

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, 14 August, 2003.

PRESENT: A. M. Beattie, D. J. Harley, R. Haynes, H. Hughes, A. D. Lamont, V. Lumb, J. Macfarlane, J. L. Milne and A. J. B. Redpath along with H. B. Edmond, the Secretary.

The Association President, Mr V. Lumb occupied the Chair and welcomed those present at the meeting.

- (1) APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs R. J. S. Doig, T. Halliwell, C. J. Herron, J. R. McArthur, R. McKay, A. Melrose, P. Peebles, A. B. Pullar and D. Y. Stewart.
- (2) MINUTES: The Minute of the Meeting of Council of 8 May 2003 was taken as read and approved and thereafter signed by the Chairman.
- (3) MATTERS ARISING:
 - (a) Entertainment Matters: Arising from Item (3)(a) Curling - The Secretary confirmed that the first round of the North v South curling competition was organised for Murrayfield Ice Rink for Tuesday 25 November at 3.00pm and the second round for Perth Ice Rink for Friday 19 March 2004, also at 3.00pm. Members were asked to note that the Perth game was later than normal due to there being a National Competition at Perth in early March.
 - (b) Seed Industry Trail: Arising from Item 3(b) the Secretary confirmed that a link had been set up between the BPC database on the exercise and the Association's site. A link had also been put on SPTA's home page to the BPC's site as agreed at the last meeting. Members present felt that the exercise had as predicted not been a success and in response to a enquiry from Louise Chapman of the BPC the Secretary was instructed to inform her that those present at this meeting had no approaches for visits under the scheme.
 - (c) Association Subscriptions: Arising from Item (3)(c) The Secretary reported that there were still 5 outstanding subscriptions. Members of Council were once again requested to contact these members to try and resolve the situation.
 - (d) Association Membership: Arising from Item (3)(d) the President asked Council to note from the correspondence that the Association had lost a further two members. The President also said that an application had been received from Saltire Seed Ltd for membership of the Association and that Council would consider the application at this time. They were proposed by Wm Fraser Potato Merchants & Growers Ltd and seconded by Agrolon Ltd. Council unanimously agreed to the company becoming a member and the Secretary was instructed to write the usual letter of welcome.
 - (e) Appointments to the British Potato Council: Arising from Item (5) it was confirmed that there had not as yet been any announcement on the subject.
 - (f) Arbiters' Training Meeting: Arising from Item (8) it was reported that a very successful Arbiters' training meeting had taken place on Thursday 22 May with 12 members attending. A vote of thanks was expressed to Ron McArthur, in

his absence, for all his work in organising, preparing and efficiently presenting the whole event.

(g) Association Web site: The Secretary reported that the site was now live and that we had a good response from Members to have their companies entered. Very few Members had requested login details for the members' only section, which we will use quite a lot in the future for Council matters in particular. The Secretary requested comments on the site and possible ways to improve it.

All other matters were on the agenda for today.

- (4) FUTURE OF THE ASSOCIATION: The President reported that it had been difficult to fix a date suitable to the majority of representatives from both Associations for a meeting. NASPM had suggested the 10 September within the last few days. Not to delay any longer the President had already instructed the Secretary to confirm that date. This was acceptable to the members concerned who were present. To keep down costs D. Harley offered the use of the meeting room at Blairfield Farm. The President accepted the offer with thanks and instructed the Secretary to inform NASPM. As agreed at the last meeting the Secretary had written to all SPTA members who were known to also be members of NASPM as per what was agreed at the meeting. Only one had replied so far and the rest were to be reminded before the meeting on 10 September. Council confirmed they supported the intention to progress the move to a single body provided SPTA Members did not forfeit more than they gained in attaining it especially past success and working relationships with other bodies.
- (5) END OF SEASON EXPORTERS' MEETING: The report on the meeting of 3 June 2003 was not as yet to hand. The President gave a brief resume of some of the main items raised but would leave the full report until the minute was received. One of the main subjects raised was the PCN testing of consignments for Morocco. During the 2001 crop season all tests passed and in 2002 98.9% passed. This was a cost to the industry and SEERAD/SASA were discussing the problem with the Moroccans in anticipation of a compromise. A nil tolerance for powdery scab also caused concern and it was suggested that the Moroccans be invited as an inward mission. Face to face contact usually made problems easier to deal with. Other items would be left until the report on the meeting was received but the President felt that if SPTA spoke as one voice at the meeting it would lead to the Association having greater influence, which led on to the next item.
- (6) EXPORTERS' SUB-COMMITTEE: Most items raised at the above meeting are instigated by SPTA Members. The President felt that if these had been discussed at an Exporters' Sub-Committee meeting a united case could be put forward instead of a few individual member companies doing it on their own. As a number of Council Members representing exporters were absent, it was decided to leave a full discussion on the subject to the next meeting. The Secretary was instructed to include the item on the next agenda.
- (7) TRADE'S VOLUNTARY IMPORT BAN: The President's Sub-Committee had met in the morning to discuss the current situation in relation to the import of seed potatoes into Scotland and a report was given by the President. It appeared that things had moved on since the Trade's Voluntary Ban was introduced in 1997. It appeared that more than one company had imported seed into Scotland contrary to the voluntary ban and as a result would the Association's policy have to change? Under EC and SEERAD regulations these imports are legal but Council were still concerned that in spite of all the testing the risk continued to exist that quarantine disease could escape being detected by the tests and the

