

The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

26 March 2018

Dear Ms Cunningham and Mr Ewing,

**NGOs, farmers, and rural groups call on the Scottish Government to drive a Just Transition
towards carbon-neutral farming**

Ahead of Scotland's 10-year anniversary of its landmark 2009 Climate Act, the Scottish Government will bring forward an even more ambitious proposal aligning our domestic targets with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. To achieve this and targets in the new Bill, all economic sectors have a responsibility to transition to low carbon practices.

As farmers, crofters, land managers, rural groups and NGOs, we acknowledge our joint responsibility to fight climate change and call on the Scottish Government to use the new Climate Bill to drive a just transition to a **carbon-neutral¹, resilient farming sector by 2050 at the latest**.

Whilst our farming sector is currently contributing 22.5% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions, farmers, crofters and landowners are also contributing to carbon sequestration and storage, and efficiency measures are already leading to carbon savings. Farming, therefore, has the potential to bring its net greenhouse gas emissions down to zero and become the first carbon-neutral farming sector in the world, while reaping substantial economic benefits. As the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity has stated, "reducing emissions and improving soil and water quality undoubtedly helps our climate change ambitions, but will also benefit farmers' bank balances by reducing waste and improving market returns". Carbon-neutral farming systems deliver a range of public benefits such as flood prevention, enhanced biodiversity, clean air and water, and greenhouse gas emission reduction; whilst making farms more resilient to climate impacts, creating employment, increasing farm profitability and supporting rural economies.

To prepare for this transition and ensure our rural economies optimise opportunities, we need Scottish Government support to ensure a fair and supportive approach to move farming into a low-emissions future. Climate change mitigation and farm profitability need to be promoted as mutually supportive objectives.

In line with the recommendations of the UK Committee on Climate Change, which highlighted the need for additional emphasis on mitigation through agriculture and land use, we support the following measures as critical to driving a just transition to carbon-neutral farming:

- **Introducing a nitrogen balance sheet.** Creating a national nitrogen balance sheet would help Government develop evidence-based policies and targets to improve the efficiency with which we use nitrogen. Better nitrogen use efficiency reduces nitrous oxide and ammonia emissions, saves farmers money, promotes circular economy business opportunities, and reduces water and air pollution which damages people and nature.
- **Investing in soils.** We must continue to restore carbon-rich peatlands, safeguard semi-natural grasslands and protect and improve our valuable agricultural soils. Advice and incentives are needed to ensure all farmers regularly test their soils, increase soil organic matter – thereby locking in carbon and improving soil quality - and prevent soil erosion from fields.

¹ Carbon-neutral refers to 'carbon equivalent', or net-zero greenhouse gases

- **Promoting productive and profitable carbon-neutral farming.** Low-carbon farming practices and systems must become the norm, in order to reduce emissions. To do this we need to promote and support both organic farming and efficient mainstream production. Public bodies must procure more food from these farms and help drive the transformation to carbon-neutral food production. Organic farming has an important role to play but needs promotion to reverse declines of recent years which have occurred despite strong demand for organic food.
- **Promoting agroforestry.** More farmers and crofters need to be helped to see how integrating trees into their farming business could be of value to them and the climate. When planting the right trees in the right place, agroforestry has the potential to sequester carbon and protect soils, as well as deliver other benefits, such as diversification of farm income, shelter for livestock, and fuelwood.

Scotland needs to begin a fair and just transition to carbon-neutral farming now. We have the potential to establish ourselves as a real leader in sustainable farming and the Climate Change Bill is the place to start. We are looking forward to working with the Scottish Government to develop and implement adequate, cost-effective measures to deliver this ambition.

If you would like to get in touch to discuss any aspect of this letter, please contact Jim Densham at RSPB Scotland, jim.densham@rspb.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA)
 Biodynamic Association
 Buglife Scotland
 Caledonain Organic
 Church of Scotland
 Compassion in World Farming
 Commonweal
 Community Land Scotland
 Cyrenians
 Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
 Friends of the Earth Scotland
 Food Ethics Council
 Froglife Trust Scotland
 Glasgow Community Food Network
 Global Justice Now
 National Trust for Scotland
 NFU Scotland
 Nourish Scotland
 Organic Growers Alliance
 Permaculture Scotland
 Propagate
 RSPB Scotland
 Royal Scottish Geographic Society
 Scotland the Bread
 Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society
 Scottish Badgers
 Scottish Crofting Federation
 Scottish Farming and Wildlife Advisors Group
 Scottish Land and Estates
 Scottish Organic Forum

Scottish Organic Producers Association (SOPA)
 Scottish Rural Action
 Scottish Wildlife Trust
 Scottish Wild Land Group
 Soil Association Scotland
 Stop Climate Chaos Scotland
 Tweed Forum
 Unite Scotland
 Woodland Trust
 WWF Scotland

Individuals

Professor James Curran
 John B Cameron, Member, Livestock Health Scotland
 Dave Reay, University of Edinburgh
 Professor Pete Smith, Professor of Soils and Global Change, University of Aberdeen
 [REDACTED] Member of Scottish Churches Rural Group
 Professor Davy McCracken, Head of SRUC's Hill and Mountain Research Centre
 Antonia Ineson, Myreside Organics
 [REDACTED] Shetland crofter, member of the Nature Friendly Farming Network
 [REDACTED] Dumfriesshire Farmer, member of the Nature Friendly Farming Network
 [REDACTED] Farmer

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Jonathan Hall [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2018 15:50
To: Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution
Subject: Scottish Government Brexit Preparedness and Capacity - Letter from NFU Scotland

FAO Derek Mackay MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution

Please find attached correspondence from NFU Scotland in relation to Scottish Government resources for the impacts of Brexit of Scottish agriculture and the development and implementation of a new Scottish agricultural policy.

I look forward to receiving a response.

Jonnie Hall

Jonnie Hall | Director of Policy and Member Services
NFU Scotland | Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston, Newbridge, EH28 8LT

[REDACTED] Website:
<http://www.nfus.org.uk/>

[REDACTED]

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

BY EMAIL ONLY

15 May 2018

Dear Cabinet Secretary

I write with regard to Scotland's capacity to fund and resource EU competences following the UK's exit from the EU.

