

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, 18 October, 2001.

PRESENT: Messrs R. J. S. Doig, C. J. Herron, A. D. Lamont, V. Lumb, J. M. Marshall, K. A. McKenzie, J. Macfarlane, J. R. McArthur, P. Peebles A. B. Pullar, A. J. B. Redpath, D. Y. Stewart and J. M. Swinton along with H. B. Edmond, the Secretary. Also in attendance were Messrs. S. Crane, R. Reiss, P. Smith and Ms K. Ralston of the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants who were present for Item (4).

In the absence of the Association President Mr V. Lumb, Vice-President occupied the Chair and welcomed those present at the meeting. He gave a particularly warm welcome to the representatives from NASPM who was present for item (4) of the agenda and it was agreed that this should be taken first.

(4) PRESENTATION BY NASPM: Mr S. Crane led a presentation by representatives of NASPM on their proposal for a new body to represent the interests of UK potato merchants. It was stressed they were not proposing an amalgamation but a new united body. He listed the reasons for needing the new body as:

- Rapid changes within the potato industry.
 - Decline in membership.
 - Duplication of membership.
 - Financial implications.
 - Council members time restraint.
- Need for a strong body to take the UK potato trade forward into the new century.
- Unified international representation for UK potato merchants.

He indicated that the functions of the new body would be to unify the UK seed potato trade and provide support and advice to the members.

The benefits to members would be:

1. A broad based representation to cover the whole UK seed industry.
2. Stronger body to face the future.
3. One voice on Europatat.

A number of issues would have to be addressed including, the new Association structure, Association funding, ware representation and a name for the new the body.

At this time NASPM did not go into detail on their proposals but felt that there was a need for deliberation and investigation into the possibility of one organisation. An in depth discussion took place without coming to any final conclusion on the subject. The Chairman thanked the representatives of NASPM for taking time to come and make the presentation to our Council. At this point they left the meeting. Further discussion on the subject took place and it was agreed that Council should look at and consider the proposals. SPTA had an excellent working relationship with SEERAD which Council felt should be maintained. The same did not exist in England with NASPM. Council felt NASPM's proposals lacked detail but agreed that a working party should look at

the subject, do a SWOT analysis if appropriate and report back to Council. It was agreed that the President's Sub-Committee should carry out this task. Mr D. Stewart suggested that another possibility was for the VTSC Growers' Association and SPTA to merge.

- (1) APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs A. M. Beattie, T. Halliwell, D. J. Harley, R. Haynes, A. Melrose and J. L. Milne.
- (2) MINUTES: The Minute of the Meeting of Council of 16 August 2001 was taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
- (3) MATTERS ARISING:
 - (a) Industry Levy System: Arising from Item (4) the Secretary reported that the BPC's proposals on the changes to the levy system would be put out to consultation shortly by DEFRA, SEERAD and NAWAD.
 - (b) Entertainment Matters: Arising from Item (3)(a), Mr A. Pullar reported that the Annual Dinner and Dance was organised for Friday 7 December at the Huntingtower Hotel. Tickets would be £20 per person and special rates were available for those wishing to stay overnight at the hotel. The Secretary would circulate details before the end of the month.
 - (c) Association Subscriptions: Arising from item (3)(b), the Secretary reported that all subscriptions had now been paid with the exception of one member who had ceased trading and was taken off the membership list.
 - (d) British Potato Council: Arising from item (6), it was intimated that at the last meeting Mr D. Stewart had reported on the meeting of the BPC of 7 August although the minute was not to hand. This was circulated to members today. The minute of the meeting of 2 October was also circulated but it was agreed to leave the report on it until the next meeting of Council.
 - (e) Exporters Meeting: Arising from Item (7) a copy of the report on the end of season exporters' meeting was distributed to those requiring it as this was not available at the previous meeting.
- (5) ANNUAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS: The Secretary confirmed that there had only been five nominations for the five vacancies on Council. No election was therefore necessary and accordingly they had all automatically been elected to Council with effect from 1 November 2001. J. M. Marshall had decided not to stand again saying he had enjoyed his time on Council. The Chairman thanked him for his devoted services and wished him all the best for the future. The Secretary was instructed to write to him expressing Council's appreciation for his services. The Secretary explained that Messrs C. J. Herron, K. A. McKenzie, A. J. B. Redpath and D. Y. Stewart had been re-elected to Council and that Mr A. D. Lamont had been elected to Council. The Secretary was instructed to write the usual letters to the re-elected members and to the new member of Council.
- (6) DRAFT ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS: The Secretary tabled interim unaudited accounts of the Association for the year to 31 October 2001. The Secretary took the meeting through the draft accounts and pointed out that although the accounts showed a surplus of £1,655.26, the projected expenses to the end of the year had been estimated and the final surplus would be slightly different. It was also suggested that at least £1,000 of any surplus should be transferred to the Press Account as the balance in that account was as low as it had been for some time.
- (7) SEED SECTORAL GROUP: the Secretary had circulated a copy of the Minute of the meeting of the Seed Sectoral Group held on 30 August 2001. Mr A. J. B. Redpath gave a brief report on the meeting. He reported that the Seed Satisfaction Survey had been approved by the Seed Sectoral Group and was now published. A. MacLennan had reported on the Seed Sectoral Group Strategy

