

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

ORAL ANSWER 1

Oliver Mundell (MSP for Dumfriesshire (Constituency), Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what cross-government action it is taking to ensure that agriculture expertise is represented in government agencies.

S6O-00910

MAIRI GOUGEON: Where agricultural expertise is required in Ministerial appointees to Government agencies, the sponsor team for the agency may choose to integrate that into criteria for the role. The sponsor team should work with the public body and the Board Chair on this, to represent Ministers' aims and requirements for the roles.

Government agencies will of course also ensure that they engage with their relevant stakeholders, including agricultural representatives, as appropriate.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

To be amended/added to once/if further information becomes available regarding any specific board or issue (See background note)

Women in Agriculture

Karen Adam: Can the Cabinet Secretary advise how it includes women with expertise in agriculture in its work and what it is doing to enable more women to gain knowledge, skills and expertise in agriculture in Scotland?

MAIRI GOUGEON: Earlier this year we committed a further £300K to support training women in agriculture, established the women in agriculture Practical Training Fund and supported them through the Farm Advisory Service's Women in Agriculture peer to peer groups across Scotland focussing on resilience and personal development.

This government is committed to supporting women developing their career in agriculture and giving them opportunities in what has been a very male-dominated industry.

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)

Q. Four new Board members were appointed to the South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) earlier this year. Is agriculture representation covered by these new appointments?

MAIRI GOUGEON: The South of Scotland Enterprise advertised for four new members in Autumn 2021 and deliberately sought experience in land based industries with applicants having to demonstrate evidence of their skills, knowledge and experience in one of three areas: land based industries, governance/strategic management; or digital transformation.

On 15 February the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy announced the appointment of the 4 new Board members who have extensive expertise in land based industries between them.

General SG bodies – ARIOB, APDG and AAP

Q: The Scottish Government has set up ARIOB to help shape future agriculture policy in Scotland but does not represent the full industry so how can farmers and crofters ensure their interests are being taken into account?

MAIRI GOUGEON: I have the privilege of co-chairing the **Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board** alongside NFU Scotland President, Martin Kennedy with full its membership representing land based businesses covering a range of farming, geographical and environmental interests. I can ensure you that its members were appointed to provide the necessary breadth of expertise and knowledge required to take this work forward.

Q: How is the Scottish Government itself ensuring they it receives the best possible advice on agriculture, both from farmers and crofters themselves and from those in academia?

MAIRI GOUGEON: Officials and myself are in regular contact with representatives and practitioners across the agriculture sector and my door is always open to discuss any matter that effects the industry.

In addition to the ARIOB group, itself it is important to note that it is supported by the Academic Advisory Panel that was established to provide independent scientific and academic context for planning agricultural reforms.

The Panel's remit is to provide robust evidence to support the work of the Scottish Government and the ARIOB to develop and implement policies to support agriculture in becoming more economically and environmentally sustainable as well as providing a mechanism for testing policy proposals and ensure they are consistent with the best available science, knowledge and expertise.

Q: How does the Agricultural Policy Development Group support the work of the ARIOB and ensure agricultural interests are considered?

MAIRI GOUGEON : The Agricultural Policy Development Group (APDG) was established in September 2021 as part of the Scottish Government's approach to developing future agricultural policy and support. It enables government officials to discuss and share policy proposals and to get the input of key stakeholder interests to their development.

In addition to Scottish Government officials, the APDG currently comprises representatives from NFU Scotland, from Environment LINK and an independent individual with extensive government and industry experience and expertise.