In my letter to you in December 2017, ahead of your annual Budget Statement to the Scottish Parliament, I highlighted the importance of NFU Scotland and Scottish Government jointly making the case to HM Treasury to ensure Scottish farmers and crofters are supported in the short-to-medium term after EU exit. Equally, NFU Scotland would welcome a commitment from Scottish Government that any future agricultural budget will remain ring-fenced to farming and crofting support to enable the sector to continue to deliver in the economic, social and environmental interests of Scotland.

Clearly, these are vital issues which NFU Scotland continues to press with HM Treasury and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: As recently as 2 May I meet with HM Treasury officials on these vital issues, and I would be pleased to work with you and your officials to deliver a co-ordinated message to UK Government on finding a fair financial settlement after Brexit – not least in light of the frustrating delay to the review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) convergence and budget allocations that emerged last Friday.

However, the purpose of my writing to you regards Scotland's internal capacity to ensure readiness for our impending exit from the CAP.

Notwithstanding the financial agreement that will be found with the UK Government on a future funding settlement for Scottish farmers and crofters, I would welcome any clarity you could provide on what resources have been allocated by Scottish Government to design and implement a new Scottish agricultural policy itself. I am also interested to learn of what resources Scottish Government will invest to ensure we have the necessary expertise on the significant issues that will certainly arise from the implementation of any new trade and export policy after EU exit.

NFU Scotland understands that since 2016 Defra has filled some 650 vacancies across the Defra Group, with a further 550 staff to be appointed to meet the additional requirements of EU exit¹. The National Audit Office has also highlighted that Defra agreed spending of £94.4 million with HM Treasury to fund its EU exit programme in 2017-18, with further funding expected following the commitment from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Autumn Statement that £3bn would be earmarked for Brexit preparations.

I sympathise with the significant challenge that Brexit readiness will present the Scottish Government, but nonetheless, I do wish to express my firm view that the Scottish Government's preparedness for the challenges ahead is becoming increasingly vital. I understand that so far £6.6 million² has been allocated from the UK Government to the Scottish Government in order to make preparations for Brexit.

¹ <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Implementing-the-UKs-exit-from-the-European-Union-the-Department-for-Environment-Food-Rural-Affairs.pdf>

² <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CDP-2018-0046#fullreport>

I would therefore appreciate any reassurance from you that Scottish Government is ensuring the appropriate levels of staffing and financial resource are being committed to the sizeable task ahead, and any clarity you can provide on what additional resource has been given to the Scottish rural and environmental portfolios, particularly for the design of a new Scottish agricultural policy.

I would be very pleased to discuss the issues outlined in this letter with you in further depth at any time. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



Andrew McCornick
President, NFU Scotland



UNDEB AMAETHWYR CYMRU
FARMERS' UNION OF WALES
PRIF SWYDDFA • HEAD OFFICE

W. GLYN ROBERTS
Llywydd/President

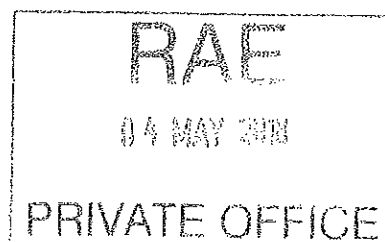
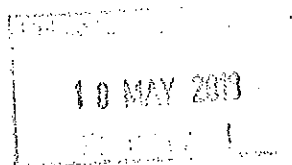
Llys Amaeth, Plas Gogerddan, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3BT.
Ffôn/Tel: (01970) 820820. Ffacs/Fax: (01970) 820821. E-bost/E-mail: head.office@fuw.org.uk
Rhyngwryd/Internet: <http://www.fuw.org.uk>

Cyfeirnod/Reference: [REDACTED]

Dyddiad/Date: 2 May 2018

Fergus Ewing MSP

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG



Dear Cabinet Secretary

On Monday 23rd July the Farmers' Union of Wales will be holding a seminar on the issue of Brexit at the Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells.

I am writing to ask whether you would do us the honour of speaking at the event on the issue of agriculture and Brexit from the Scottish Government's perspective.

Other speakers at the seminar will cover English and Welsh perspectives in relation to similar issues, although I would emphasise that no other politicians have been asked to speak.

I appreciate that it may be difficult to fit such an event into your busy schedule, but given Welsh and Scottish interests have so much in common, the opportunity to hear your views would be invaluable and help highlight the risks both our countries share as a result of the vote to leave the European Union.

I look forward to receiving your response, and if in the meantime you have any questions about the event please do not hesitate to contact our Head Office on the above number.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]

W GLYN ROBERTS
President

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 January 2018 11:55
To: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Subject: Scottish Land & Estates Spring Conference 2018 - Keynote speech invitation
- Message sent on behalf of [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Ewing,

Scottish Land & Estates Spring Conference 2018

I am writing to invite you to deliver one of the keynote speeches at Scottish Land & Estates' Spring Conference 2018, which has become one of the pre-eminent rural events in Scotland.

The theme of the conference is "Brexit and beyond: the future for Scotland's rural businesses", and it will look not only at the opportunities and challenges of Brexit for rural business in Scotland, particularly land based businesses, but will also explore domestic and global emerging markets, changing fiscal and regulatory frameworks and the business implications of climate change.

We envisage having two keynote speakers at the conference, both delivering their speeches during the same session to be followed by a Q&A. We plan to approach Lord Duncan of Springbank to deliver the other keynote speech, on behalf of the Westminster government. Ideally, the speeches will focus on where our Governments are working together and where the future lies for businesses in rural Scotland after Brexit.

The conference will be held at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh, on Tuesday 29th May 2018.

Our Spring Conference will provide speakers with a unique platform to engage with

Scottish land-based businesses. The conference attracts delegates from a variety of different rural sectors including community trusts and business, landowners and land agents, financial institutions, housing associations, local authorities, architects and those with a wider interest in the rural economy.

