

EIR - 202400443942

Correspondence since December 2023 between NFU Scotland and Mairi Gougeon and or Jim Fairlie

Document 1A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: 10 December 2024 09:48

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024
<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity 2023
<ministerac@gov.scot>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Subject: NFU Scotland Conference 6 and 7 February

I write regarding the NFU Scotland Annual Conference which is being held in February at the Raddison Hotel in central Glasgow.

Both the Cabinet Secretary and Minister will shortly be receiving an invite to the dinner which is on Thursday 6th February.

We received confirmation that the First Minister has agreed to be the keynote speaker at the event on Friday 7th February. I wanted to check to see if the Cabinet Secretary and Minister would be able to attend also.

We are happy to be guided by you as to how you would see the Friday session with the First Minister work. Last year, the Cabinet Secretary was on the stage alongside the FM, who gave the speech, and both participated in the Q&A session – would that be what you would like to happen this year also?

If you could please let me know, or if a discussion regarding this would be helpful, do let me know.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Political Affairs Manager

Document 2A

10/12/24

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: 10 December 2024 10:57

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024
<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11] [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Subject: NFU Scotland Galloway National Park Letter to Cabinet Secretary

Please see attached letter to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform, and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, from NFU Scotland Milk Chair, Bruce Mackie.

Best wishes
[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

[REDACTED-Regulation 11] | Political Affairs Advisor

NFU Scotland | Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston, Newbridge, EH28 8LT

Document 2B

Dear Mairi,

Proposed Galloway National Park - Concerns from Dairy Farmers

I write to you as NFU Scotland Milk Chair to raise concerns from our dairy farming members regarding the proposed Galloway National Park.

Dairy farming makes up a large and crucial part of Dumfries and Galloway, with about 177 dairy farms operating within the proposed boundaries. They all play their part in making the region an outstanding natural beauty with an abundance of diversity. This rich agricultural landscape exists because of the hard work, skill, and dedication of land-owners, which includes all scales of dairy farming.

Agricultural and food production and what agricultural businesses deliver to the rural economy must be central in any future decision about a possible Galloway National Park. Given the importance of the rural economy to the area, those who live and work within the proposed Galloway area deserve a platform for economic growth and development, and not be pickled in aspic by top tier rules and regulations driven by National Park requirements.

Key concerns are highlighted below –

- Planning - Galloway is a highly productive agricultural area and our members are concerned that a new Galloway National Park will increase bureaucracy and stifle innovation. For example, if a dairy farmer was to invest in their

business and build a new shed, would they be subject to enforced additional cost? Dairy farmers operating within the proposed National Park must have solid reassurance to ensure that any further regulations or restrictions will not compromise their livelihoods and impact them financially.

- Regulation - Farmers and land managers will be working with the new Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act, Biodiversity Strategy and a new National Park designation will add a further layer of bureaucracy.
- Rural economy - Prioritising tourism and visitor access over farming and crofting businesses in Galloway will be to the detriment of the rural economy and the natural environment.

Finally, I would like to highlight members' concerns over the appointed reporter, NatureScot. There are concerns that they may have a limited knowledge and understanding of not only the variety of farming enterprises operating in the region but also the long-term planning and capital investment and the asset value involved in farming, especially dairy farming. Additionally, members are hearing a very anti-dairy agenda from consultation meetings and the Galloway National Park Association. Statements such as “we don’t need dairy farms in Galloway” – if this is the true nature of the people and organisations that propose the Galloway National Park you can understand why our dairy farming members are concerned and seek reassurance from Scottish Government that their livelihoods are not under threat.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Mackie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bruce" and the last name "Mackie" clearly distinguishable.

Bruce Mackie

NFU Scotland Milk Chair

Document 3A

03/12/24

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: 03 December 2024 11:05

To: Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity 2023 <ministerac@gov.scot>

Cc: Ian Muirhead <ian.muirhead@gov.scot>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Subject: NFU Scotland letter - sea eagles

Please find attached a letter from Martin Kennedy, President NFU Scotland, on sea eagle management to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, Jim Fairlie MSP, following his visit to Argyll in November.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Document 3B

White-tailed Eagle Management in Scotland

Dear Minister,

I write to thank you for taking the time to visit Argyll to discuss the issues relating to the management of the white-tailed eagles (sea eagles). We welcomed the opportunity to highlight the significant impact that sea eagle predation is having on farms and crofts. During your visit you discussed the multiple approaches that have been tried to adapt and mitigate the impacts that sea eagles are having on agricultural businesses across the west coast and Highlands. This does not just have a financial impact, but also significantly impacts the mental health of our farmers and crofters.

As we know that the current mitigations are not working for farm and croft businesses impacted by sea eagles, and in many instances the impacts are worsening, I urge the Scottish Government to deliver the following asks:

- 1) Urgently provide confirmation of the budget for the Sea Eagle Management Scheme and increase the budget for 2025.
- 2) Increase the current cap of £5,000 and enable multi-year funding so mitigation measures currently unavailable via a single year scheme can be delivered.
- 3) Implement the licensed removal of birds on farms and crofts where they are habitually targeting livestock as a food source and where mitigation measures do not sufficiently resolve the impacts.
- 4) Undertake a commitment to deliver a compensation scheme (similar to those used in other European countries) for the farms and crofts most significantly affected by sea eagle predation and where licensed removal is not an option.
- 5) Accept and implement the recommendations from the Sea Eagle Review.

While we appreciate some elements of the existing scheme, NFU Scotland (NFUS) wants to work with the Scottish Government, NatureScot (NS) and other stakeholders going forward, so that the issues we know are negatively impacting farm and croft businesses can be addressed. The following points were discussed at the meeting and provide more information on the asks above.