industry would be destroyed. After a lengthy debate it was decided to take up the suggestion of the President's Sub-Committee to conduct a survey, first of Council Members and then of the full membership. This survey should enable us to put in place procedures, which truly reflect the industries position. The Secretary was instructed to prepare and conduct the survey when approved by the President and Vice-President.

- (8/9) BRITISH POTATO COUNCIL: The Secretary had issued the minute of the meeting of the British Potato Council of the 2 June 2003 with the agenda and there had been another meeting on 4 August. The report on this meeting was not to hand but D. J. Harley said he would give a brief report on the two meetings together. He said that the BPC Corporate Business Plan had been approved. At the heart of the document were two strategy maps, which had been approved at the previous Council meeting, and which highlighted the two critical success factors identified for the Industry: competitiveness and increased usage of GB potatoes. The action plans which, formed part of the document flowed from these. The overarching factor was understanding the industry and the business environment in which it operated. Each action sheet in the Business Plan identified the director or manager who would be accountable for executing the activities, and it showed a breakdown of the budget allowed for these. So, in future, agreed activities would drive expenditure, whereas, in the past, the total budget had been split between functions in a 'top-down' fashion. On Statistics issues Mr Harley said that the first published plantings estimate, which was based on a 66% return of actual plantings, showed a reduction of 13.4% compared to 2002. Mr Gagen told the meeting that, in view of this substantial change, particular care had been taken to substantiate the figures before these were published; that was done by additional sampling within size groups. Only when staff were confident in the robustness of the information was this made public. The BPC had decided to go ahead with crop check weighing. Mr Gagen updated the Council on a number of improvements to the crop check weigh programme (yield testing), which was part of the BPC's system of establishing the size of the total potato crop. Introducing an improved sampling method, known as incremental sampling, had facilitated an earlier start to the project. A suggestion on gathering information by surveying producers rather than the current follow-up survey of field leavings was made. This led on to discussions on the BPC Growers Panel. An alternative prototype originally put forward by Mr Harley, had been developed and Mr Gagen presented this to the meeting. The concept was that a number of selected producers would each propose one field for participation in the programme, and data relating to those chosen fields would then be sent to the BPC. Mr Gagen and his colleagues had created a number of screens, so as to be able to show the Council the range of data, which could be sought, and the array of topics, which could be included in such a project. Mr Harley's concept had fewer collection points than the BPC's but included a full field history. A significant potential advantage would be that the latter might encompass crop check weigh information. A report on seed issues was given to the BPC Council by D. Harley and in his report on this Mr Harley included the next item (Item (9)) on our agenda. He said concerns had been raised over Rail Track's apparent practice of running a train, which allegedly sprayed glyphosate indiscriminately, with some drift effect on seed potato crops. A letter would be sent on behalf of the SSG asking for an explanation of the company's policy in this matter. On the long distance movement of farm saved seed a joint response had been received from DEFRA and SEERAD. The joint paper covered the main issues related to