We would be delighted if you were able to accept our invitation and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Chairman

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SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF MEAT WHOLESALERS

Office bearers

President: Frank Clark (REDACTED)
Vice President: Andy McGowan (REDACTED)
Junior Vice President: Billy Stewart (REDACTED)

Fergus Ewing, MSP
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG



October 2018

Dear Fergus,

26 OCT 2018

SAMW ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

I am writing to invite you to be the key note speaker at our next Conference, which will be held on Saturday, 27 April 2019, at the Marriott Hotel, in Argyll Street, Glasgow. I should like to extend an invitation for you and your wife to attend our dinner dance that same evening if you are available.

At this point in time we have not set a theme for next year's conference due to the ongoing uncertainty we face as the Brexit negotiations continue. However, it is clear that the support framework that Scottish Ministers put in place to underpin a sustainable and viable future for the agricultural sector will be also pivotal to the long-term success of the red meat industry in Scotland. Over the last ten years or more we have witnessed a steady decline in livestock numbers which, if allowed to continue unchecked, will have detrimental impact on this Association's members.

The membership would, therefore, welcome the opportunity to hear from you first hand your emerging thoughts on how the Government intends to reenergise livestock production in Scotland. We also welcome the benefit of some early insight as to when the proposed pilot exercises (to test new support models) will be formulated and then rolled out to the farming sector.

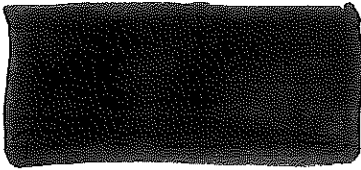
As you may recall from your attendance at our 2017 conference, coffee and tea is available from 9.45am while the conference proper starts at 10.15am. I would envisage that you would be the first speaker and I would ask that you speak for approximately 20 minutes or so. Once your talk has concluded we would then ask Ken Rundle to preside over a short follow-up interview and Q&A session, which will include inviting the audience to ask you some pertinent and topical questions. As to the makeup of the audience, that would be mostly our members, and their invited guests, our various sponsors and of course the media will be there too.

Executive Manager: Martin Morgan
27 Brockwood Avenue • Penicuik • EH26 9AL
Mobile : (REDACTED)
Email : (REDACTED)
Web: www.samw.org.uk

We would be delighted if you could stay for the rest of the event, which will conclude around 1pm with a buffet lunch available after the conference closes. I am, however, aware that you greatly value the opportunity to spend time with your family over the weekends so you may wish to depart early.

I very much hope that you are able to accept this invitation to address our next Conference. Can I ask that your private secretary responds to our Executive Manager, Martin Morgan, whose contact details can be found at the bottom of page one.

Finally, I should make you aware that I will complete my term in office as President at our AGM, which will precede the conference, and Andy McGowan, who I understand you know well, will step up from his current role as our Vice President.



Frank Clark
President

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 November 2018 14:33
To: Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations
<CabSecGBCR@gov.scot>
Subject: AIC Scotland - Meeting request.

Dear Cabinet Secretary

The Agricultural Industries Confederation would like to meet with yourself to discuss the Brexit situation and how we can work together to achieve a mutually satisfactory outcome. AIC Scotland represents a large number of agricultural supply companies who are significant local employers and play a positive role in the economy of rural Scotland. AIC members supply £8billion worth of key inputs to farmers and employ over 43,000 people UK wide. It is absolutely vital to the future survival and prosperity of our member businesses that there is a good Brexit deal with minimal disruption to trade and investment. With this in mind we are keen to secure a meeting with yourself to discuss these matters at a time and date of your choosing. We can arrange for a meeting to take place at one of our many member's company operating facilities, if that would be helpful in illustrating some of the practical problems which may occur from the Brexit process. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Many Thanks.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Policy Manager - AIC Scotland
Head Office: Agricultural Industries Confederation, Confederation House, East of
England Showground, Peterborough, PE2 6XE

Mobile: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED] | Tel: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Website:
www.agindustries.org.uk<http://www.agindustries.org.uk/%22%20%5Co%20%22htt
p://www.agindustries.org.uk/Cmd+Click%20to%20follow%20link>
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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 March 2018 12:18
To: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Subject: Post- Brexit Implications for Agriculture in the Highlands and Islands

19

Hi [REDACTED]

We spoke briefly yesterday about the Cabinet Secretary's availability to attend an event organised by the Highlands and Islands Agricultural Support Group to discuss post-brexit implications for agriculture in the Highlands and Islands.

Our event is being organised on 14th May, 14.00 until 16.30, at the Macdonald Hotel. We will be presenting our report "Post-Brexit Implications for Agriculture in the Highlands and Islands" to an audience of around 80 invited guests. Should the Cabinet Secretary be available, even for a short period, we would structure our agenda to allow Mr Ewing to speak about the findings in the report. I will send a copy of the report to the Cabinet Secretary well before the date of the event.

If the Cabinet Secretary is unable to attend our event we would be happy to host a senior figure nominated by Mr Ewing to discuss the report.

I will issue a formal invitation once I hear back from you.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]
Executive Manager - Economic Development
Shetland Islands Council

Our values: excellent service, taking personal responsibility, working well together

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-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 April 2018 09:33
To: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Subject: An informal dinner held at Adam and Co

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I am writing to invite you to a dinner with leading figures in the Scottish agricultural sector. My idea for the evening is to provide you with an informal opportunity to hear and discuss views on the food and farming industry as we approach the challenges and opportunities that will unfold with Brexit looming .

As you are I'm sure aware I am personally supportive of a great deal of you stand for politically and the evening would hopefully be of a non confrontational , informal nature.

I will host the evening and have asked [REDACTED] of Ardnamurchan Estates to join me in selecting the guest list.

I already have a number of guests that would be keen to attend . They include :-
Malcolm Buchanan , Chairman of Royal Bank of Scotland (Scotland)

[REDACTED] , Farmers Weekly . UK farmer of the year 2017

Professor [REDACTED] , Moredun Institute

[REDACTED] , Scotbeef

[REDACTED] , Agri

[REDACTED], Harbro
[REDACTED] Leading Sheep farmer
[REDACTED], Isle of Mull farmer

Adam and Co have asked that they have two representatives attending the dinner which would be held at their headquarters in St Andrews Square, Edinburgh. Date of your choosing and then I would finalise a guest list to keep you informed. I do hope you feel you would benefit and appreciate this opportunity .If you have some guests that you feel would positively contribute to the evening I would be only too happy to accommodate them .