Financial impact

With the exponential increase and expansion of the sea eagle population we need to have a significantly increased budget for the Sea Eagle Management Scheme (SEMS) along with a multi-year funding commitment. With this longer-term commitment we can begin to address the underlying issues that many farms and crofts have dealing with sea eagle predation, some for well over 20 years, and for others since the 1980s.

As highlighted at the meeting, of the 208 current applicants in the SEMS, NS have identified 50 of these farmers to be 'at risk' from significant sea eagle impacts.

The current cap of £5,000, combined with the lack of multi-year funding, is totally insufficient to enable the scheme to fund bespoke measures designed to mitigate the impact that birds are having on individual farm or croft businesses. The multi-year funding commitment is crucial to allow some mitigation measures to be utilised,

which are currently unavailable in a single year scheme. These have previously been shown to be successful on some holdings when three years' worth of funding is combined e.g. for the construction of polytunnels for lambing and fencing of hill parks.

Importantly, we need confirmation of the budget for the SEMS to be available in early 2025, to allow planning and recruitment for measures such as enhanced shepherding.

Compensation and licensing

Compensation for losses associated with predation from protected species are already utilised in other countries. There are many positive examples demonstrating how compensation payments, either for living with the risk caused by predators or compensating for any losses incurred, allow farmers and predators to live alongside one another without conflict.

Where mitigation measures do not sufficiently resolve the impacts caused by sea eagles then the licensing system needs to be implemented. These have also been used in other countries and enable the removal of protected predators that are causing significant problems, and where all other mitigation measures have failed to resolve the issues.

A similar approach in Scotland, combining compensation payments alongside a licensing system, to manage birds which are particularly targeting livestock, could help to reduce areas of conflict. Ultimately this could benefit the wider rural economy and Scotland's reputation for the highest-quality food and natural environment.

Regional impact

The Sea Eagle Review, which was submitted in June 2024 to NS and Scottish Government with input from the National and local stakeholder groups, highlighted the funding issues outlined above. In addition, the review identified that farming and

crofting in Scotland is incredibly diverse and every farm is unique. There can be no 'one size fits all' approach and any future scheme needs to be bespoke to each business to properly mitigate the impacts.

As was highlighted at the meeting, hefted hill sheep are unique to Scotland's traditional hill farms. They have been built on generations of developing the best adapted sheep to each farm or croft, but they are at risk where higher levels of predation occur. In some cases, predation may result in insufficient numbers of replacement ewes being kept to maintain flock numbers. This reduces the options available for selecting the best sheep to keep improving the flock and impacts on the economic viability of these units.

The Review contains a clear list of recommendations for improving the current scheme and we would ask that Scottish Government accept and implement the recommendations made.

Mental Health Impact

The impact of losing lambs to sea eagles on our farmer's and crofter's mental health is immense. Losing lambs not only has a financial impact, as already described, but with the increasing uncertainty over the future detail of the scheme, it also has an emotional one that goes beyond the financial worries.

With 208 current participants in the scheme, and a further 28 applying this year, alongside increasing numbers of birds, we know that this situation is only going to worsen: causing further strain on the mental health and wellbeing of our farmers and crofters, their families and rural healthcare services. Many have been suffering for decades with an apex predator they are powerless to control.

I want to thank you again for travelling to Argyll to engage on this issue. As the number of birds expand, we know that the problems and areas of conflict are only going to increase. Scottish Government, working with other stakeholders and NFUS, need to ensure that hill farmers and crofters have a viable future, and we would ask that you act urgently to do all you can to ensure that happens.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy
President, NFU Scotland

Document 4A

14/11/24

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: 14 November 2024 14:51

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government

<CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11] <[REDACTED-Regulation 11]; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; B

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

<MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

Subject: NFU Scotland Submission - Scottish Government Budget 25/26

Please find attached NFU Scotland's submission in advance of the Scottish Government Budget 25/26.

We would be most grateful if we could meet with Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government and Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform, and Islands in advance of 4 December.

Please let me know a date that would be convenient.

[REDACTED-Regulation 11] | Political Affairs Advisor

NFU Scotland | Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston, Newbridge, EH28 8LT

Document 4B

Date : November 2024
To : Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government Shona Robison MSP and Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cc : Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, Jim Fairlie MSP
From : [REDACTED-Regulation 11]
E-mail address : [\[REDACTED-Regulation 11\]](#)

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S 2025/26 BUDGET

NFU Scotland is calling on the Scottish Government to demonstrate its support for Scotland's farmers and crofters in the forthcoming 2025/26 Scottish Budget by:

- Increasing in funding for farming and crofting in the 2025/26 Budget, given the increase to the block grant
- Delivering the full rollover of £620 million baselined in the block grant in the 2025/26
- Repeating the Scottish Government's annual contribution of some £60 million in the 2025/26 Budget
- Adding a further £50 million, given the 8 per cent increase in the block grant then applied to the £620 million rollover
- Explicitly returning the outstanding £46 million of uncommitted funds to the 2025/26 Budget
- Ring-fencing support for farming on crofting within the Scottish budget
- Committing to multi-annual funding for farming and crofting within successive Scottish budgets

In total, that equates to £776 million for farming and crofting in the 2025/26 Scottish Budget.

NFU Scotland believes:

If the Scottish Government wants to secure food production and the upstream and downstream socio-economic multipliers that are critical to wider rural prosperity across Scotland, then they must increase the 2025/26 ARE budget.