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S6O-00910

1. Oliver Mundell is the Scottish Conservative MSP for Dumfriesshire (Constituency) Mid Scotland and Fife (Region) since 2016.
2. He has served as Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skill since 2021.
3. **It is not clear why Oliver Mundell is asking the question** and the particular use of the term “government agencies” is quite loose and general so it is difficult to determine what it behind this line of questioning. The answer provided gives a clear response that relevant expertise will form part of any selection criteria for any public appointed positons but it is not clear if he may be referring to that or how public bodies themselves engage with the agricultural sector, or if in fact they might ask about any SG bodies themselves (such as ARIOB). To note we are unaware of any particular issues with these boards in relation to Agriculture representation. As such, **it is difficult to provide any potential supplementary questions with any certainty** with only some general questions and answers offered at this stage.
4. **Annex A** offers general briefing on the role of public bodies and on the regulated public appointed procedures and the role of
5. **Annex B** offers general briefing and background on recent appointments to South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE).
6. **Annex C** offers some general background to some public bodies mostly associated with Agriculture – Crofting Commission, QMS, Scottish Agricultural Wages Board, SEPA, NatureScot, Environmental Standards Scotland, Scottish Forestry, and Forestry and Land Scotland.
7. Should the follow up questions somehow be linked back to Scottish Government groups, **Annex D** offers some general background on ARIOB, APDG, and its AAP, which is the group that has received the most interest on its membership.
8. **Annex E** offers some information on Woman in Agriculture Practical Training (and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Training fund).
9. **Annex F** provides copies of recent written parliamentary questions asked by Rhoda Grant (Lab) on the Agricultural Policy Development Group (ADPG).

The role of Public Bodies and regulated public appointments

The role of public bodies

Public bodies play an important role in the delivery of public services in Scotland. They make a significant contribution to delivery of the Scottish Government's national outcomes and objectives as set out in the National Performance Framework.

Scotland's public bodies fund, oversee and deliver a huge range of public services. There are currently 127 public bodies which range from health to social care, arts and culture to the environment.

They consist of:

- executive agencies
- non-departmental public bodies (NDPB)
- public corporations
- tribunals
- non-ministerial offices
- health bodies
- commissioners
- ombudsmen
- other significant public bodies

Public bodies deliver the priorities of ministers, or the Scottish Parliament, through the promotion, funding and scrutiny of services. They provide impartial, expert advice to ministers, the parliament, the public and those who deliver public services.

Public bodies have the specialist knowledge and skills to focus on specific issues. This gives them an authenticity and credibility with stakeholders and helps them reach and engage effectively with a wide range of interest groups.

Regulated public appointments

All regulated public appointments are made on the basis of merit.

Regulated public appointment recruitments are designed to address the needs of the particular Board at that point in time and in response to the Board's strategic assessment of future need.

Regulated appointments are those where the appointment is one made by Scottish Ministers and the process to appoint is independently regulated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. These are board level appointments.

The need to secure a diverse board should be taken into account in how recruitment is carried out, to ensure that we take advantage of the skills and expertise of the widest range of people in Scotland.

South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) – recent appointments

The South of Scotland Enterprise advertised for four new Board members in Autumn 2021. SOSE deliberately sought expertise in land based industries. Applicants were asked to demonstrate evidence of their skills, knowledge and experience in one of three areas: land based industries; governance/strategic management; or digital transformation.

On 15 February, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy announced the appointment of Vivienne Cockburn, Emma Guy, Kirsten Hannay and Paul Winstanley as members of SOSE's Board. **Both Emma Guy and Kirsten Hannay have extensive expertise in land based industries.**

- Emma Guy is a former elite mountain bike downhill athlete having represented GB at World Championships level and one of the founders of The Hub at Glentress, where she created the model for mountain bike trail centres across the UK and was at the centre of making the Tweed Valley the international biking destination it has become. More recently Ms Guy has been working with local community groups and businesses through various roles. She brings to the Board, the discipline and ambition needed to both compete as an elite athlete, and as a business entrepreneur, combined with a strong sense of collaboration.
- Kirsten Hannay is the Managing Partner of Kirkdale Estate on the Solway Firth in Dumfries and Galloway. Her varied role includes responsibilities for farming, forestry, rural diversification, native woodland creation and long-term property management. In addition, she has set up and runs a holiday let business and has created a holiday lodge park on the estate. Previously, Mrs Hannay established and ran a property management firm in Edinburgh and has over ten years' experience in global publishing firms in London where she ran the global print marketing arm for The Economist Intelligence Unit, a division of The Economist Group.
- Vivienne Cockburn is a chartered accountant who has specialised in infrastructure development supporting the financial and commercial aspects of public sector investments in a wide variety of sectors including energy efficiency, housing, health, education and utilities. She holds a number of Director roles within the south of Scotland

including Vice-Chair of Berwickshire Housing Association and Public Interest Director on the Board of High Wood Health (Project Co) Limited - the company responsible for designing, building, financing and maintaining the Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary. Previously, she worked with Scottish Futures Trust as Director of Corporate Services and Low Carbon and latterly, Director, Management and Investments.

