



## Chairperson's Report



**Desmond Hyman**  
Chairperson



In the days of the temple and at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, the people would gather at the temple mount to observe the smoke offering direction caused by the wind. If the wind blew from the north, it meant late rains and farmers would be able to sell their crops for higher prices. If the wind blew from the east it meant early rains and lower prices for farmers.

If the wind blew from the west it would create evenness. Good rains, good crops, enough food, average prices and benefits for all. But if the wind blew from the south, it was a drought year and the farmers as well as the people would suffer.

You now ask yourselves how the above biblical story has anything to do with my report on the seed potato industry.

I will try and explain. The winds of change are blowing through the South African economy and I fear that we as seed growers and farmers may not be immune to the nationalism, uprisings, community unrest and economic strife that is sweeping through our land. Just in a few short weeks our currency has devalued dramatically, people were killed, assets destroyed, our moral fibre under attack. As Alan Paton's title fully describes it "Cry the beloved country".

We do not have the luxury of having a recipe that determines our economy as in biblical times.

The seed industry has maintained an even keel over the past five years.

- 1) The number of registered seed growers has remained stable.
- 2) The number of hectares planted is stable at 10 000 hectares.
- 3) The quantity of seed bags, certified, rejected, sold and exported, has been stable and consistent.
- 4) The quantity of G0-, G1- and G2-seed potatoes produced has shown growth.
- 5) The price of seed has lagged inflation putting growers under pressure.
- 6) We have had some quality problems, but this has been limited to certain regions and has been addressed accordingly by Potato Certification Service and the farmers concerned.
- 7) Within each major seed growing region, seed growers meet at least once a year to discuss various related matters.

- i. Here they will make recommendations for discussion points by the Seed Growers' Forum.
- ii. They elect a chairman from those amongst them, who then serves as a Director on Potato Certification Service's Board.
- iii. As a Board member he has to deal with the funding of PCS, registration fees, personnel issues, asset replacement, debtors, creditors, the law as it affects directors, banking, budgets, the companies act, and audit reports and to network with other seed growing regions and with his fellow directors. He gets to meet certification personnel from the other regions.

My point is that directors don't just show up in Pretoria because it's fun. They have a constituency to look after and hard work is done by all.

At our meetings held in June 2012, we were asked to fill in a survey on various aspects of our duties as a director. I personally scored well in some areas, but could also improve in other areas. Where I achieved a score of less than 70% from my peers, I hope to be able to improve my scorecard in the future. All the directors were subjected to the same evaluation and I may point out that their scores were as varied as my own. We all have our strong points and will work on improving our understanding of our function as Directors. This just illustrates that the directors have to meet minimum performance standards.

Potato Certification Service is an evolving, well managed, well run Non Profit Company (NPC).

From the above we can deduce that a good wind has been blowing for the seed growers and for their customers, the commercial table growers.

Within our industry, we have with hard work, due diligence and the necessary forums, laboratories and structures, been able to adapt and work within the wind that currently blows in our favour. We have achieved much during the past reporting year.

I take this opportunity to thank all our seed growers, their families and staff who all contribute to the success that we have enjoyed in the seed potato industry.

Desmond Hyman  
Chairperson