

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION held in the ICE RINK,
GLOVER STREET, PERTH at 2.30 p.m. on
Thursday, 29 January, 2004.

PRESENT: Messrs. R. J. S. Doig, D. J. Harley, R. Haynes, H. Hughes, A. D. Lamont, V. Lumb, J. Macfarlane, J. R. McArthur, A. B. Pullar, N. Pullar, A. J. B. Redpath and D. Y. Stewart along with H. B. Edmond, the Secretary.

Mr V. Lumb, President occupied the Chair and welcomed those present at the meeting. Mr J. Grant who had been present at the Annual General Meeting accepted an invitation from the Chairman to remain for the meeting of Council. He also gave a special welcome to Mr Neil Pullar who was at his first meeting since being elected to Council.

- (1) APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of T. Halliwell, C. J. Herron, R. McKay, A. Melrose, J. L. Milne and P. Peebles.
- (2) MINUTES: The Minute of the Meeting of Council of 20 November 2003 was taken as read approved and signed by the Chairman.
- (3) MATTERS ARISING:
 - (a) Entertainment Matters: Arising from Item (3)(a) The Annual Dinner and Dance held on Friday 5 December 2003 was considered a success although with only 73 attending the future of the event had to be considered. A. B. Pullar, the Entertainments Convenor, requested suggestions on improvements to encourage more to attend. There was none other than a change of dance band to give a mixture of Scottish and modern was to be investigated. After a wide discussion it was agreed that the Association should retain the event at the Huntingtower Hotel on the same Friday in December. It was pointed out to the Membership that if attendance did not return to about 100 the next event would probable be the Association's last Dinner and Dance. Due to reduced numbers this year's event showed a deficit of £157.00. The raffle had realised £230.00 after the prizes had been paid. The President had decided that this should go to the charity, the Royal Highland Agricultural Education Trust and this had already been paid over. A. B. Pullar also announced that the first Thursday in June was not available for the Annual Golf Outing and asked for suggestions for alternative dates. As it did not have to be a Thursday it was agreed that Tuesday 1 June should be reserved. Members were reminded that the second round of the Association's curling competition was booked for Perth on Friday 19 March 2004 at 3.00 p.m.
 - (b) British Potato Trade Association: Item (3)(c) The President said that it was the intention to hold another meeting with NASPM representatives but this could not take place until an outline Business Plan and Budget had been put together. Pressure of work had not allowed this to happen but he anticipated action within the next few weeks.
 - (c) Tolerance Levels for Common Scab: Arising from Item (10) The Secretary reported that he had received a letter from SEERAD granting derogation for common scab with certain conditions following the request made after the last Council meeting. A. B. Pullar expressed concern that the derogation may have a detrimental effect on the trade for certain varieties where there was no

real shortage. With hindsight it was agreed that the request should probably have been variety specific.

- (4) ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS: The Secretary confirmed that the Association Accounts for the year to 31 October 2003 had been approved earlier in the day at the Annual General Meeting of Members of the Association.
- (5) 2003/2004 ASSOCIATION SUBSCRIPTIONS: Council noted that its recommendation with regard to the level of subscriptions for the year to 31 October 2004 had been approved at the Annual General Meeting of Members. The Secretary was instructed to proceed with arrangements to ingather the subscriptions from Members for the current year.
- (6) SPTA/NFUS SAFE HAVEN CAMPAIGN: The Secretary reported that there had been over 300 supportive responses to the letter sent out and all the names had been listed on the web site. Some Council members had not replied and these were to be contacted, as were other members of the Association. Additional comments made on some of the forms returned were considered and would be taken into account in further action. It was agreed that members who brought English seed into the high-grade seed area could not be included as supporters of the campaign as it was considered that the risk was too great. It was commented that experience had shown that Ring Rot often did not always express signs of the disease in its first year of planting, the disease being carried on the seed to subsequent generations before being expressed. A long discussion on the subject took place. It was suggested that the risk from the use of human consumption potatoes from out with the area should also be considered but as Ring Rot was mainly seed borne and could not survive in water the risk although there was much lower. In virtually all cases tested so far spread had been in the seed potatoes or from contact with agricultural machinery. A discussion on what should be done next took place and it was agreed that the campaign message should be renewed on a regular basis and NFU members were to be asked to look at the list and make sure their members were supporting the campaign. There was then a lively debate on whether there should be a compensation scheme for growers affected by the disease. Strong feelings for and against were expressed and there was no consensus reached.
- (7) BRITISH POTATO COUNCIL: The Secretary had circulated a copy of the Minute of the meeting of the British Potato Council held on 2 December 2003. Mr Harley indicated that there was nothing too contentious discussed at the meeting and all matters were fully reported in the minute. It was noted that a vote was taken on the question of whether a planting intentions survey should be carried out in respect of the 2004 plantings season. There was an overwhelming majority in favour of not to do so.
- (8) SEED SECTORAL GROUP: The Secretary had circulated a copy of the minute of the meeting of the Seed Sectoral Group held on 12 November 2003. Mr A. Redpath gave a brief resume of the main points raised. He said that discussions continued on the subject of farm saved seed and long distance movement of farm saved seed. There continued to be difficulties in estimating the extent of these problems and the SSG awaited responses from other organisations. The group was updated on the Brown Rot and Ring Rot situation. Details of the Ring Rot Awareness Campaign was given and this would be sent out to all levy payers and interested parties. It was reported that exports were up and Mr Dykes gave a report on Inward Missions from Brazil and Indonesia. The Seed Industry Event was attended by almost 200 delegates and regarded as a success. A report on the event was included with the minute.

