

# REPORT OF COUNCIL

of

## THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION

for the year to 31 October 1999

to

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

held in the Ice Rink, Perth  
on Thursday 27 January 2000

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During the year under review seven meetings of Council of the Association were held and a Report on each of these meetings was issued to the Members of the Association.

The Membership of the Association as at 31 October 1999 was seventy-four which represents a net loss of seven Members, either as a result of ceased trading or amalgamation of businesses and one resignation. As in previous years Council again invites Members to suggest to the Association Secretary or to a Member of Council the names of Companies or people involved in the Scottish Potato Trade who they consider might be interested in taking out Association Membership.

Council continued to work on behalf of Ware Growers and Merchants as well as for those involved in seed. Early in 1999 the Association submitted one of two requests received by the Scottish Executive for derogation to allow the planting of potatoes two years away from classification for ware production. Council subsequently withdrew this in the light of statistics provided by the British Potato Council. A Committee was next set up in March to look at ware growers concerns in general. Following discussions in Committee and with staff at the Scottish Agricultural Science Agency a request was put to the Scottish Executive to alter the Plant Health Regulations to allow controlled use of home saved seed for up to two years

from classification. The Scottish Executive has not as yet made a final decision on the request.

During the year under review representatives of your Association attended meetings with The Scottish Executive with particular regard to Potato Brown Rot/Ring Rot, Small Ware and the Classification Scheme for Seed Potatoes. Your Association also responded to government consultation on various subjects relative to the potato industry including the Review of the British Potato Council. Association representatives attended meetings with the National Farmers' Union of Scotland, the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants and other Trade Bodies. It was also represented at meetings of the British Potato Council and also the Seed Sectoral Group of the BPC. Council records its appreciation of the work undertaken by the Association's representatives on the BPC. During the year, following consultation and discussion between NASPM and SPTA, there was a move towards greater co-operation between the two Associations. On the 22 April 1999 The Joint Potato Trade Council (JPTC) was established. It was felt that this joint body would have greater influencing power. It would be a single point of contact for all the trade, having a united strong and influencing voice on issues affecting the trade. The JPTC has met three times since formation and has discussed issues such as amendments to the seed potato classification

schemes, ware growers' concerns, brown rot/ring rot, chemical treatment of seed potatoes, trade insurance and weights and measures issues.

David Hunter retired at the end of January 1999 after being Secretary with the Association and its predecessors for the last forty odd years. Appreciation of his dedicated service was recorded in the minutes of Council. Mr. Hugh B. Edmond succeeded him as Association Secretary and Treasurer on 1 February 1999.

An Arbitration Training Seminar was held in York in June 1999 when six members of the Association attended together with the Secretary. It was agreed the exercise was very worthwhile and should be repeated on a regular basis. Council believes that these Training Seminars are of value to existing Arbiters, prospective Arbiters and even more importantly to Trade Members who find themselves involved in Arbitrations as one of the disputing parties.

On 24 November 1999 Potato Industry bodies met at NFU(S) Headquarters in

Edinburgh to discuss the threat to the Scottish seed potato industry from Brown Rot and Ring Rot. It was agreed that a campaign should be mounted to publicise this threat and encourage growers in Scotland to plant only seed produced in Scotland. The NFU(S) issued a Press Release backed by SPTA and the VTSC Growers' Association. The SPTA subsequently issued their own Press Release.

As reported in last year's Report Plant Variety Legislation provides for Royalties to be charged on Home Saved Seed. At that time discussions were taking place between the Farmers' Unions and the British Society of Plant Breeders regarding the level of Royalty to be applied in respect of Home Saved Seed Potatoes. These negotiations are still in progress.

As in previous years, the Association organised a Dinner and Dance, Golf Outing and Curling Matches. These social occasions continued to be well supported and enjoyed by all participants.