

Chairman's Report tabled by Desmond Hyman as Chairman of Potato Certification Service for the year 2008/9

I am happy to report that Potato Certification Service (PCS) has once again performed admirably under the guidance of the CEO, Mrs Sanette Thiart. The company was faced with many challenges the past year (budgetary and employee), but these caused few hiccups in the system as well as sleepless nights. Some of the challenges faced were the resignation of key personnel and the juggling of staff to fill vacant posts and to keep offering the services that we do. The vacant posts were advertised and trainee staff were employed and brought up to speed by existing staff members. I can commend all our personnel for the fine effort that they put into PCS this past year.

I take this opportunity to point out that the retirement of Chris Du Toit in January 2009, with his wealth of experience, was expected by some to create a vacuum in the management of PCS. Once again I must commend our CEO on her appointment of Mr Frank Osler to the position of technical manager of PCS. This appointment has ensured the continuity and smooth running of certification officials in the regions. Another important aspect of the appointment was the analytical review of the scheme and protocol which resulted in some major technical changes to language and semantics. This review being necessary as the interpretation of the scheme could have been called into question.

I want to assure you, the seed growers of South Africa and clients of PCS that we will always endeavour to provide you with a quality of service that will be comparable and better than that offered in the past.

I thank Dr Keetch for his continued commitment to the potato seed industry and for his neutral handling of very sensitive issues. You are an asset to the potato industry and I value your inputs and advice.

I now arrive at the end of my report. I have to thank the directors of PCS, the ones who voted me into the chair, who placed their trust in me to lead this company during my first term in office and then again who placed their trust and confidence in me to oversee the appointment of the CEO and Technical Manager with the retirement of Dr Pierre Nortjé and Mr Chris Du Toit in the space of 15 months.

I have really enjoyed the challenge and enjoy serving the seed potato industry in the capacity of Chairman of PCS.

I wish all our clients, the Potato Seed Growers of South Africa, a long, independent and sustainable future.

Desmond Hyman