3 May 2001 in Perth.



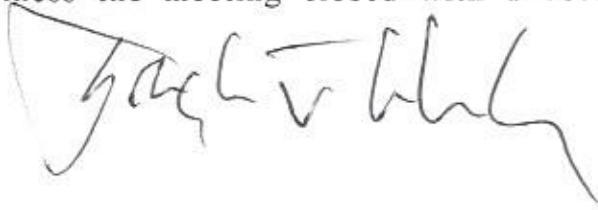
(12) ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Irish Farmers Association: A report had been submitted by a member on an article taken from the web page of the Irish Farmers Association on the fear of Brown Rot infection from the import of seed potatoes from Scotland and they were lobbying their authorities to take action. As there had been no findings of the infection in Scottish seed potatoes Council felt their fears were not justified. C. Greenslade was to be informally contacted to see if he knew what the Irish Department of Agriculture's opinion was on the situation.

(b) GM Trials: The President intimated that a Category B GM trial was scheduled to take place at Dundee this year. He felt Council should be aware that this was taking place.

(c) Climate Change Levy: The Climate Change Levy is a tax on industry and commerce for the use of energy and will come into effect on 1 April 2001. If the business pays VAT at 17.5% on its energy bills it will be liable for this tax. Council viewed this additional cost to the industry with concern and asked members to consider what action we should take if any. In the meantime Council instructed the Secretary to write to the British Potato Council asking if they would consider submitting a case on behalf of the potato industry as a whole for relief or exemption from the tax.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon V. White', is written over the text of the meeting minutes.