

CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND ISLANDS
Briefing for East Coast Visits – Thursday 14 October 2021

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Programme

Thursday 14 October

- *[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]*

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What	You are visiting an arable unit in Berwickshire as part of a wider programme of engagement. You will observe regenerative farming practices and discuss future farming policy.
Where	[REDACTED]
When	Thursday 14 October, 09.00 – 09.45
Key Message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the importance of the arable sector to Scottish agriculture and the rural economy • Recognise the efforts already ongoing within many parts of the farming community to address the biodiversity and climate change crises • Assure Mr White that farming representatives are closely involved in the development of new farm policy
Who	[REDACTED] regenerative arable farmer in Berwickshire Member of NFUS’s Combinable Crops Committee
Why	An opportunity to improve relations with arable farming stakeholders, and reinforce/illustrate existing policy. MiCase Ref – 202100204614A copy of the full e-mail is featured in Annex C .
Supporting official	No official attending. For urgent questions, please contact [REDACTED]
Briefing contents	Annex A: Summary Page including overview, information on Neil White, and agenda Annex B: Lines to take Annex C: Original correspondence
Media Handling	No Comms official attending.
Social Media	Suggested tweet: “It’s been wonderful to get out amongst some field crops today and to hear about @GreenknoweFarm’s regenerative farming practices. Arable farmers make a key contribution to Scotland’s rural economy.” Instagram: everything_is_greenknowe YouTube: Everything is Greenknowe
Dress code	Please wear sturdy footwear, and warm and waterproof clothing
Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival	Go directly to farmhouse. In case of delay, contact: [REDACTED] Greenknowe Farmhouse – [REDACTED]

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ANNEX A

SUMMARY PAGE

[REDACTED]

LINES TO TAKE

Arable sector overlooked

Issue: [REDACTED] feels the contribution of the arable sector to Scottish agriculture is overlooked in favour of livestock

Lines to take:

- We fully recognise the important contribution the arable sector makes to Scottish agriculture, by producing world-class food and drink and by managing our valuable natural environment.
- Both ministers and officials remain in regular contact with arable farmers and sector representatives, including via the Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board which has been established to develop new proposals for sustainable farming support.

Accessibility of Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) to small farms

- [REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

Future farming policy

- [REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

Haulage shortages

- [REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

Fertiliser prices

Issue: Fertiliser prices have risen dramatically in the last year, driven largely by global events affecting the supply of and demand for key inputs including natural gas. UK manufacturer have stopped or paused production. If the high prices continue into spring (the key time for applying fertiliser), farmers may choose to reduce their cropped area, reduce the amount of fertiliser applied with potential yield loss, or see impacts to their margin. Their decisions will partly depend on the relative price of grain, which is currently high.

Line to take:

- Although some fluctuation in fertiliser price is normal due to seasonality, we are aware that natural gas price has risen dramatically in the last year, driven largely by global events affecting its supply and demand. The Scottish government continues to monitor the price and availability of fertiliser in the UK, and remains in regular contact with industry as well as with Defra, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- Respected sources of advice such as the Farm Advice Service and AHDB can provide information reducing your fertiliser needs, for example by optimising nutrient uptake.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

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[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]