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED] FRAGS

Watson Seeds

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] buccleuch.com]

Sent: 20 August 2018 15:07

To: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy <CabSecRE@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Galloway Country Fair

Dear Fergus,

[REDACTED]

As discussed I have enclosed a copy of a presentation made to the Sustainable Food Trust earlier this year that provides an overview of some of our initiatives within Buccleuch's tenanted and in-hand farms.

I would be delighted to meet you in Edinburgh should you wish to discuss further and share in more detail thoughts as to the challenges and changes our industry may adopt to deliver a vibrant agricultural sector for the next generation.

With kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Head of Agriculture

Buccleuch, Estate Office, Weatherhouse, Bowhill, Selkirk, TD7 5ES



[ttp://www.buccleuch.com](http://www.buccleuch.com)>



21 SEP 2018



3rd September 2018

Mr Michael Russell MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Government Business & Constitutional Relations
Room T3.25
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Russell

AIC Scotland – Invitation to Annual Dinner 22nd November 2018

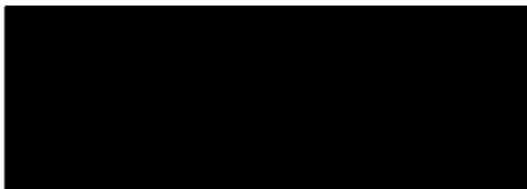
I am writing to invite you, on behalf of AIC Scotland Chairman Stephen Kenyon, to our forthcoming dinner at the Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld, Glasgow G68 0EW on Thursday 22nd November 2018. Timings are 7:00 p.m. for a private drinks reception, followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. Dress code is Black Tie.

You are invited to join our top table and will be welcome to make a short address to Members of no longer than 15 minutes. Our Members would be pleased to hear your views on the future for Scottish Agriculture post Brexit.

For your information AIC Members represent the Agrisupply Industry which provides inputs into the agriculture and farming sectors. On a UK wide basis AIC has 250 members whose trade represents £9 billion at farmgate.

I very much hope that I may have the opportunity of welcoming you in Cumbernauld.

Yours Sincerely



Robert Sheasby
AIC Chief Executive

Cc: Stephen Kenyon, AIC Scotland Chairman

agricultural industries confederation
confederation house, east of england showground, peterborough PE2 6XE

w: www.agindustries.org.uk e: [REDACTED]

registered in england no. 316783

2018/0033443

25

Mr F Ewing
The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy
T3.25
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

21 SEP 2018



10 September 2018



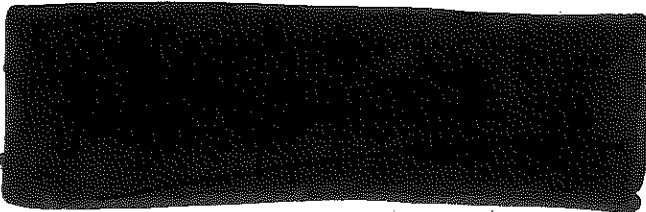
Dear

Fergus

It was good to see you briefly at the Galloway Country Fair the other day. I was most interested to hear of your role with regards to SoSEP, and also noted your interest in visiting the Borders and I am writing to extend an invitation to visit Tweed Forum. We are particularly keen to pick up on the LUS which we discussed when you visited in May of last year. The LUS approach put Scotland way ahead of the game, and whilst Brexit has understandably stalled progress, to our mind it is absolutely key to devising and implementing a more enlightened agri-environment policy of the future.

Whilst I know the LUS is not strictly in your portfolio, it potentially affects all aspects of the rural landscape, particularly farming and forestry, so cannot easily be separated. We believe that the framework developed as part of the Borders pilot has fundamental implications for improved targeting and better utilisation of resources across Scotland and would welcome a chance to discuss this and SoSEP matters further.

I look forward to hearing from you.



James Hepburne Scott
Chairman

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 October 2018 16:55
To: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy <CabSecRE@gov.scot>
Subject: Meeting with NFU Scotland - Agriculture Bill

25

Good afternoon

I write on behalf of the President of NFU Scotland, Andrew McCornick, to ask if it would be possible to organise a meeting in the near future to discuss various issues arising from the UK Government's recently-published Agriculture Bill.

NFU Scotland is in the process of formulating its formal position on the Bill and is seeking third-party advice in certain areas that we believe are open to different interpretations. Clearly there is also a political dimension to much of the Bill due to the fact that there is currently no Schedule pertaining to Scotland. At this stage we would very much appreciate the opportunity to talk through these issues with the Cabinet Secretary in further depth.

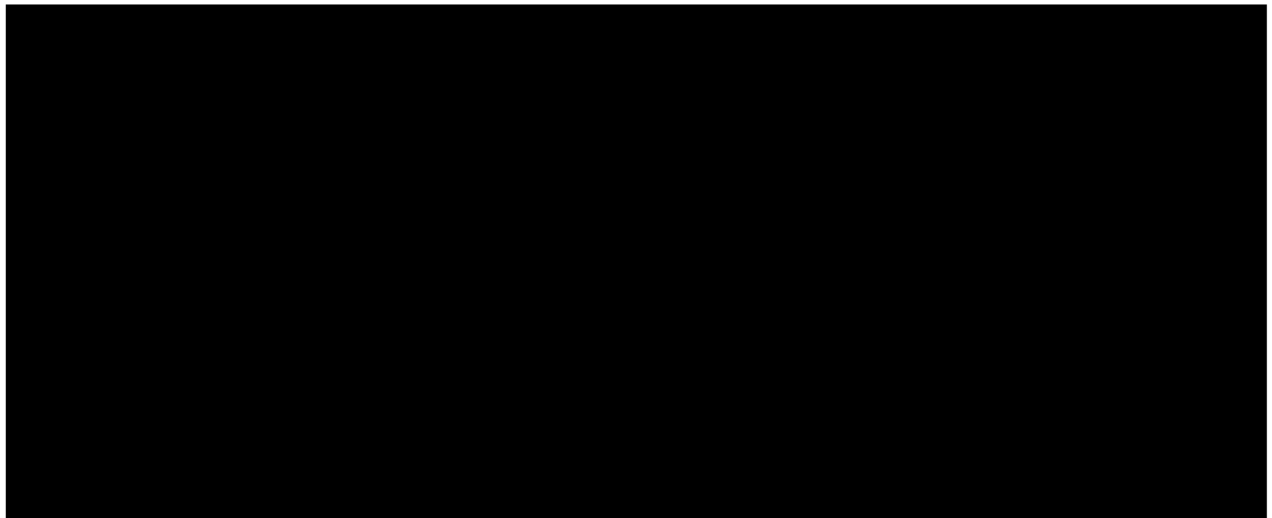
I look forward to hearing from you what might be possible. We will be attending SNP conference a week today (8 October) - if the Cabinet Secretary does have any time available that day for an initial discussion, we'd be pleased to meet then - if not, we can be flexible to make a meeting in the near future work.