A modest increase would ensure the continued delivery of the significant return on investment for the Scottish Government's, generate more growth and employment, and deliver the climate and nature outcomes that are vital to all our futures. Our farmers and crofters deliver sustainable and high-quality food production, help to tackle climate change and enhance biodiversity, and underpin vibrant rural communities. This cannot be understated or overlooked. Nor can it be put in jeopardy by real or nominal reductions in necessary funding.

Background

1. This submission sets out NFU Scotland's clear asks in advance of the forthcoming Scottish Government Budget for the financial year 2025/26.
2. With the passing of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024 (ARC Act), and the Scottish Government's Agricultural Reform Programme, it is critical that agricultural and rural development funding is prioritised in the 2025/26 Budget.
3. Farming and crofting are being tasked to deliver more in terms of high-quality food production, tackling climate change, enhancing nature and underpinning rural communities.
4. These are key to two of the four Programme for Government's national outcomes – i.e. growing the economy and tackling the climate emergency. Annex A below sets out in more detail how active farming and crofting are key to the Scottish Government's aspirations.
5. The Scottish Government's ARE funding remains critical for high-quality food production, climate and nature recovery, economic growth and Scotland's rural communities – as well as playing a fundamental role in food security.
6. Decisions taken by the UK Government in the 30 October Budget will impact on food production and agricultural business viability for years to come.
7. Our vital industry needs certainty and the Scottish Government's 2025/26 Budget provides the opportunity for the Scottish Government to demonstrate its commitment to safeguard the future of farming and crofting – and all that it delivers for Scotland. Sustainable and regenerative agriculture is key to climate and nature ambitions, and we call on the Scottish Government to provide an increased funding commitment for our sector.
8. An increase in ARE funding in 2025/26 would also ensure the continued delivery of the significant return on investment from Scotland's agricultural

support budget by generating more economic growth and employment, whilst delivering the climate and nature outcomes that are vital to all our futures.

Scottish Government Commitments on Funding

9. Over recent years, the Scottish Government has repeatedly given assurances to Scotland's farmers and crofters that there will be no "cliff edge" as we transition to a new support framework. That, of course, refers to the financial underpinning of both existing and new support mechanisms and the direct support for individual agricultural businesses.
10. More explicitly, and among numerous references, the Scottish Government is on record as highlighting the need to provide sufficient financial support to the sector.
11. In correspondence with NFU Scotland, dated 2 August 2024, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon MSP) stated "The Scottish Government is in full agreement that the current allocation of funding from the UK Government does not fairly reflect the contribution that Scottish Agriculture can make to deliver on social and environmental outcomes and high-quality food production".
12. In addition, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government (Shona Robison MSP) also stated "The current situation does not reflect the contribution that Scottish agriculture can make to deliver on social, food, climate and nature outcomes" in correspondence to NFU Scotland on 12 August 2024.
13. It is clear to us that, across the Scottish Government, there is a recognised need to ensure the necessary and sufficient funding is made available to farmers and crofters – increasingly through evolving means as we transition to new support structures. That being the case, we are calling on the Scottish Government to deliver on those commitments in the 2025/26 Budget.

The UK Government Budget

14. The new UK Government set out a stark Budget on 30 October. Of significant interest to farming and crofting in Scotland is the removal of a specific ring-fenced, multi-annual funding commitment for agriculture and rural development across the devolved nations.
15. The Statement on Funding Policy (published on 30 October) states: "From 2025-26, the Barnett formula will apply in the usual way to funding for

agriculture and fisheries, rather than the devolved governments receiving a ringfenced addition to the block grant as they did for Spending Review 2021. Funding from 2024-25 has been baselined in each devolved government's block grant."

16. This means that for 2025/2026 the Scottish Government is to receive an increased block grant that includes a rollover of the £620 million which will no longer be ring-fenced.
17. We have had that confirmed by UK Treasury who state that the "UK Government have baselined into 2025/26 the full amount provided to farmers and land managers in 2024/25. This is £620 million for the Scottish Government and includes the Bew Review funding. It is now part of the overall Scottish Government block grant, which is for the Scottish Government to allocate as they see fit across their devolved responsibilities".
18. Moreover, it was also announced by the Chancellor that Scotland will receive an additional £3.4 billion in Treasury funding in 2025/26 because of the UK Government Budget - creating "the largest real-terms funding settlement since devolution". It was also announced that the Scottish Government would receive an additional £1.5 billion in the current financial year.
19. The UK Treasury has also confirmed that "the Scottish Government settlement is a record settlement in real terms and the Scottish Government are receiving over 20 per cent more per person than equivalent UK Government spending in the rest of the UK".

The Scottish Government's 2025/26 Budget

20. The ARE portfolio's funding is now exclusively down to the Scottish Government to deliver from their budget.
21. Future ARE funding remains vital for food security and economic growth in Scotland. In addition, any real or nominal reduction in future funding would undermine the vast array of upstream businesses that rely on the spending of active farming and crofting, thereby putting at risk the socio-economic multipliers that are critical to wider rural prosperity across Scotland.
22. Without adequate funding from the Scottish Government any ambitions in relation to high-quality food production, tackling climate change, nature restoration and thriving rural communities will be put in severe jeopardy, not

least as many farms and crofts across Scotland would cease to be viable – leading to significant socio-economic and environmental challenges.

23. As a result, for the 2025/26 financial year, we are seeking the full rollover of £620 million. In recent years, the Scottish Government added significant sums from its own resources to the £620 million received from the UK Government.