- Paul Winstanley is currently CEO of CENSIS, one of Scotland's Innovation Centres focused on sensing, imaging and the internet of things (IoT). His early career was with UK Government, then with QinetiQ where he held a number of leadership roles including Technical Director and then CEO of QinetiQ Inc. Subsequently, Mr Winstanley founded and led a technology business. He is passionate about the development and delivery of innovative game-changing solutions and supporting the development of high performing teams.

The appointments are for four years and run from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2026.

Public Bodies most closely associated with Agriculture & their board structures

Crofting Commission

- The Crofting Commission's Board is made up of 9 Commissioners, six of whom are elected by crofters and 3 are appointed by the Scottish Ministers. One of whom is appointed to the role of Convener/Chair of the Board.
- The six crofting constituencies are East Highlands, Western Isles, South West Highlands, Shetland, Orkney and Caithness, and West Highlands.
- The crofting elections take place every 5 years. The count for the next election is taking place on 18 March 2022.
- Commissioners were able to stand for re-election should they wish.
- To qualify as a candidate for election, an individual must be a crofter named as such on the Crofting Commission's Register of Crofts, or be nominated by a crofter.
- The role of the Board is to provide leadership, direction, support and guidance to ensure the Commission remains committed to deliver its functions effectively and efficiently.

Quality Meat Scotland

- QMS are a non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) promoting the interests of the red meat industry in Scotland and funded by industry levies.
- They were set up through a through a statutory instrument under the powers of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- QMS also have a ministerial elected board with a ministerial elected Chair.
- The QMS board is made up of 13 elected members, many who have direct agriculture expertise and experience. At least 50% of these members are required to be levy payers (farmers or processors) as laid out in the legislation.

Scottish Agricultural Wages Board

- The SAWB is an autonomous body under the Agricultural Wages (Scotland) Act 1949 and is empowered to set minimum rates, holiday

entitlement and certain other conditions of service for agricultural workers in Scotland. The Board comprises 15 members:

- 5 representing the interests of employers nominated by NFU Scotland and the Scottish Land & Estates;
 - 5 representing the interests of workers nominated by Unite the Union; and
 - 5 independent members appointed by Scottish Ministers, one of whom is designated Chair.
- The Independent appointments on the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board serve a maximum 8 year term and are appointed by Scottish Ministers through the Public appointment process.
 - Applicants who serve on the Wages Board are selected on their knowledge, experience and interest in the sector. The Wages Board is a negotiating body that pulls together employer and employee representatives, therefore an understanding on the wider issues faced by agriculture in Scotland is an advantage.

NatureScot

- NatureScot's Board currently has 12 members (6 women/6 men) with members possessing a board range of environmental skills relevant to the delivery of statutory NatureScot function and Ministerial priorities.
- Example of s represented on the Board include; Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Land Management, Freshwater Biology, Environmental and plant based Sciences, Estate Management, Climate Change, Tourism and Planning.
- 3 members of the Board are due to stand down on 31 March 2022 and will be replaced with new members via the regulated Public Appointments process. Selection criteria for the roles will be published in due course as part of the public appointments process.

SEPA

- SEPA's Board currently comprises of 11 members (5 female, 6 male) possessing a range of environmental, scientific, regulatory

and governance skills relevant to the delivery of the statutory functions of SEPA and Ministerial priorities.

- Examples of skills on the Board include environmental science, technological development, sustainability, risk management, engineering, health, finance, communications and legal.
- No Board member is noted as specifically having agricultural expertise although SEPA's professional area staff have well developed relationships with farming communities across Scotland.

Environmental Standards Scotland

- The ESS Board comprises five members (2 females, 3 males) possessing a range of skills relevant to the organisations primary role to ensure the effectiveness of environmental law in Scotland.
- These include legal, environmental regulation, flood management, environmental policy, European environmental legislation and governance.

Forestry Governance in Scotland

- The Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 led to the creation of two Scottish Government executive agencies responsible for carrying out Scottish Ministers functions – Forestry and Land Scotland; and Scottish Forestry.
- As well as a Chief Executive for each organisation, under the powers of the Act a Chief Forester acts as Head of Profession for Scottish Government – ensuring strong professional forestry standards are maintained, as well as developing such skills across the organisations.
- Each organisation has an executive team to oversee financial and workforce planning, and monitoring against organisational targets.
- Both also have an Agency Advisory Body to provide and support to the Chief Executive, and is comprised of members of the senior management team and three non-executive advisers, offering constructive challenge and advice.
- None of the non-executive advisors in place across both organisations are viewed to have specific agricultural expertise.

Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board and the Academic Advisory Panel

The Cabinet Secretary RAI established and co-chairs the **Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board** (alongside NFU Scotland President, Martin Kennedy) representing land based businesses and covering a range of farming, geographical and environmental interests. Members were appointed to provide the necessary breadth of expertise and knowledge required to take this work forward;

- ARIOB is supported by the **Academic Advisory Panel** which was established to provide independent scientific and academic context for planning agricultural reforms and is comprised of eleven members:
 - Professor Deb Roberts, James Hutton Institute
 - Professor Davy McCracken, SRUC
 - Professor Andrew Millar, Chief Scientific Advisor for Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
 - Professor David Reay, University of Edinburgh
 - Professor Lorna Dawson, James Hutton Institute
 - Professor Liz Baggs, University of Edinburgh
 - Steven Thomson, SRUC
 - Dr Andrew Moxey, Pareto Consulting
 - Professor Frederic Leroy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
 - Sheila Voas, Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland
 - Professor Fiona Burnett, SRUC
- The Panel's remit is to provide robust evidence to support the work of the Scottish Government and the ARIOB to develop and implement policies to support agriculture in becoming more economically and environmentally sustainable as well as providing a mechanism for testing policy proposals and ensure they are consistent with the best available science, knowledge and expertise;
- The **Agriculture Policy Development Group** was established in September 2021 as part of the Scottish Government's approach to developing future agricultural policy and support. It enables government officials to discuss and share policy proposals and to get the input of key stakeholder interests to their development. In addition to Scottish Government officials, the APDG currently comprises representatives from NFU Scotland, from Environment

LINK and an independent individual with extensive government and industry experience and expertise;

- This is not the only route for stakeholders to input their proposals as part of this work and we would welcome all relevant organisations engaging with officials to provide their thoughts and ideas on current and future aspects of the National Test Programme. In particular, we would welcome stakeholder organisations encouraging their members and supporters to participate in the Programme itself. There will also be a full consultation on future policy and legislative proposals for rural support.

Annex E

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Training Fund and Woman in Agriculture Practical Training

The Scottish Government funded **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Practical Training Fund**, enables people aged 13 and over, who are working in land based sectors or who want to train/upskill in those sectors to get the right training to enable them to play their part so we are more adaptive and resilient to meet the challenge we face. People can get £500 or more for a fully funded training course, they can apply through the Scottish Government funded SkillSeeder app/ [website](#) for this Lantra Scotland administered fund. £250k is allocated to this Fund for FY 2021-22

The Scottish Government funded **Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund** enables women and girls aged 13 and above who live or work in Scottish agriculture to get access to fully funded practical training to increase their skills to support their personal or business development. They can get £500 or more for a fully funded training course, they can apply through Lantra Scotland and they can find courses using the Scottish Government funded SkillSeeder app/ [website](#). £142,500k is allocated to this Fund for FY 2021-22.

Copies of recent questions asked by Rhoda Grant on Agricultural Policy Development Group

Question asked are below – note all questions received the same written response

- S6W-06149 Rhoda Grant To ask the Scottish Government what the relationship is between the recently established Agricultural Policy Development Group and the Agricultural Reform Oversight Implementation Board.
- S6W-06147 Rhoda Grant To ask the Scottish Government what the crofting representation is on the recently established Agricultural Policy Development Group.
- S6W-06146 Rhoda Grant To ask the Scottish Government who the members are of the recently established Agricultural Policy Development Group.
- S6W-06151 Rhoda Grant To ask the Scottish Government how the role of the recently established Agricultural Policy Development Group differs in remit from the Academic Advisory Panel that provides support to the Agricultural Reform Oversight Implementation Board.
- S6W-06148 Rhoda Grant To ask the Scottish Government who the recently established Agricultural Policy Development Group reports to.
- S6W-06145 Rhoda Grant To ask the Scottish Government what the remit is of the recently established Agricultural Policy Development Group.
- S6W-06150 Rhoda Grant To ask the Scottish Government how the recently established Agricultural Policy Development Group fits into the decision-making process of agricultural development.

