THE ORIGIN AND AIMS OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR POTATO RESEARCH

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Summary in Fr. & G, p. 4

THE FIRST INFORMAL CONFERENCE AT AALBORG (1951)

During the Second World War and the immediate post-war years, a number of countries in Europe initiated programmes of research directed towards improving methods of storing potatoes. Between 1946 and 1950, interchange of views, both by correspondence and at casual meetings, between individuals working in this field proved so helpful that DR. N. H. H. ADDENS and DR. W. H. DE JONG (the Netherlands), MR. T. FREDERIKSEN (Denmark) and DR. A. R. WILSON (United Kingdom) decided that an informal conference on storage problems should be held in Aalborg, Denmark, in 1951. This conference, which was organised by MR. FREDERIKSEN, was attended by workers from Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. As those who attended were unanimous in their opinion that the meeting had been of considerable value, it was decided to hold such conferences biennially, working round the participating countries in rotation.

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL INFORMAL CONFERENCE ON POTATOES AT SUTTON BONINGTON (ENG.) IN 1953

The second meeting was organised by DR. WILSON and held at Sutton Bonington, England, in 1953, under the title "Second International Informal Conference on Potatoes". As the title implies, a wider range of subjects was included in the programme than at the previous meeting. This seemed desirable because storage problems are so often complex and involve research in many different fields. Workers from the German Federal Republic were present at Sutton Bonington in addition to a number from all the countries represented at the first conference.
The third conference was organised by Dr. de Jong and held in Wageningen, the Netherlands, in 1955. This meeting was attended by over fifty workers from the five countries mentioned above. Many of those present expressed the opinion that because of the paramount importance of the crop in most parts of Europe and because of the similarity of many of the problems facing the various countries, there was a real need for even wider contact of this kind. It was pointed out that these conferences had given specialists a chance to discuss their problems with those working in other fields, against the background of the crop as a whole, a thing which was not possible at the more usual type of international gathering organised on a subject rather than a crop basis.

On 10th August, 1955, during the field excursion following the Third Conference, a meeting was held at the Hotel Amicitia, Leeuwarden, to discuss future plans. At that meeting, motions were carried,

(1) that a European Association for Potato Research, open to all countries and covering all subjects, be formed to take over and expand the functions of the Informal Conferences and,

(2) that the Association, when formed, should publish a "European Potato Journal" on the general lines of the American Potato Journal.

The main argument brought forward in support of the latter motion was that the results of a considerable proportion of the potato research carried out in Europe, particularly on the Continent, do not reach many who might be interested, partly through language difficulties and partly through their publication in a wide range of periodicals and reports, some of which are not readily available. A number of speakers stressed the usefulness of the American Potato Journal in bringing together much of the American work, especially applied research, into one publication. It was felt by many that a European journal on similar lines would be very valuable to all concerned (both scientifically and commercially) with the crop. Both proposals were strongly supported by Professor Ora Smith of Cornell University, representing the Potato Association of America, who attended the meeting, and subsequently by that Association itself at its Annual General Meeting in East Lansing, Mich. in September, 1955 (Amer. Potato J., 32 (1955) 433). Before the Leeuwarden meeting closed, an "Interim Council" was appointed to work out the detailed means of implementing the decisions made. This body consisted of Dr. B. Emilsson (Sweden), Professor Dr. O. Fischlich (German Federal Republic), Mr. F. Hansen (Denmark), Dr. W. H. de Jong (the Netherlands) and Dr. A. R. Wilson (United Kingdom).

During the next two years the difficulties surrounding the foundation and organisation of both the formal Association and the Journal were gradually resolved in correspondence between the various members of the Interim Council and at meetings held in England (1956), the Netherlands and Sweden (1957). At the last of these meetings the final draft of the Constitution was agreed.