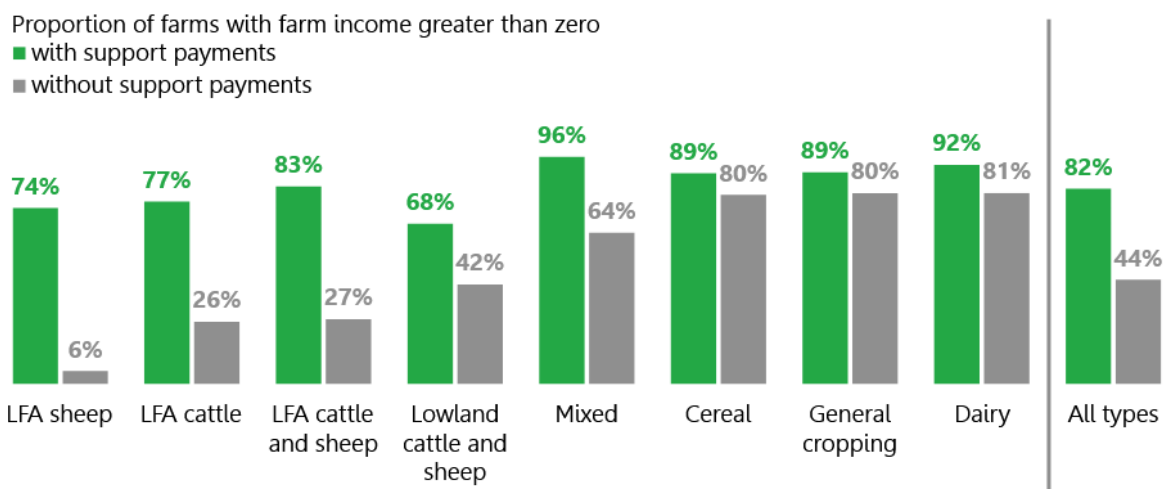
24. In addition, given the increase to the block grant, we are also calling on the Scottish Government to increase the funding in the ARE portfolio in 2025/26 to ensure policy outcomes are delivered through the Agricultural Reform Programme as we transition to schemes and measures under the new ARC Act.

25. Given the significant increase in the Scottish Government’s block grant for 2025/26, we are therefore calling on the Scottish Government to add an additional £124 million (equating to 20 per cent of the £620 million) to bolster funding for measures within the ARE portfolio’s responsibilities. This must be in addition to returning the outstanding £46 million of uncommitted funds.

The Importance of Direct Support

26. Support payments play an important role to farms in Scotland. Without support payments, the percentage of agricultural businesses in Scotland that would make a profit would sit at around 44 per cent. With current levels of support the figure is around 82 per cent.

27. To compound this, the profit margins across all agricultural sectors in Scotland are only returning wafer thin margins at best.



28. The importance of support payments varies by farm type. With support there is less variation in the proportion of farms that breakeven (have income

greater than zero). Without support far fewer livestock farms make any profit, especially those in Scotland's less favoured areas (LFAs).

29. Any real terms erosion of direct support payments would see many agricultural businesses in Scotland cease to be viable. This would lead to significant socio-economic and environmental challenges.
30. The Scottish Government is on record as saying that through the transition years of 2025/26 and 2026/7 to the new four-tiered structure of support, that at least 70 per cent of the overall ARE funding would be delivered as direct support. This was the commitment from the then First Minister, Humza Yousaf MSP, at our AGM and Conference in February 2024 and has since been reiterated by the current First Minister, John Swinney MSP.
31. We are unequivocal in stating we need to see that commitment underlined by the allocation of ARE funding as direct support in the 2025/26 Budget.

Return of Reallocated (Uncommitted) ARE Funding

32. In total, some £61 million of uncommitted ARE funding was reallocated by the Scottish Government between September 2022 and December 2023.
33. We acknowledge the Scottish Government's response to Parliamentary Question S6W-16700, published 17 April 2023, which confirmed that the money will be used to deliver on Scotland's rural priorities. It also explained that the appropriate profile for returning this funding will be considered as part of the 2024/25 budget process.
34. We understand that some £15 million was returned to ARE budget lines in the 2024/25 Scottish Government Budget. However, and despite repeated assurances that all £61 million will be returned, some £46 million remains outstanding.
35. We are calling for the explicit return of the outstanding £46 million in the 2025/26 Budget on 4 December.
36. We share the view of the Scottish Government that, ideally, this funding should be delivered as 'capital expenditure' to enable agricultural businesses to build resilience, add value, and adapt to change.
37. In particular, we would seek to work with the Scottish Government on developing capital funding options for water resources management on farms and the practical rollout of on-farm green energy (particularly hydrogen) to

accelerate the decarbonisation of agricultural machinery and create by-products such as green manure.

38. Capital investment is also required in Scotland's 'unsupported' sectors, such as pigs, poultry, soft fruits and vegetables. This is needed to facilitate increased productivity and provide storage and processing capacity in order to add value.
39. It is vital that capital funding is also returned to existing schemes, such as the Food Processing, Marketing and Co-operation (FPMC) Scheme, to enable much needed investment beyond the farmgate and into the supply chain.
40. If this money must be returned as 'resources' rather than 'capital', the latter being our clear preference, we call on the Scottish Government to use the funding as a supplement to 2025 Basic Payments Scheme (BPS) and Greening payments.
41. The £46 million of uncommitted funding would amount to almost 11 per cent of the BPS and Greening envelope. We believe a single-rate, one-off 11 per cent uplift in 2025 BPS and Greening payments would provide a significant cash injection to agricultural businesses across Scotland at a time when input costs are still putting them under extreme financial pressure and undermining business viability. That financial injection would drive economic activity throughout rural communities.

