

**Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands**

Copies: Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport  
Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform

Other copies as per email.

**Portfolio Themes & Connected Issues**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

Andrew

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Andrew Scott  
Director of Agriculture & Rural Economy

Annex 1

**Agriculture and Rural Affairs: Current Issues**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Climate Change Targets**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Biodiversity and natural capital**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Food Production**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Land**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Resources**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Managing Continuity and Planning Change**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Our future relationship with the European Union**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

Pesticides

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

Gene Editing

1. The UKG recently closed a consultation on Gene Editing (GE) and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) with a view to amending the definition of a GMO and effectively legalising GE organisms (such as crops or livestock) for marketing and production in England. They have not yet issued a response. GE was ruled to be in scope of the GMO legislation by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 2018, effectively preventing the use of gene editing outside a laboratory. This was seen as a controversial ruling by many since gene editing is a different technique to GM which is much more precise and can bring about changes which could have occurred naturally.

2. The European Commission published its long-awaited report on GE (30 April, 2021) acknowledging the technology has the potential to contribute to a more sustainable food system in line with its European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy. It acknowledged that current GMO legislation is no longer fit for purpose. The Commission will now start an open consultation process on the design of a new legal framework. Ministers will need to consider whether Scotland should follow suit in order to maintain alignment with the EU.

#### Seed Potatoes

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

### **Other Priority Issues and Significant Manifesto Commitments for Agriculture**

#### Scottish Veterinary Service

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

#### Vertical Farming

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

#### Crofting

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

#### Agricultural holdings legislation

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

### **Rural Economy and Communities**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

#### Islands

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**International Trade (Including Northern Ireland Trade)**

Annex 2

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Northern Ireland Protocol**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Constitutional affairs and SG/UK relationship**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]

**Business competitiveness:**

[REDACTED, OUT OF SCOPE]