With best wishes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Political Affairs Manager
NFU Scotland



From: [REDACTED]@scotlink.org>
Sent: 12 October 2018 16:16
To: Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy <CabSecRE@gov.scot>
Subject: Scottish Environment LINK meeting request

Dear Sir/Madam,

Attached a letter on behalf of LINK members for Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing in response to his statement in Parliament in late September.

LINK members are seeking a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary and LINK member directors to discuss these issues further.

Best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Advocacy Manager
Scottish Environment LINK

[REDACTED]

Fergus Ewing MSP
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh

12 October 2018

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

We are writing to you following your statement of 26 September in the Scottish Parliament. We welcome the decision to open applications for the Agri-Environment-Climate Scheme (AECS) in 2019 but believe that it is critical that Scottish Government also make the development of a shared plan for Scotland's post-CAP support system a priority.

While "Stability and Simplicity: proposals for a rural funding transition period" provided views regarding Pillar I, it did not provide insights to the Government's thinking on Pillar 2. We are therefore concerned over the ongoing lack of clarity regarding the funding and implementation of the AECS scheme as well as a wide range of other schemes and payments including woodland grants and advisory services that currently form part of Scotland's Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

What is more, while we will seek to engage in the process that follows the Stability and Simplicity consultation, this piece of work does not provide any clarity regarding the future of farm support from 2024 onwards. Even though a number of groups have been convened to provide insights into agriculture and rural policy (the Agriculture Champions, the CAP Greening Review Group, the National Council of Rural Advisors), none seem to have been tasked specifically with developing policy recommendations for post-CAP rural support schemes. These processes need to be brought together to deliver a vision for Scotland's farm support, one that will command public support, and it is unclear at the moment how this will happen.

LINK members believe that we now have a unique opportunity to ensure that Scotland can benefit from a farming support system that is fit for the 21st century. Scotland's Good Food Nation agenda as well as our aspirations towards Green Farming could be realised through the right support system. A fresh approach to farming and forestry is also an opportunity to deliver on the Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy, linking sustainable land use to community aspirations.

As such, we would like to see greater focus being placed on designing a future system of farming support for Scotland. Convening a taskforce that will look exclusively at 'simplification' will not address this pressing issue. While we fully support that future schemes are designed and delivered so they are understandable and accessible to beneficiaries, a broader discussion is needed to ensure that future schemes are delivering effectively in the public interest. We hope that you will consider the creation of a "Future Farm Support Taskforce" to work on this issue over the next 12-18 months in parallel to the process that you have committed with Scottish Parliament. In Annex we have provided our views regarding proposed Terms of Reference.

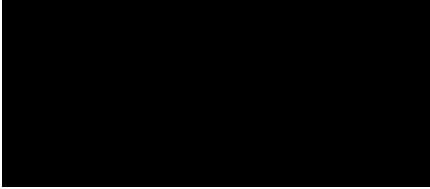


Scottish Environment LINK
13 Marshall Place
Perth
PH2 8AH

T 01738 630804
E enquiries@scotlink.org
W www.scotlink.org

LINK member directors would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and further discuss how we can support the development of a commonly shared ambition for Scotland's future farm support. Given the urgency of these issues both for farmers and for our natural environment, we hope you will be amenable to having this meeting in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Charles Dundas
Scottish Environment LINK Chair

On behalf of Scottish Environment LINK Food and Farming Subgroup members:



ANNEX: Future Farm Support Taskforce Proposed Terms of Reference

To research, design and consult on a system of farm support which:

- 1) helps to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, which Scotland was among the first nations to endorse, and on the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework;
- 2) meets public policy objectives on the production of healthy food, the provision of a range of public goods, and on the social cohesion of vulnerable rural areas;
- 3) assists generational renewal and short food chains;
- 4) is deliverable, equitable (taking into account disadvantages of geography, scale, tenure), auditable and evaluable;
- 5) ensures that future schemes are designed and delivered so they are understandable and accessible to beneficiaries whilst delivering effectively in the public interest.

The Taskforce should work transparently and should draw on the expertise and data held by the key research institutes, commissioning specific reports and impact assessments where needed.

The membership of the Taskforce should be broad and inclusive across the range of public policy objectives on which future farm support will need to deliver. Its work should be supported by a dedicated secretariat provided by Government.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy
Fergus Ewing MSP
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG



11 December 2018

Dear Cabinet Secretary

As was highlighted during the recent AgriScot event, NFU Scotland is pleased that progress is being made on your *Stability and Simplicity* proposals, and that a member of staff from NFU Scotland has been invited to participate in the Taskforce.

NFU Scotland is hopeful that it will be a constructive forum that will result in positive changes to agricultural regulation which will promote productive agriculture whilst also protecting human health, animal health and welfare, and the environment.

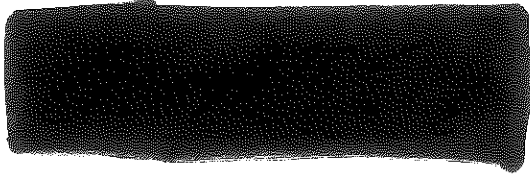
Having examined the list of representatives on the Taskforce, NFU Scotland is of the view that each individual will provide some excellent expertise and input into the group. However, following representations from NFU Scotland's cropping sectors, the purpose of my writing to you is to enquire whether there is any space for a representative from the cropping sector to also participate in the Taskforce. It is felt by our members from the cropping sector that more balance might be required in terms of 'on the ground' experience from those producers who currently carry out greening requirements.