Conclusion

42. We understand that there is significant pressure on the overall Scottish Budget. However, with the significant uplift in the block grant, we strongly call for the Scottish Government to demonstrate its support for the sector. Our submission demonstrates that any reduction in the Scottish Government's ARE support budget would negatively impact food security, environment and nature recovery, economic activity and growth.
43. If the Scottish Government wants to secure high-quality food production and the upstream and downstream socio-economic multipliers that are critical to wider rural prosperity across Scotland and the wider UK, our budget must be increased in real and nominal terms.
44. That increase would ensure the continued delivery of the significant return on investment for the Scottish Government, generate more growth and

employment (in areas of Scotland that have little alternative employment), and deliver the climate and nature outcomes that are vital to all our futures.

45. The public interests embedded in sustainable food production, tackling climate change, enhancing biodiversity and underpinning vibrant rural communities cannot be understated or overlooked.

46. In short, the Scottish Government's 2025/26 Budget must provide the fuel to drive all the clear objectives and ambitions in the Scottish Government's flagship Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024.

47. Scotland's farmers and crofters cannot deliver what is being asked of them, in the wider interests of us all, without the financial backing which is now the sole responsibility of the Scottish Government.

Annex A - Investing in Scottish agriculture is investing in the future prosperity of Scotland

Delivering food security

1. Committing to sustainable domestic agricultural production rather than relying on importing food is important. We cannot rely on food supplies from other countries – which also means off-shoring our environmental responsibilities as well as our commitments to animal health and welfare. Affordable high-quality food is being made here and our producers need funding assistance to continue to deliver this.
2. The Scottish Government should increase agricultural funding as it will lead to an increase in confidence and investment in food production, as well as climate and nature restoration, across the country.

Delivering for rural communities

3. Thousands of supply chain companies are supported by our farmers and crofters across the country. Supply chain companies used by agricultural businesses often sustain rural communities in areas with little or no alternative employment.
4. Any real or nominal reduction in future agricultural budgets would impact the vast array of supply chain businesses that rely on the spending of active farming and crofting. It would put at risk the upstream socio-economic multipliers that are critical to wider rural prosperity across Scotland.
5. A funding increase will protect the livelihoods of rural communities.

Delivering for climate and nature recovery

6. Farmers, crofters, and growers across Scotland are tasked to deliver food production at affordable prices alongside increasingly being asked to help the country meet climate change and biodiversity goals.
7. As guardians of over 70 per cent of Scotland's hugely variable land mass, our members help to deliver on the climate and biodiversity policy objectives of the Scottish Government.
8. At least 32 per cent of the UK's utilisable agricultural area (UAA) is in Scotland and is home to some 56 per cent of the UK's less favoured areas. Scottish farmers and crofters manage some 21 per cent of the permanent grass and 71 per cent of the rough grazing in the UK. And Scotland holds around 60 per cent of the UK's peatlands and 34 per cent of designated sites.
9. We are committed to sustainably tackling climate change and nature restoration but need Scottish Government funding to be able to deliver these vital outcomes.
10. A decision to increase agricultural funding will help in the delivery of climate and nature outcomes.

Delivering for economic growth

11. Farming is the first link in the food and drink sector that is worth billions both domestically and through Scottish exports of internationally renowned products such as Scotch Beef and Scotch Whisky – the latter of which generates significant revenue for the Exchequer every year.
12. Any reduction in funding would significantly undermine Scotland and the UK's aspirations to grow the food and drink sector, as the major plank of green economic growth.

Delivering a return of investment

13. Significant returns on investment are generated from agricultural funding. This is delivered back to the Scottish and UK economies and to wider society.
14. Analysis shows that the £550 million of direct support to Scottish agriculture generates an output of £3.3 billion – i.e. for every £1 of public support farmers and crofters in Scotland convert that into about £6 of output.
15. A case study of just 12 farms across the length and breadth of Scotland showed that they spent £12.6 million annually with over 722 supply chain businesses.

16. We have demonstrated that farmers and crofters play an integral role in rural areas right across Scotland – a nation reliant on active farming and crofting to deliver an array of economic, environmental and social values. Equally, farmers and crofters are reliant on Scottish Government funding now if those benefits are to be reaped by generations to come.

Document 5A

From: Gougeon M (Mairi), MSP <Mairi.Gougeon.msp@parliament.scot>

Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2024 5:14 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <cabsecforRALRI@gov.scot>

Subject: Fwd: NFUS

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Date: 14 November 2024 at 13:09:21 GMT

To: "Gougeon M (Mairi), MSP" <Mairi.Gougeon.msp@parliament.scot>

Subject: NFUS

Dear Mairi,

I am emailing you to thank you for showing your support to the farming and crofting sector as you met with us at our exhibition at the Scottish Parliament last week.

You may have seen that there was a motion submitted on Thursday last week, S6M-15252 from Karen Adam MSP, which acknowledges the work our President Martin Kennedy has delivered for agriculture, positively shaping it for future generations of farmers and crofters, before he steps down in February next year. I would like to ask for your support of this motion, if you haven't already done so.

Martin Kennedy will be in attendance at our rally at the Scottish Parliament on 28 November, alongside other farmers and crofters, as we look to showcase all that farmers and crofters deliver (high-quality food production, climate and nature restoration and thriving rural communities) to secure a multi-year ring-fenced budget for Scottish agriculture in the Scottish Budget on the 4 December. We will be in touch with your office to hopefully arrange a meeting for you and any local farmer or crofter from your area.

Hopefully we will see you again then.