Answer provided 1st March 2022 -

Mairi Gougeon: The Agricultural Policy Development Group (APDG) was established in September 2021 (as referred to at ARIOB on 30 September 2021: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/agriculture-reform-oversight-implementation-board-minutes-30-september-2021/>) as part of the Scottish Government's approach to developing future agricultural policy and support. It enables government officials to discuss and share policy proposals and to get the input of key stakeholder interests to their development. In addition to Scottish Government officials, the APDG currently comprises representatives from NFU Scotland, from Environment LINK and an independent individual with extensive government and industry experience and expertise.

The Group's Terms of Reference can be reviewed here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/agriculture-policy-development-group-terms-of-reference/>

Crofting interests on the Board are represented through NFU Scotland as well as the Chair of the Scottish Crofting Federation, Donald McKinnon. This is not the only route for stakeholders to input their proposals as part of this work and we would welcome all relevant organisations engaging with officials to provide their thoughts and ideas on current and future aspects of the National Test Programme. In particular, we would welcome stakeholder organisations encouraging their members and supporters to participate in the National Test Programme. There will also be a full consultation on future policy and legislative proposals for rural support.

The Academic Advisory Panel (AAP) was established to provide independent scientific and academic context for planning agricultural reforms.

The AAP's Terms of Reference can be reviewed here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/academic-advisory-panel-terms-of-reference/>

Background note provided to the above PQ's

Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board (ARIOB)

- ARIOB was recently established as a 100 Days commitment to drive forward the work of the Farmer-led Groups;
- The Board are contributing to the Scottish Government's work to implement policy reform, incorporating the relevant recommendations of the farmer-led groups to cut emissions across agriculture, support the production of sustainable, high quality food, and design a new support system and approach;
- The Board are helping to develop the National Test Programme, which will support and encourage farmers and crofters to learn about how their work impacts on climate and nature, including offering financial support to carry out carbon audits and nutrient management plans, establishing a clear baseline and options for action for all who participate;
- The Programme will also help, through work with a focus group of farmers and crofters, to understand how sustainable farming can be supported and rewarded in future. This will ensure the right tools and support are in place when, from 2025, the climate and biodiversity performance of businesses will determine the level of agricultural support payments;
- It will also put in place livestock data and performance systems for businesses in the beef sector with the aim of improving both business and emissions performance;
- In addition to hearing from experts in their field as required, ARIOB will be supported throughout its lifetime by an expanded Scottish Government Academic Advisory panel that will draw on the best available science, knowledge and expertise, and grow the evidence base;
- In the longer term the Board will consider how we use our land and the role that agriculture can play in restoring biodiversity.

Agricultural Policy Development Group (ADPG)

- The ADPG was established in September 2021 and consists of three members: Jonathan Hall (NFU Scotland), Vicki Swales (RSPB Scotland) and Ian Davidson (Independent);
- The ADPG has met regularly to further develop the proposals included in the National Test Programme, reporting to ARIOB.

Academic Advisory Panel (AAP)

- The Academic Advisory Panel was reconstituted in the autumn of 2021 and is comprised of eleven members:
 - Professor Mathew Williams, Chief Scientific Advisor for Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture (Chair)
 - Professor Deb Roberts, James Hutton Institute
 - Professor Davy McCracken, SRUC
 - Professor David Reay, University of Edinburgh
 - Professor Lorna Dawson, James Hutton Institute
 - Professor Liz Baggs, University of Edinburgh
 - Steven Thomson, SRUC
 - Dr Andrew Moxey, Pareto Consulting
 - Professor Frederic Leroy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
 - Sheila Voas, Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland
 - Professor Fiona Burnett, SRUC
- The Panel has two main functions as part of its remit. Firstly, to provide robust evidence to support the work of the Scottish Government and the ARIOB to develop and implement policies to support agriculture in becoming more economically and environmentally sustainable.
- Secondly, it aims to provide a mechanism for testing policy proposals and ensure they are consistent with the best available science, knowledge and expertise.

Rhoda Grant MSP

- Rhoda Grant is a Scottish Labour Party MSP for Highlands and Islands (Region) (since 2017);
- Ms Grant is Scottish Labour's Deputy Party Spokesperson on Land Reform and previously a member of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee;
- This is one of seven written PQs on the topic of the ARIOB and related SG groups.

Contact Name: (Redacted text)
Phone No: (Redacted text)