With greening presumably occupying a significant part of the Taskforce's agenda, we would be grateful if you could indicate whether there would be any possibility of a representative from the cropping sector being added to the Taskforce.

If there was scope for an additional member to be appointed to the Taskforce, NFU Scotland would be pleased to share with you some suggestions of individuals from the cropping sector who we feel would be able to contribute to the Taskforce in a very positive way.

I look forward to an early response.

Yours sincerely

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Andrew McCornick

President, NFU Scotland



Cabinet Secretary for the Rural &
Economy and Connectivity ie@
Mr Fergus Ewing MSP .uk
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The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Ewing,

The Board of the Crofting Commission very much appreciated our visit with you on 21 November 2017 and the opportunity to discuss current crofting issues.

We would very much like to follow up with you on the issues raised and you are cordially invited to visit us at Great Glen House.

If your office could perhaps suggest a date and time suitable to you, I'll be delighted to make the appropriate arrangements.

Yours sincerely




Convener
Crofting Commission

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Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG
BY EMAIL ONLY

13 August 2018

Dear Cabinet Secretary

I write to thank you for your comprehensive reply to NFU Scotland's joint correspondence with SAYFC earlier this year, regarding interpretation and implementation of the rules for new entrants to the agricultural industry.

Since this correspondence, the Scottish Government's 'Stability and Simplicity' consultation was published and this has been welcomed by NFU Scotland. Whilst NFU Scotland will respond comprehensively to the consultation on behalf of the wider membership, I wish to convey to you the specific views of the NFU Scotland Next Generation Working Group on the importance of ensuring the continuation of schemes that support new entrants and young farmers in Scottish agriculture.

NFU Scotland's Next Generation group welcomed the recognition of the need to ensure future new entrant schemes in both the Agricultural Champions report and the Stability and Simplicity Consultation. We would however argue that to ensure the success of such schemes, the definition of a new entrant needs to be addressed to ensure that valuable individuals are not locked out of any future system. There is also a need for targeted measures which enable not only entry into the industry but also the long-term progression of farming businesses.

For the budget to be properly allocated, the new entrant definition needs to be rebased. This is an important discussion which NFU Scotland's Next Generation Committee would be keen to contribute to, especially with many new entrants sitting within the group.

We would also like to express concern that while the Stability and Simplicity consultation asks questions around the future of the New Entrants Capital Grant, there are no questions around the Young Farmer Start Up Grant. This leads us to assume there will be no further rounds of the Young Farmers Start Up grant being offered in the transition period, and we believe this would be a huge detriment to new businesses that no longer have the benefit of this funding to help them at the start of their farming careers. As a minimum, we would like to see at least one round of the Young Farmers Start Up Grant within the transition period, open to all businesses with start dates from 1 January 2018 and onwards.

Further to this, we note the value of the continuation of the current Young Farmers Top Up Grant and seek assurances this will remain throughout the transition period.

Looking beyond Brexit, NFU Scotland Next Generation would advocate further new entrant and young farmer schemes which go beyond a five-year period to allow for the long-term progression of businesses. As either a new entrant or a young farmer who has succeeded a family business, accessing the current schemes requires heavy investment at an early stage which then doesn't go beyond the first five years.

NFU Scotland continues to hear from an increasing number of new entrants and young farmers who have started businesses in the past couple of years and have still yet to receive their BPS payment. Whilst we understand that the transfer or purchase of entitlements and Base Payment may cause delay in payments, the long periods of uncertainty and hardship faced by many new entrants is unacceptable.

The use of the National Reserve to lessen the impact of this process should be commended but we advocate a fairer system where cases are heard on a case by case basis, and not who manages to tick all the boxes.

New Entrants are particularly affected in this regard as they often lack financial security. Instead of a bureaucratic system, we feel that an assessment panel made up of industry experts should be appointed, and who then assess national reserve applications and Young Farmer Start Up Grant applications.

This would allow genuine cases to be heard, and non-genuine cases weeded out in a timely and efficient way.

Another concern of the group, and of NFU Scotland, is the lack of affordable training of necessary agriculture skills, such as trailer licenses, forklift courses and livestock handling skills for young people. This also reflected in the poor safety record of farming as many farms are not in a position to afford these expensive courses which then results in a lack of knowledge and skills, often leading to accidents. While we would like to see some changes to training delivery we feel that increased access to affordable, and often life improving, training through increased funding should be a priority. To secure future generations in Scottish farming and crofting, there must be investments made to support and equip this generation.

My Committee would be delighted with any opportunity to meet with you in the coming months for further discussion on these important themes. I would be very happy to assist with setting up further discussion if a mutually convenient opportunity were to arise.

Yours sincerely

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Next Generation Working Group Chairman, NFU Scotland

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG
BY EMAIL ONLY



24 August 2018

Dear Cabinet Secretary

I am writing to express the extreme disappointment felt by new entrants, and indeed many others within the farming sector, at the recent news that the New Entrant Capital Grant Scheme will close on 31 August.

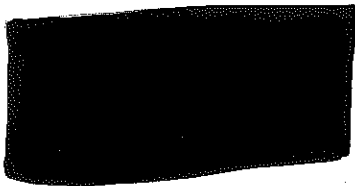
The 31 August deadline for applications has caused real angst and anxiety as new entrants try to meet the short deadline. Many potential recipients of the scheme have already incurred significant costs in the process of putting together their applications and are now very concerned that the tight timeframe in which to complete applications will not be achievable. I would therefore be very grateful if you could confirm that any eligible claimant who is already in the process of submitting an application, and is awaiting necessary paperwork such as planning permission, building warrants etc, will be accepted with the accompanying paperwork supplied when complete.

The Scheme was supposed to be both open and funded until 2020 and the unexpected closure has come as a real blow to many. A number of new entrant members of NFU Scotland have highlighted that they are having to restructure their business plans to accommodate for the late warning.