Best wishes

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Document 5B

2 December 2024

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Thank you for your email dated 14th November regarding the motion lodged by Karen Adam MSP to acknowledge the work of your President Martin Kennedy during his tenure.

Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon recognises the significant contribution he has made during his two years as president of NFUS and his tireless work which included working with her as Co-chair of ARIOB amongst a raft of other commitments which the Cabinet Secretary has had the pleasure of being a part of.

In the meantime, she looks forward to continued meaningful engagement with Martin for the remainder of his term in office.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED-Regulation 11] APD : Agriculture Support Policy Development

Document 6A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 12:43 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]; Martin Kennedy <martin.kennedy@nfus.org.uk>

Subject: NFU Scotland Letter to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform, and Islands

Please find attached letter to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform, and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, from NFUS President, Martin Kennedy.

Best wishes

[REDACTED-Regulation 11] | Political Affairs Advisor

Document 6B

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Sent to: CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot

Dear Mairi,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about the process of designating a new National Park in Scotland. As you may be aware, NFU Scotland is opposed to the creation of any new National Park. We recently undertook a public survey on the proposed National Park for Galloway. Of the almost 2,000 respondents, 73% were against the proposed bid. Of our members that responded, 78% were against the proposal. We feel that this is a significant proportion of the population – both farmer and the general public – who have serious concerns about what a new National Park will mean for them, their communities and their businesses.

One of our main concerns is around the process. In July 2024, the Scottish Government confirmed that NatureScot was to be appointed the Reporter to conduct the public consultation and investigation into whether Galloway should become Scotland's third National Park. In an initial meeting with NatureScot, they said that were not an impartial reporter, as their organisation has an interest in Scotland gaining a new National Park. This has unfortunately confirmed many fears from our membership that this proposal is a 'done deal'.

NatureScot committed to conducting their investigation in an open, transparent and inclusive way. But unfortunately, this clear bias is preventing this from happening. Our members in the Galloway and Ayrshire regions feel that their views are not represented, their voices are not heard, and their opinions do not matter. They feel the matter on whether Galloway should become a new National Park has already been decided by a small minority. This was evidenced by the fact NatureScot recently shared a report commissioned by Scottish Environment LINK on the social and economic benefits of National Parks. This report itself was written by John Mayhew, Chairman of the Scottish Campaign for National Parks. Our

members have repeatedly stated that the lack of impartiality and objectivity is making them feel alienated and ignored by this process.

We feel like this is a serious problem and that there has been a significant failing on the part of the Government by not appointing a truly independent reporter for this investigation. As an additional concern, we know there are legislative changes proposed for the National Parks Act (Scotland) Act 2000. We are concerned that these changes are not sequential but happening in parallel. We feel that any changes to the legislation should be established before the public have been asked to comment on proposals for a new National Park. By not doing so, the process is disjointed and unclear.

We do currently and hope to continue to have a good working relationship with NatureScot. We remain committed to engaging in the process and will provide a full and thorough response to the consultation when it is published. But we would be doing our members a disservice by not putting on record the fact that many of them feel this process is nothing more than a rubber stamp.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy
President, NFU Scotland

Document 6C

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Our Reference: 202400439722

Your Reference: NFU Scotland Letter to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform, and Islands 11 December 2024

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your correspondence of 5 November 2024 regarding the proposal for Scotland's next National Park to be located in Galloway. Please accept my apology for the delay in responding to your correspondence.

I appreciate you writing to let me know of your concerns about the proposal for a new National Park in the south-west of Scotland and for sharing the results of the public survey that NFU Scotland undertook. I am concerned to hear that your members in the Galloway and Ayrshire regions feel that their voices are not heard and that their opinions do not matter - I can assure you that this is not the case and that we very much value the views and opinions of your members and of people that live and work in Galloway and South and East Ayrshire.

First and foremost, I want to stress that the designation of a new National Park in the Galloway area is still very much a proposal and by no means a 'done deal'. The purpose of the current public consultation is to gauge whether or not there is support for a new National Park and to ensure that everyone has the chance to have their say on the more detailed aspects of the proposal. That is why I am encouraging everyone with an interest to engage in the consultation process and make their views known.

As you know, NatureScot has been appointed as the reporter, in line with the requirements of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 and NatureScot's expertise and experience of the aims of National Parks. In its role as the reporter, NatureScot is required to take forward an investigation into the proposal which includes a statutory public consultation. The consultation began on 7 November and will conclude on 14 February next year. We have extended the consultation period by an additional two weeks to take account of the festive period when people will understandably be busy with other things.

In our proposal, we made it clear that the consultation should be participatory and inclusive and that it should ensure that people living and working in the area have an opportunity to discuss the issues, consider the content of the proposal including the desirability of a National Park in the area and suggest any alternatives. In addition to consulting local authorities, community councils, businesses, landowners, land managers and interest groups, NatureScot has been asked to ensure that representatives of the social, economic and environmental interests of the proposed National Park are consulted and that their views are reported. I am aware that the NatureScot reporter team has met with NFU Scotland representatives on a number of occasions since July and that they attended an event hosted by NFUS Ayrshire in November

In addition to the consultation surveys, NatureScot has awarded a public contract to an independent third-party organisation with the relevant expertise to organise and facilitate a series of in-person public engagement events during the consultation period. Over 25 events across the area have been confirmed so far and attendees are supported to share their thoughts, opinions and questions in a welcoming environment. All views expressed at these events will be captured and reported on.

