**Scottish Agronomy**

**New chair appointment**

**Press release**

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**Fife farmer appointed new chair of Scotland’s agronomy co-operative**

Scottish Agronomy has appointed Jim Mason of Denbrae Farm in North-East Fife as Chair of its 12-strong board. The farmer cooperative, which offers independent agronomy advice based on over 20,000 cutting edge trials plots, has more than 250 members from arable and potato enterprises across Scotland, as well as industry associates.

Following three years as Vice Chair, Mr Mason takes over from Thomas Pate of South Powrie Farm, near Dundee. Growing cereals, potatoes, onions and broccoli across owned, rented and contracted land in Fife, he brings with him 15 years of board experience with East of Scotland Growers (EOSG), four years as Chair.

“I joined Scottish Agronomy in 1989, soon after it was established, because I wanted to access independent advice that had my best interests at heart,” he says. “The same guiding principles remain core to the cooperative today, and I am looking forward to working with the board, staff and executive team at Scottish Agronomy to take the cooperative into the next era, navigating the challenges and maximising the opportunities.”

The industry is facing a rising wave of change, instigated by Brexit, withdrawal of more agrochemical products and a Government agenda that is pushing at once for farmers to produce more food for less and be aligned with its environment agenda, but, he says, this is not all negative.

“It will test us and there is risk but there’s also opportunity. It’s an exciting time for members and the cooperative. Our role on the board is to look further ahead to allow management to run the business. We are constantly adapting to deliver an agronomy service that gives our members and staff stability and security to make decisions, keep motivated and always pointing to business improvement.”

Mr Mason says he’s proud to be chairing an organisation that has been integral to his own farming enterprise for over 30 years:

“I know from my years as a member the value of being part of the membership, both the savings I’ve made through recommendations untethered by sales targets, and what I’ve learned and continue to learn from others in my agronomy group. It constantly challenges you to think. Learning from the experience of the agronomists and other farming members is priceless.”