



Monday 8th August 2005

Whisky Code sends out clear message on responsible marketing

Whisky producers have underlined their strong commitment to promoting responsible enjoyment of their brands with the launch today of strict new industry rules on the marketing and promotion of Scotch Whisky in the UK.

Covering all commercial communications, including advertising, promotional materials, sponsorship, websites, and text messaging, The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) Code of Practice for the responsible marketing and promotion of Scotch Whisky will directly apply to all brand activities in the UK. The Code also has international reach setting out best practice for Scotch Whisky producers in export markets, where stricter national codes do not exist.

Backed by an Independent Complaints Panel, and with the power to impose sanctions on distillers if the rules are breached, the Code represents the toughest self-regulation by a specific alcoholic drinks sector anywhere in the world.

Launching the Code, Gavin Hewitt, SWA Chief Executive, said:

“Scotch Whisky is a drink to be sipped and savoured; to be enjoyed responsibly. By adopting this strict Code of Practice, underpinned by an independent complaints process and sanctions, SWA members are committed to ensuring their brands are marketed and promoted responsibly at home and overseas.

“Distillers take their responsibilities seriously and already adhere to the various rules that apply, including the Ofcom Code in the UK. But we think more can be done and,



with nine out of every ten bottles of Scotch Whisky sold overseas, the Code also sets out industry best practice internationally. We are determined that the highest standards of responsible marketing will be maintained wherever Scotch Whisky is sold.”

Possible breaches of the Code’s provisions will be considered as necessary by an Independent Complaints Panel, which has the power to impose a range of sanctions on companies who breach the Code.

Jack Law, Chief Executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, has been appointed Chairman of the Code’s Independent Complaints Panel. Mr Law commented:

“All stakeholders must work to change attitudes to irresponsible alcohol consumption. The new SWA Code demonstrates the Scotch Whisky industry’s clear commitment to playing its part to the full and the Independent Complaints Panel will be watching closely to ensure the rules are followed, in scope and spirit as well as by the letter.”

- END -

Notes to Editors:

The SWA Code of Practice is available at: www.scotch-whisky.org.uk. Consumers with questions regarding the Code or who wish to register a complaint about a particular Scotch Whisky’s marketing, should contact the SWA at: complaints@swa.org.uk.

Members of the Independent Complaints Panel are:

Jack Law, Chief Executive, Alcohol Focus Scotland
Candace Currie, Director, Child & Adolescent Health Research Unit, University of Edinburgh
Gordon Millar, ex-Chief Executive, Scottish Beer & Pub Association

The SWA Code builds on a range of existing whisky company initiatives - including internal company marketing codes, unit labelling and responsibility messages on labels and in adverts - to encourage sensible drinking choices.

Issued by David Williamson

0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151