I would like to assure you that we will give very careful consideration to the outcome of the consultation process before taking any further decisions on the proposal for a new National Park. Everyone's views will be listened to and taken into account. Responses to the public consultation will be categorised according to location (inside the proposed area, within the region, within Scotland, elsewhere). Care will be taken by the reporter to avoid multiple responses from the same individual or group. All

responses will be made publicly available (within GDPR limits) and an independent evaluation of the consultation process will be undertaken and presented to the Scottish Government.

I hope this provides reassurance regarding the public consultation and NatureScot's role as the reporter. I am committed to seeing this important consultation process through and I appreciate your organisation's commitment to engaging with the process and providing a full and thorough consultation response. I would emphasise once again how important it is that we hear from people living and working in the area, including those working in the farming, forestry and other land-based sectors given their importance within the area

In your letter you also express concerns around potential changes to the National Parks legislation. As you know, in 2023 we consulted on proposed changes to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The responses to this consultation have been analysed and a report of the consultation analysis has been published on our website.

The consultation analysis demonstrates overall agreement with the need to review and modernise the legal framework for National Parks given that it is over 20 years since the legislation came into force. For example, there was broad support for the suggested changes to the role of public bodies operating within National Parks. However, respondents had more mixed views on the proposed changes to the purpose, aims and governance of National Parks.

I have given careful consideration to the consultation responses - including that of NFUS - and this is informing the development of provisions that will be included within the Natural Environment Bill.

Residents and business operating in the area proposed for the new National Park will have the opportunity to comment on the details of the proposed changes to National Parks legislation once the Bill is introduced. I will of course listen very carefully to any views they express and will continue to engage very closely with all interested parties.

Thank you again for bringing these matters to my attention and I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely, MAIRI GOUGEON

Document 7A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2024 5:11 PM

To: Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

Cc:[REDACTED-Regulation 11]; Martin Kennedy <martin.kennedy@nfus.org.uk> [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Subject: NFU Scotland Letter to Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

Please find attached letter to Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, Jim Fairlie MSP, from NFU Scotland President, Martin Kennedy.

Best wishes

AI

[REDACTED-Regulation 11] | Political Affairs Advisor

NFU Scotland | Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston, Newbridge, EH28 8LT

Document 7B

Dear Minister,

I write to request a meeting with you to discuss Fair Work.

We have a key concern that the Real Living Wage (RLW) and the wage rates of the Scottish Agricultural Wages Order (SAWO), set by the Scottish Agriculture Wages Board (SAWB), are not fairly aligned with one another. We discussed this with the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP last year and as the SAWB is due to commence negotiations in November, we would welcome a meeting at the earliest opportunity with you to address this issue again. We believe that the SAWB should only make recommendations as an independent body with regards to wage rates, not purely implement government policy.

If Fair Work conditions, including the RLW, are a requirement of businesses in receipt of public funding then we believe that is incompatible with the SAWO which has been independently agreed by the SAWB. Without an understanding as to how the RLW and SAWB will be able to work alongside each other, perhaps a wider discussion on the future role of the SAWB is required.

We also have worries about the future upskilling and learning of young agricultural workers. There is no age banding in place within the SAWO, meaning that all workers, no matter of age or experience are paid the same. The availability of labour is a huge concern for the

industry as it is, and we believe this is a further barrier. Implementing age banding, would encourage employers to invest in a younger workforce. Not only providing opportunities for young people, but also helping to shape and secure our future workforce. The Fair Work policy for employers to pay apprentices the Real Living Wage is another significant concern. The Real Living Wage paid to apprentices would discourage employers from participating in apprenticeship schemes, which are already oversubscribed. This is unworkable and further highlights the Fair Work policy does not interact with the SAWO in its current form.

We would very much welcome the opportunity to meet you at the earliest opportunity. We originally wrote to Minister Arthur who informed us that you, as Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, would be the right person to meet to discuss this.

Please can your office send through some suitable dates for you to meet with us.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy
President, NFU Scotland

Document 7C

T : 0300 244 4000

E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Our Reference: 202400437834

6 November 2024

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Thank you for the letter from Martin Kennedy to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity on 23 October 2024.

The Minister would be pleased to accept your invitation to meet with you. Officials will be in touch shortly by email to arrange a suitable date.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11] Private Secretary

Document 8A

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

Date: 21st October 2024

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Precision breeding technology – enabling climate resilience in Scottish Agriculture

Precision breeding (PB) also known as gene editing is one of the key tools which will be required by farmers, crofters and growers across the globe to meet the challenges of producing food whilst coping with more extreme climatic conditions. Precision breeding allows plant breeders to rapidly breed new more climate resilient varieties of key crops, thus improving yield reliability and resource efficiency. In Scotland, we have unique pest and disease pressures arising from our climate, however we also have the research institutions and plant breeding businesses to help address them.

Precision breeding has the potential to play a key role in contributing to key Scottish Government policies, including reducing emissions from agricultural production, growing the Scottish agricultural economy and contributing to food security through ensuring resilient domestic food and feed supply.

As an industry we believe that the government cannot afford to ignore the vast potential benefits of this established technology. We should be clear that Precision Breeding is not the same as Genetic Modification, and there are clear differences between the two.

Globally, many nations and trading blocs such as the EU, Canada, USA, Argentina and Australia either have legislation in place to enable precision breeding or are in the process of doing so. Here in Scotland, our major trading partners in both England and the EU are advancing legislation which will enable the production of PB crops. Scotland has a great opportunity to not only benefit from both research and application of precision breeding technologies, but also to lead them.

Divergence from our key trading partners and markets is a major concern for our industry. It would create extra cost and friction for our vital agri-food supply chains, given the global nature of these markets. At a time when we continue to experience supply chain disruptions and volatility caused both by weather events and geopolitical instability – we as an industry believe access to precision breeding technology is essential for Scottish Agriculture.