Review saying that the proposed activities were being ranked in accordance to the relative importance of each activity. It had been agreed Variety Trials were necessary and tender had been sought from potential contractors. C. Greenslade had updated them on the progress on the work on eradicating the infection of host plants contaminated with the Brown Rot organism in the Lunan Burn in Perthshire. M. Hawkins did the same for the work done by DEFRA in East Anglia and Kent in June. A report was also received on Ring Rot and the actions taken by DEFRA and SEERAD on the import of potatoes from Germany. This had already been sent to all members of SPTA. A. MacLennan had given a report on the end of season export figures. It was encouraging to see that they had remained very similar to the previous year in spite of current currency exchange rates. He was pleased to report that 1700 tonnes of seed had been exported to Turkey in spite of difficulties over Turkish powdery scab requirements. BPC and SEERAD negotiations had managed to obtain a relaxation of the tolerances. The World Potato Congress was to be held in China in 2003. A. MacLennan was preparing a proposal of what the BPC's presence should be. The proposed changes to the Plant Health Directive were to be considered by the whole Council of the BPC. It was noted that the Seed Sectoral Group were not over pleased with the report made by Mr Morgan, recipient of the last Nuffield Scholarship.

- (8) 100% TUBER INSPECTION OF SEED: Mr A. Pullar had raised the subject at an earlier meeting. He said that during the Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions seed consignment inspections had been stopped. There had been no difference in the level of complaints and therefore wondered if the exercise was necessary. He understood the department's level of rejection was about 0.5% and questioned the value for money aspect of the service. Mr C. Herron suggested that last year was a year of few problems and that we could not rely on this every year. He felt the industry still needed an independent assessment made and that to reduce the standing of Scottish seed in the eyes of our customers was a backward step. Mr K. McKenzie said that the industry had fought hard for 100% inspection and he was loath to loose it. There were points for and against the service and it was agreed we should ask for it to be included on the agenda for the Seed Consultative Panel meeting in November.
- (9) RING ROT IN GERMAN POTATOES: A letter from SEERAD outlining their requirements for notification of imports of both seed and ware potatoes from Germany. Mr R. Doig felt that the action was not sufficient and this matter should also be on the agenda for the Seed Consultative Panel meeting. He suggested the same action should be considered against Holland because of the infections with Ring Rot found there. He recommended that countries within the EU should be considering introducing safe havens where high-grade seed can be grown and maintained. Mr D. Stewart considered it would require NFU involvement to advance the idea of safe havens for seed. It was agreed that the NFU should be invited to a meeting to further these points.
- (10) SPTA INVESTMENTS: A government gilt investment held by the Association was due to redeem on the 6 November 2001. Council was asked to consider how they wished to invest the proceeds. Reinvesting in gilts at present would considerably reduce the amount of income. Gregg Middleton had recommended income bonds and a prospectus on one recommended by them was circulated. A decision would have to be made by the next meeting.

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

Letters from the Scottish Executive headed:

- (a) "Review of Plant Health Fees".
- (b) "Potato Ring Rot in German Potatoes".
- (c) "Potato Ring Rot in German Potatoes". (Action taken on (b) above)
- (d) "Packaging Regulation: Consultation on Recovery and Recycling Targets for 2002".

