

REPORT OF COUNCIL

of

THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION

for the year to 31 October 2000

to

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

held in the Ice Rink, Perth
on Thursday 25 January 2001

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 2000 was sixty-eight which represents a net loss of six Members, either as a result of ceased trading, amalgamation of businesses or resignation. As in previous years Council again encourages 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. The Association's Constitution and Rules were amended at the Annual General Meeting in January 2000 to allow a wider scope for applicants. Membership is now open to any person, company or partnership firm engaged in selling or processing potatoes originating in Scotland.

Council continued to work on behalf of Ware Growers and Merchants as well as for those involved in seed. During the year the Membership was asked how the Association could best represent ware members interests now and in the future. Although responses were disappointing your Council acted on the points submitted. To obtain a better balance of ware representation to seed on Council and to assist in the debate and progress with

items of concern to the ware sector, it was agreed to co-opt to Council two members with ware interests. Council continued to pursue their proposals to allow ware growers to plant twice saved seed and the planting of seed and ware on the same holding. No final decisions have been made by SERAD on these but it was felt that there was beginning to be some progress especially on the second proposal.

During the year under review representatives of your Association attended meetings with The Scottish Executive with particular regard to Potato Brown Rot/Ring Rot and the Seed Potatoes Regulation. Your Association also responded to government consultation on various subjects relative to the potato industry including the Review of the British Potato Council. Council supported the continuation of the BPC for a further five-year term with qualifications. They felt the review was too early in the life of the BPC, that a greater proportion of the budget should be targeted towards marketing and a closer watch should be kept over costs. The Minister granted the BPC a further term and D. Y. Stewart continued as an appointee from our Association. D. J. Harley, A. J. B. Redpath and R. J. S. Doig were subsequently appointed to the Seed Sectoral Group of the BPC. Council records its appreciation of the work undertaken by the Association's representatives on the BPC and the SSG.

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 VTSC Growers' Association. The SPTA subsequently issued their own Press Release. When the Brown Rot organism was discovered in a watercourse in Perthshire an emergency meeting was called with the Scottish Executive and action taken to minimise the damage to the industry. A Press Release was issued stressing that Scottish seed potatoes continued free from Brown Rot. A voluntary and successful seed testing system was set up with the co-operation of SERAD to test all stocks intended for export. It was felt the operation had worked well.

Council also responded to the Scottish Executive on the consultation on the Seed Potatoes (Scotland) Regulation 2000. This subsequently came into operation on 7 July 2000 although Regulation 6 only becomes applicable on 1 April 2001. This regulation

included the long sought after definitions for seed potatoes and for marketing.

Council was also consulted and became involved in the BPC's 'Recommendations for Industry Improvement'. A working Party was set up following industry bodies responses and I am pleased to report that A. M. Beattie represents our Association on that committee.

Association representatives attended meetings with the National Farmers' Union of Scotland and the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants.

The Joint Potato Trade Council (JPTC) met once during the year on 8 December 1999 when subjects of mutual interest including the Seed Potatoes Regulations and Trade Insurance. Due to the lack of interest the pursuit of Trade Insurance was dropped.

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.