- (9) BRITISH POTATO COUNCIL PROPOSALS FOR LEVY RATES IN 2004/2005: The Secretary had issued SEERAD's consultation paper on the subject with the agenda. The BPC proposed the same two-tier system of levies as in the current year for both area and tonnage. For payment by the due date they proposed a basic levy of £39 per hectare on planted area and for payment received after the due date a higher levy of £44 per hectare. The basic levy proposed for purchasers is 17p per tonne received by the due date and 19p per tonne for payment after the due date. This involved no increase on the current year. Council supported the proposals and the secretary was instructed to write to SEERAD to that effect. A continued monitoring of costs and careful budgeting was to be stressed.
- (10) SCOTTISH SEED POTATO CONSULTATIVE PANEL: The minute of the meeting of 21 November 2003 had been issued with the agenda for this meeting. The report was very full and all points were well covered but members were asked for their comments. There were proposals for changes to the Classification Scheme to bring it into harmony with EU standards. There would be a discussion paper on the subject. It was proposed that VTSC1 and VTSC2 would disappear and be replaced by Pre-basic3 and Pre-basic4. Mr Grant felt that the proposed reduction in the percentage inspection of Pre-basic crops was a retrograde step. He had spoken to Mr Greenslade to point out that this was not generally accepted as reported in the minute.
- (11) VOLUNTARY DOWNGRADING OF SEED POTATOES: The Secretary had issued SEERAD's consultation paper on the subject with the agenda. The subject had already been discussed at the last Council meeting. Options 2 and 3 were considered not acceptable, as they did not allow the industry the flexibility available in option 1. Council agreed to support option 1 and the Secretary was instructed to respond to Mr Greenslade to that effect. Once introduced reinstatement would not arise as an issue as downgrading would not take place under this option.
- (12) CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary reported that the following correspondence had been received:

Letters from the Scottish Executive headed:

- (a) "Potato Ring Rot: Information leaflet sent to all interested parties".
 - (b) "Derogation for Common Scab"
 - (c) "British Potato Council Proposals for Levy Rates in 2004/2005".
 - (d) "Potato Brown Rot: Import of Potatoes from Egypt".
- (Letter sent to Scottish processing & ware importing companies)

Letter from SASA headed

- (a) "The Scottish Seed Potato Consultative Panel".

Letters from British Potato Council.

- (a) "Minute of Seed Sectoral Group Meeting of 12 November 2003".
- (b) "BPC Retail Report". (November Issue)
- (c) "Potatoes everyday anyway". (Promotion Campaign)
- (d) "BPC Retail Report". (December Issue)
- (e) "Provisional end October and end November 2003 stocks".
- (f) "Minute of British Potato Council Meeting of 2 December 2003".
- (g) "Potato Newsletter". (December issue)

- (h) "BPC Retail Report". (January Issue)
- (i) "Seed Industry Trail".
(letter from L. Chapman announcing the continuation of exercise)
- (j) "BPC Ring Rot Campaign".
(Letter with leaflet announcing the Ring Rot awareness Campaign)

Letters from Food Standards Agency.

- (a) "Food Standards Agency Open Board Meeting - Invitation".
- (b) "Food Labelling Action Plan: Food Labelling Forum – Wednesday 21 January 2004".
- (c) "Consultation on Alternative Wording to 'May contain' Statements alerting Consumers to Possible Contamination with Peanuts, Nuts and Sesame"
- (d) "The Food Labelling Amendment (Scotland) Regulation 2003".
- (e) "Food Standards Agency News". (December/January Issue).
- (f) "Food Standards Agency Open Board Meeting - Invitation".

Letter from Weber Shandwick Worldwide

- (a) "Offering their Services for Crisis Management".

Letter from NFUScotland

- (a) "Accepting SPTA's Invitation for representative to attend Dinner & Dance".

Arising from the British Potato Council letter (i) on the Seed Industry Trail a discussion took place on the membership's experience with the project since it started. Most were of the opinion that it was not a success and should be stopped right away. Other than their normal visits from customers to see crops no new contacts had been received. They were more concerned at the possible interference to the normal and successful established trade routes currently in place. The Secretary was instructed to write to Louise Chapman to this effect reminding her of the comments made in the original letter responding to the consultation on the proposed project.

- (13) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was confirmed that the next meeting of Council would be held on Thursday 11 March 2004 in Perth.

- (14) ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- (a) Food Standards Agency Consultation on Residue Minimisation: A J. B. Redpath indicated that he had received a brief note from Dr Mike Storey on the progress of the consultation. He had concerns that the outcome might affect the use of sulphuric acid, CIPC and other very essential treatments in the potato industry. The membership had to be aware of this and make representation if appropriate. He was asked to send a copy of the notes to the Secretary in preparation for the wider consultation.

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