Letters from SASA headed

- (a) "Arrangements for the Examination, Labelling and Sealing of Scottish Pre-Basic and Basic Seed Potatoes 2001/2002".
- (b) "Figures for Area Classified in 2001". (Issued to all Members)
- (c) "Scottish Seed Potato Consultative Panel Meeting: Friday 16 November 2001". (Response as soon as possible)

Letters from British Potato Council.

- (a) "Formal Submission Document on Levy System to DEFRA, SEERAD and NAWAD".
- (b) "Minutes of Meeting of the Seed Sectoral Group of 30 August 2001". (Item (7) on agenda)
- (c) "Minutes of Meeting of the British Potato Council of 7 August 2001".
- (d) "Minutes of Meeting of the British Potato Council of 2 October 2001". (Laid on the table - To be considered at next meeting)

Letters from Food Standards Agency.

- (a) "Policy Issues Related to Farming and Food – Request for Comment from Scottish Interests".
- (b) "Commission Proposals to Prohibit Certain Pesticides in Raw Agricultural Products used to Manufacture Infant Formula, Follow-on Formula and Baby Foods".
- (c) "Report of the Task Force on the Burdens of Food Regulations on Small Food Businesses (Ref. SCO/41/GFHy/01/08)".
- (d) "Proposed EP/Council Regulation Laying Down the General Principles and Requirements of Food Law, Establishing the European Food Authority, and Laying down Procedures in Matters of Food Safety".
- (e) "Maximum Levels for Aflatoxins in Spices – Commission Regulation and Directive".
- (f) "Consultation: Draft Guidance on Taste Trials and Human Volunteer Studies Involving Novel Foods or Foods Produced by Novel Processes".
- (g) "Consultation: Migration of Bisphenol A from Can Coatings into Food".
- (h) "Food Labelling: Proposal for EU Legislation on Labelling of Foods Containing Caffeine and Quinine".
- (i) "Food Standards Agency News September Issue".
- (j) "Scottish Food Advisory Committee Meeting on 5 October 2001".
- (k) "Food Labelling: Ingredient Listing and Allergens".
- (l) "Consultation: Food Hygiene and Safety at Farmers' Markets in Scotland".
- (m) "Labelling of Foods Containing Caffeine and Quinine".
- (n) "Food Standards Agency News October Issue".

(o) "Food Standards Agency Open Board Meeting - Invitation".

Letter from the Scottish Food and Drinks Innovation Initiative

(a) "Exhibition and Mini-Conference Event: 7 November 2001, The Moat House Hotel, Glasgow".

Letter from Scottish Enterprise

(a) "Change of Address: 150 Broomielaw, Atlantic Quay, Glasgow, G2 8LU".

Letter from Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS)

"Letter of Thanks for Donation from Annual Dinner and Dance Charity Efforts".

Letter from British Heart Foundation Scotland

"Letter of Thanks for Donation from Annual Dinner and Dance Charity Efforts".

Letter from Organic Potato Growers (Scotland) Ltd (OPG)

"Notifying Change in Company".

Letter from J S Cruickshank (Farmers) Ltd

"Response to SPTA letter sent following last meeting".

Letter from Specialist Potatoes Ltd (J M Marshall)

"Notifying intention not to stand for re-election to Council and congratulating Council on its work".

(12) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: As the scheduled date of the next meeting coincided with the Seed Sectoral Group Meeting it was therefore agreed that the next meeting of Council would be changed from Thursday 29 November to Thursday 22 November 2001 in Perth.

(13) ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Election of Office Bearers: A. Redpath stated that Mr D. J. Harley was nearing the end of his year as President. He no longer held the office in BSBP but was now Chairman of the Seed Sectoral Group. He was prepared to complete the customary second year provided Council approved. Council indicated they would unanimously approve his re-nomination when the time came.

(b) Seed Potato Matters: It was brought to the attention of Council that SEERAD's office in Aberdeenshire had run out of seed labels. This and the fact that the Perth office was taking three days to print labels raised some concern to members. It was agreed this should be another item for the agenda of the Seed Consultative Panel meeting.

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

