



21<sup>st</sup> April 2005

## MSPs toast whisky's support for rural economy

MSPs gave their support today to Scotch Whisky distillers' long-term and valuable commitment to the rural economy, and in particular their continuing efforts to buy Scottish cereals whenever possible.

With distillers sourcing over 90% of industry barley requirements from Scotland, both The Scottish Executive and MSPs recognised distillers' ongoing support for local cereal growers, despite there never having been a requirement to use Scottish cereals when producing Scotch Whisky.

Supporting Scotch Whisky's future sustainability and competitiveness, as well as the many jobs across the rural economy which rely on it, MSPs agreed during today's Scottish Parliament debate that distillers must continue to have the flexibility to source enough raw materials of the right quality from elsewhere when required.

Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of The Scotch Whisky Association, said:

"Scotch Whisky distillers spend £700m a year with Scottish suppliers of goods and services, including cereals. We warmly welcome The Scottish Parliament's recognition of the industry's strong and continuing commitment to rural Scotland.

"It was particularly encouraging to see clear Scottish Executive and MSP support for our efforts to use Scottish cereals where possible, plus a recognition that to continue to compete internationally and protect jobs across the whisky supply chain distillers must have flexibility to source enough raw materials of the right quality if, regrettably, the harvest in any one year is lean."

- END -

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