We also seek reassurance that any new entrant starting up or doing a project from 2017 will not be locked out of any future scheme due to the date their business was established when there was no scheme in place. Many new entrants who started farming in 2017 and should have expected a scheme available for three years have now been cut short by 18 months. As outlined in my letter to you of 13 August, the lack of support specifically for new entrants and young farmers currently brings great uncertainty to the sector. With no proposed future schemes, I am concerned that many fledgling farming businesses who will play a vital role in the future success of Scottish agriculture will slip through the cracks.

In the Year of Young People, the closure of this scheme is a real blow to young people trying to establish their business in what has already been a challenging year for Scottish farmers. There is now very limited targeted supported for new entrants and young farmers and NFU Scotland's Next Generation group again would like to express their desire to meet with yourself to discuss measures that are needed to ensure the future of Scottish farming for the next generation.

Yours sincerely,

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 **Next Generation Chairman, NFU Scotland**



17 September 2018

PRIVATE

Rt Hon Fergus Ewing MSP
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh

Dear Mr Ewing,

I write in my capacity as Chair of the Plant Link Scotland network that represents the botanical and fungal community of Scotland. Our membership includes statutory and non-statutory organisations, academia and civil society. As you will no doubt recognise, where plant conservation leads nature follows.

We welcome recent legislative changes that bring issues relating to trees, woods and forestry under the control of the Scottish Government and, following these changes, wanted to highlight some key issues that we hope you will incorporate into your forthcoming Forestry Strategy.

As set out in your Government's 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity and Scotland's Economic Strategy, our trees, woods and forests form a crucial part of our natural capital that is critical to the prosperity of the country.

As Plantlife's Forestry report sets out, the priority for Scotland's woodland habitats is their active management to ensure they are restored into healthy functioning ecosystems that maximises their services for public benefit. This requirement for active conservation management should be reflected in the new SRDP so the public receive value for money from the public goods provided by forest managers.

We also welcome your ambitious plans for woodland creation. Ensuring the 'right tree: right place' is crucial in ensuring that public funding doesn't inadvertently support further biodiversity loss at a time when Scotland's flora is suffering on-going pressure. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how such unintended consequences can be avoided.

Evidence from Forest Research demonstrates that well targeted habitat creation can have significant benefit to biodiversity. The converse is also true. There is a real risk that the emerging process for screening and incentivising woodland creation will fail to adequately support the conservation of Scotland's native wildlife and could negatively impact priority open habitats, plants and fungi providing reduced public benefits and poor value for money.

Contd.

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Registered in Scotland, charity No. SC038951
Registered Company No. 3166339. Registered in England



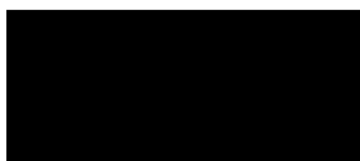


A non targeted approach that unduly rewards the commercial interests of the forest industry offers limited public benefit and is less likely to support your Government's ambition and statutory duties to conserve biodiversity. We are concerned that without the necessary planning, the optimum areas to create/expand woodland will be missed, negatively impacting on potential public benefits and contrary to the Land Use Strategy.

We therefore urge you to ensure that native woodland management is the focus of the forthcoming Forestry Strategy and the necessary steps are put in place so existing biodiversity interests are maintained and enhanced by new native woodland planting.

We would be pleased to discuss with you the necessary steps required to ensure that woodland creation fully contributes towards achievement of a coherent and effective National Ecological Network that supports the conservation of our precious biodiversity, supports climate change targets and supports the rural economy.

Yours sincerely



Ben McCarthy
Director of Strategy

cc Alistair Whyte - Head of Plantlife Scotland

Encl: Quality and Quantity Revitalising Scotland's woodlands



Fergus Ewing MSP
T 3. 25
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



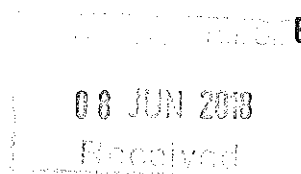
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24 May 2018



SOILS

Everything we (mankind) do today is wrong.

The latest scare with plastics polluting our environment might be an opportunity for Scotland in fibres produced from wood, plants and wool.

In Scotland there was hardly any forests planted until the 2nd World War. The planting since then has been on soils that had been created by a monoculture of sheep and cattle over 3-400 years; producing a productive humus layer of about 40 cm in depth.

Forestry Soils.

In Scotland the planted forest is mainly a monoculture of conifer. We at Forrest Estate are 18 years into our second rotation, and can see the damage from harvesting even after only taking out the logs.

Lately the biomass industry have asked us to take out stumps with roots; which we found to be wrong and have discontinued. Now we are being asked to take out the branches and we have stopped that too.

The reason is obvious. The soil with its huge subsoil universe of living organisms has to be fed for its future fertility; so we are now working to find a better method of spreading branches even leaving some logs on the ground. In many forests around the world productivity is now going down, due to the limited nutrients for the soil. **I believe that you must stop removing brash from all forests in Scotland.**

Loss of forest productivity which results from removing harvesting residue from the site will become more evident in the third rotation. The similarity to agriculture is startling except for the fact there is a rotation result every year. For vegetables retaining plant waste improves the soil. In forestry we should not wait a year to replant as has been the practise up to now.

Forestry planting and thinning.

In our forests there are 2 monocultures, conifers and broadleaves. The 5% broadleaves are established in plots and amenity along the conifer edges, and some (quite rightly so) in riparian zones within the forest. The 5% as it is now will become another monoculture.

At Forrest we thin mostly twice, except where wind conditions prevent a second thinning. We believe that this is a better way to protect the sub-soil universe, which is greater than above ground; although the biosphere within the canopy is also considerable.

Soils and grazing.

For the rearing of ruminants, the book entitled Grass-Fed Cattle I gave you last year outlines what one should hopefully do namely cutting out grain for feed, chemical fertilisers, diesel/oil, reducing medicines and spraying all without ploughing. Herd livestock from paddock to paddock systematically, allowing them only to eat the best grasses while trampling down the rest and leaving only their waste and hoof marks having only eaten half the grass. This will increase productivity. Hopefully additional efforts will make it possible to have Merino sheep, wool that can be better used for clothing rather than the traditional Black Face which is used mainly for carpet; with reduced supply of synthetic fibre the demand for wool will be vast.