contract growing, including the legal position, a risk assessment and a number of options identified for further consideration. This included the possibility of plant passports for the movement of FSS, which was an area where Directive 2000/29 was not being fully implemented at present. With regard to contract growing/long distance movement of FSS C Greenslade considered that it was important to educate growers on a regular basis concerning the heightened risk of transferring quarantine diseases such as brown rot, ring rot and PCN and also the questionable economic basis for adopting this practice. Ian Dykes would be preparing a response to the paper on behalf of SSG. The SSG was updated on monitoring and eradication work related to Brown Rot and a report given on Ring Rot. The BPC campaign for education on Brown Rot and Ring Rot would begin this summer. They would also investigate the feasibility and potential cost of an insurance scheme against ring/brown rot. A report from the Marketing Committee had been received. They were still looking for marketing people from industry to sit on the Committee. The Committee had received an update on the preparations for the Convenience Campaign, under the slogan 'Potatoes Everyday/Anyway', which would run from September to October 2003. All major supermarkets were committed to take part. The Committee had been pleased to note the success of the BPC health campaign - 'Fab not Fad'. The Chief Executive pointed out that the widespread recognition of the slogan, and the increase of awareness of health messages (up from 8% at the start of the campaign to 21% midway through the project) was excellent. Specifications had been drawn up for a proposed British Quality Chip Charter (BQCC) for fish friers. This would now be demonstrated to, and discussed with, a number of industry players as part of the project prior to a full launch in November. Before concluding Mr Harley said he had just been notified that Bill Rennie at SASA was retiring after 40 years service on 5 September. Council acknowledged the good working relationship which had existed between SPTA and Bill Rennie and the Secretary was instructed to write a suitable letter to him expressing the Association's thanks and best wishes for the future.

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

Letter from the Scottish Executive headed:

(a) "End of Season Exporters' Meeting on 3 June 2003 - Agenda".

Letter from SASA headed

(a) "Area Entered for Inspection for Classification in 2003".

Letters from British Potato Council.

(a) "Minute of the Seed Sectoral Group Meeting of 29 May 2003".

(b) "Minute of British Potato Council Meeting of 2 June 2003".

(c) "eyewitness" (April/May 2003 Edition).

(d) "FabnotFad" (Sample of campaign material).

(e) "Programme of Summer Workshops and Crop Walks".

(f) "Invitation to Potatoes in Practice".

(g) "Potato Newsletter" (June Edition).

Letters from Food Standards Agency.

(a) "Food Standard Agency Open board Meeting - Invitation".

- (b) "Food Standards Agency – News". (May Edition)
- (c) "Update on Acrylamide".
- (d) "EC Developments on Animal Feed".
- (e) "The Fish Labelling (Scotland) Regulations 2003".
- (f) "European Food Safety Authority Advisory Forum Paper" – On Acrylamide.
- (g) "Food Standards Agency – News". (June Edition)
- (h) "Food Standards Agency – Business Plan 2003-2004".
- (i) "The Food Labelling (Scotland) Regulations 2002".
- (j) "Food Standard Agency Open board Meeting - Invitation".
- (k) "EC Working Group Meeting 2-3 June: Chemical Contaminants".
- (l) "Consultation on Food Labelling – Caffeine and Quinine".
- (m) "Food Standards Agency – News". (July Edition)
- (n) "Mycotoxins – EC Permitted Levels".
- (o) "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Nutrition and health claims made on Foods COM(2003) 424 Final : 2003/0165(COD)".
- (p) "Update of the Scientific Unit Database".
- (q) "Update on Contaminants Issues".

Letter from Pearson Insurance Consultants

- (a) "Renewal of Trophy Insurance".

Letter from Dewars Centre

- (a) "Allocation of Ice for 2003 Season".

Letter from Gerrard Limited

- (a) "Yearly Report on SPTA Investments".

Letter from Higgins Group

- (a) "Copy of their Contractual Terms".

Letter from the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants

- (a) "Response to SPTA Letter of 2 May 2003 Suggesting a Meeting of JPTC".
- (b) "Further Response Suggesting 10 September 2003 as Date of JPTC Meeting".(by email).

Letter from Agrico UK Ltd

- (a) "Response to SPTA Letter of 20 June 2003".

Letter from J. I. McC. & A. M. Salvesen

- (a) "Letter of Resignation from Membership as Ceased Trading".

Letter from Glen Produce

- (a) "Letter of Resignation from Membership".

Letter from Saltire Seed Ltd

- (a) "Application for Membership – Proposed by Wm Fraser Potato Merchants & Growers and Seconded by Agrolon Ltd.".

11) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was confirmed that the next meeting of Council would be held on Thursday 16 October 2003 in Perth.

(12) ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Annual Council Elections: The Chairman intimated that the following Council members will retire by rotation in accordance with the Association's Constitution and Rules on 31 October 2003:- A. M. Beattie, D. J. Harley, J. Macfarlane, J. R. McArthur, J. L. Milne, A. B. Pullar, R. Haynes and P. Peebles. The Secretary was instructed to make the usual arrangements for Council Elections to fill these eight vacancies. In addition there would be one further vacancy due to the resignation of K. A. McKenzie during the year.

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


16.10.03