

From: [Redacted text] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Sent: 07 February 2018 16:18
To: [Redacted text]; Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Cc: [Redacted text]
Subject: RE: For clearance - LFASS 1st person piece - COP

[Redacted text]

Mr Ewing is content with the addition in red.

Thanks

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
2N.11 St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG
[Redacted text] Email: CabSecRec@gov.scot

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From: [Redacted text]
Sent: 07 February 2018 09:49
To: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Cc: [Redacted text]
Subject: For clearance - LFASS 1st person piece - COP

[Redacted text],

And another LFASS one. As you are aware, we sometimes provide a quarterly column to Farmers Scotland Magazine in the name of the Cab Sec and figure the LFASS announcement is a good fit for this quarter. [Redacted text] and officials are content with the below

Grateful if we could get clearance by COP, if possible.

[Redacted text]

Rural Affairs Secretary Fergus Ewing said:

I understand how important Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS) payments are our farmers and crofters in our most remote and marginalised areas. Some 80% of Scotland's farmland is classified as 'less favoured' incorporating more than 11,000 farmers and crofters from Shetland to Stranraer. **I ensured that LFASS is being paid in full at 100%, not 80%, as proposed.**

That is why I am establishing a loan scheme for 2017 LFASS payments. I said last year that I would consider this if I judged it to be the best way to provide financial certainty and security for hill and upland farmers and crofters. The scheme will inject up to £55 million into some of our most remote and rural communities, safeguarding jobs and local agricultural businesses.

Eligible farmers and crofters will be offered a loan of up to 90% of their LFASS entitlement, with the first batch of offer letters to be sent from the end of February. Offers will continue to be issued as claim eligibility is confirmed, with initial payments beginning in April. If you are concerned about not receiving an offer, please contact your local RPID Area Office.

In offering this loan, I want to reassure eligible farmers that no interest will be charged on the offer.

I also want to be clear that this offer does not take away funding from the NHS or any other public service. It is the individual farmer and crofters money, they deserve it, and they should have it.

While we are making good progress in our handling of LFASS 2017 scheme payments, and are on track to commence payments earlier than we have done in previous years, I am determined to offer as much certainty as I can right now. I would therefore encourage all eligible hill farmers and crofters to strongly consider taking up this offer.

Word count - 293

[Redacted text]

Scottish Government, St Andrew's House

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]