When it comes to meat; "grass fed" has become a symbol in the US, where people are aware that most cattle are bred on industrial scale farms, fed on corn, grain and soya. In the UK I believe people think that cows are grass fed, which in reality is becoming rare.

The hill farms of Scotland could double production of meat and wool by applying these methods and not ploughing. Investment in farm machinery would lessen. In the near future animals will be herded with the help of neck collars operated by computer programs. Collars will also act as an animal health system monitoring all the lead indicators of health and fertility.

All the above should make it possible for Scotland to produce an industry partly like that which has been lost; making cloth, wood and plant fibre into what must be needed to supplant the use of plastics and creating an environment for innovation.

Subsequent to formulating this letter as a follow up to our meeting held 14th September last year, on the 22nd May 2018 I met with Dr [REDACTED] (Forest Research Silviculturist and Soil Scientist), [REDACTED] (Forest Research, Head of Technical Development), [REDACTED] (FES Agricultural Advisor), [REDACTED] (FES Head of Estate Development), [REDACTED] (Forrest Estate Manager) and [REDACTED] (Scottish Woodlands Ltd – Forestry Advisor to Forrest Estate).

We discussed a wide range of issues regards forestry practice, current research and conserving soil fertility now and in the future.

The consensus of the meeting is to see if Forest Research and Forrest Estate can start on a programme of development to enhance the longevity of forests in Scotland to maintain and improve soil fertility for future generations and we therefore ask for your support in achieving this shared goal.

We were most interested to hear of Clocaenog Forest in Wales a site of Continuous Cover Forestry and look forward to visiting together with Forest Research and we would also suggest a visit to the H J Andrews Experimental Forest, USA a 16000 acre ecological research site in Oregon approximately 450 years old and home to a Canopy Sub-eco System supported by the US Forest Service and Oregon State University and reading of The Hidden Forest, a biography of an ecosystem by Jon R Luoma (ISBN-10 0-87071-094-X, ISBN-13 978-0-87071-094-0.)

Further to your brief chat with [REDACTED] at the National Economic Forum on the 16th May 2018, I would like to ask if we could arrange another meeting where we can discuss the issues raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Fred. Olsen
Forrest Estate Ltd

cc Jo O'Hara, MICFor, Head of Forestry Commission Scotland

24/01/2018

Rural Development and Skill

Fergus,

I hope that you had a wonderful festive break and managed to get some respite from the day job...It all seems such a long time ago.

I write to ask for a short appointment to discuss the development of sector specific training programmes within forestry and the wider rural environment.

Specifically I would like to discuss the progress of the [Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020](#) in relation to:

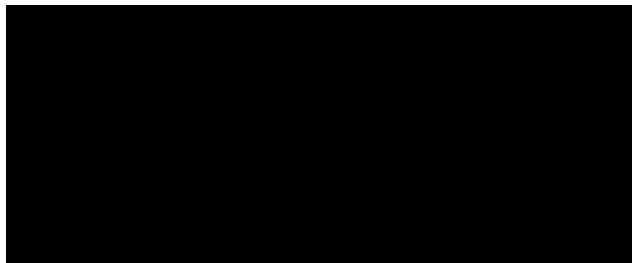
- Enhancing the rural economy
- Supporting agricultural and forestry businesses
- Protecting and improving the natural environment
- Addressing the impact of climate change
- Supporting rural communities

I look forward to your response

Kind Regards

Jamie Stewart

Director
Scottish Countryside Alliance



Fergus Ewing MSP
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Date: 3 October 2018

New Cabinet Secretary

Recommendations of the National Council of Rural Advisers

We are grateful for the work carried out by the NCRA and for the recommendations they have put forward to Scottish Ministers which align well with our own thinking in relation to the contribution of the economy across rural Scotland, which as the report rightfully recognises is significant to Scotland as a whole.

As you know from our previous discussions, SCDI has established a Rural Commission made up of representative from across the public and private sector to be forward looking and action focused in relation to the short, medium, and long term steps that could be taken to help harness the economic potential of the whole country. This work very much compliments the role that the NCRA have played and the recommendations it has put forward.

We welcome the recommendation that the economy in rural Scotland is embedded within policy making and investment decisions across government and the need to develop a new approach and model for delivering support to the economy throughout rural Scotland. As part of the work of our Rural Commission we'll be considering where any changes could be made to policies, regulations, or support to ensure they deliver the right outcomes for those working and living in communities throughout the country. We know that businesses themselves can make changes in how they work to better support those in their communities. We also know that the solutions to many of the challenge are a culmination of small measures to ensure the appropriateness of actions for rural areas without more resources being needed in many cases.

We agree that we need to draw on evidence based research and the importance of data-led policy decisions but recognise that current data often overlooks issues or opportunities in rural communities as a result of insufficient data being available. Where we can help with analysis or understanding of data we are more than willing to do so.

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North East | c/o Aberdeen Business School, Kaim House, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen, AB10 7QE | t. 01224 263 380

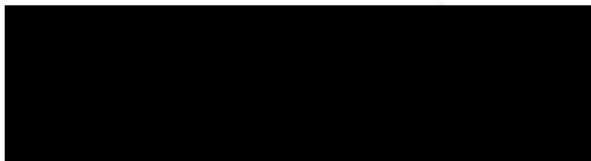
Highlands & Islands | 21b Kingsmills Road, Inverness, IV2 3JX | t. 01463 231 878

enquiries@scdi.org.uk | @SCDInews | www.scdi.org.uk | www.yescscotland.co.uk

We recognise that some of the recommendations are already being considered or underway, particularly in light of R100 and other measures, and part of the challenge with limited resourcing is how best to prioritise the actions to be taken. This is an issue our Rural Commission are mindful of and again hope to be pragmatic and realistic in the recommendations we'll put forward.

I, along with our Director of Policy Matt Lancashire, would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss the recommendations put forward by the NCRA and look SCDI can help meet the aims outlined in them.

Best wishes,



Fraser Grieve
Regional Director
SCDI