

## Chairman's Report 2012

A continuous growth in the quantity of **mini tubers** certified has been experienced the past 10 years. The number of mini tubers certified in the past year from July 2010 to June 2011 exceeded the 10 million mark for the first time with 10 199 607 mini tubers certified compared to the 8 188 433 of the previous year. The base of clean material as point of departure for certified seed is therefore becoming broader and this is also reflected in the increased number of Generation 1 to Generation 3 seed certified the past decade.

Nine mini tuber production facilities are at present registered with the Independent Certification Council for Seed Potatoes. They are Rascal Seed Research Laboratories, Potato Seed Production, Advanced Potato Propagation, Ceres Aartappels, Wes-Kaap Aartappelsaad, Super Spud Seed Potatoes, Potato Producers International, Maluti Mini tubers and Griekwaland Wes Co-op. These facilities either produce their own *in vitro* plantlets or obtain them from the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) or Ansabi Mass.

The ARC as well as Rascal Seed Research Laboratories are registered with Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as quarantine facilities. The ARC is the only tissue culture facility in the potato industry that is authorised as an establishment facility. No other facility is authorised to establish potato material in tissue culture. The tissue culture facilities can either be authorised as single or multi-crop facilities and can do multiplication and or maintenance of accessions.

It is with great concern that I have to report that we have had incidences of mini tubers that had to be rejected due to the occurrence of *Pectobacterium* in five greenhouse facilities. This is viewed in a very serious light and currently receives the necessary attention of researchers. We trust that this problem will be addressed and that the causes of the infections will be determined in order for it not to happen again.

If one looks at the number of new varieties that are currently in the trial phase, it is clear that the quest, for high yielding varieties with disease resistance which is suitable for our conditions, is still high on the priority list.

The production of disease free mother material is of the utmost importance for the South African Seed Potato Certification Scheme and we wish everyone in this very competitive industry only the best with the challenges you face every day.