As an industry we therefore call upon the Scottish Government to establish an independent expert working group to consider the key issues in relation to Precision Breeding technology. The group should consider the range of issues and evidence covering scientific application, comparing international regulatory developments, trade impacts, cost of enforcing divergent GE policies, impact on agricultural productivity and impacts on EU alignment. We feel this is the best way of taking into account the range of stakeholders with an interest in this issue, whilst also ensuring that Scotland, and our rural economy, are not left behind in this vital area of innovation.

As an industry we look forward to having a constructive dialogue with Government on this issue.

Cc'd Minister for Agriculture & Connectivity.

Industry signatories:

**Agricultural Industries Confederation
Robert Sheasby CEO**



**GB Potatoes
Scott Walker CEO**



**NFU Scotland
Martin Kennedy President**



Document 9A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>
Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2024 4:38 PM
To: Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity 2023 <ministerac@gov.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>
Subject: NFU Scotland letter to Minister Fairlie

Please find attached a letter from Martin Kennedy, President NFU Scotland, to Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity Jim Fairlie MSP on issues relating to the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service.

Please let me know if you need any further information.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Political Affairs Manager

NFU Scotland | Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston, Newbridge, EH28 8LT

Document 9B

Dear Minister,

Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service

I write to underline the urgent need for improvements to the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) for farmers and crofters.

On your recent visit to the West Coast of Scotland during summer recess, you will have witnessed first-hand the importance of our farmers and crofters to rural island communities. As Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, it is vital that you work to tackle the transport issues that face our members across these communities, as they continue to damage businesses and livelihoods.

Following NFU Scotland's meeting with the then Minister for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP in October 2023, we wrote to Transport Scotland to take forward the issues we discussed with the Minister. Yet despite several attempts from us to follow this up, we did not receive a response. Nearly a year has passed, and there continues to be areas of significant concern that need to be addressed.

We believe that improved collaborative working between the agricultural sector, CalMac, CMAL, and Transport Scotland could help address the issues facing our members. While we have cultivated positive and useful engagement with CalMac at a local level, we have had little opportunity to engage with CMAL and Transport Scotland. We need to ensure that all organisations are fully aware of, and understand, the issues and impacts relating to the agricultural sector.

In the short-term, the cumulative impact of all the disruptions and restrictions means that farmers and crofters are being prevented, at a critical time of year, from reaching markets and receiving essential goods from the mainland. In the long-term, farmers and crofters on the islands are seeking reassurance that the current situation will not continue.

Our members are reporting the following issues:

1. Vessel breakdowns, further delays in the delivery of new vessels coinciding with the introduction of the winter timetable is causing significant disruption for our members.
2. Timetabling and dry-docking decisions, made increasingly without community consultation, continue to cause issues for businesses with both island-based communities and those servicing the islands. The impact is not only economic but can affect animal health and welfare (resulting from the inability to

transport livestock, feeding and bedding for animals to and from islands sometimes for weeks on end).

3. Securing advance bookings, for both commercial livestock hauliers and farmers and crofters traveling with their own livestock trailers continues to be difficult. This has particularly impacted our members during the late summer and autumn sale period. We have highlighted these problems regularly with CalMac and HiTrans since the new booking system was first adopted in May 2023, however they remain unresolved. We are calling for CalMac to introduce a bespoke agricultural vehicle ticket, which will enable farmers and crofters to use the service effectively and with confidence.
4. Livestock trailers cannot be booked online, which means that members must phone the port of departure to secure a booking. Members are frequently reporting that they are unable to get through to CalMac staff on the phone to book a livestock trailer. With limited available capacity on the ferries, members either must travel to the port to make the booking in-person or they have to ask other people, who are nearer the booking offices, to visit in person to secure a booking. This is not a practical solution. Members are also reporting having trouble booking livestock trailers, despite available deck space, even with the best efforts of port staff. We are calling for the CalMac booking service to be fit for purpose and enable farmers and crofters to be able to use it for their needs effectively.
5. We have concerns regarding the lack of contingency planning in place if there are further breakdowns across the service. For example, it is not clear what will happen if the MV Finlaggan was to breakdown, particularly during the single vessel portion of this year's winter timetable.
6. The recent disruption to the Arran route has meant that livestock hauliers have had to use the Lochranza to Claonaig route, resulting in an additional 3–6-hour travel time dependent on which livestock mart they are travelling to, with associated additional costs ranging from £200-£400 per journey.
7. Members on Mull have highlighted concerns that the MV Loch Frisa is not fit for purpose. This ferry has a height restriction much lower than most vessels, meaning that commercially viable loads of hay, straw and livestock lorries are unable to travel.

8. There is disappointment that the Colonsay Winter Service is not reflective of the concerns that had been raised to CalMac over the past three years. We are keen for this to be addressed and that real engagement takes place going forward.
9. The cancellation of the Mallaig to Lochboisdale service and the further pressure this puts on the Uig to Lochmaddy route, along with the associated additional time and cost of using this route is of great concern. We call for this route to be safeguarded from further cancellations.
10. Members are extremely concerned about the ability of the winter timetables across all routes to meet demand.
11. Required improvements to Ardrossan Harbour are essential so that the MV Glen Sannox and MV Glen Rosa are able to use it when they come into service.
12. Until the new vessels are in operation, improvements to the reliance of the fleet on the Ardrossan to Brodick route is required following recent breakdowns and cancelled services.

We would welcome confirmation from either you, Transport Scotland or CalMac that these issues will be resolved.

NFU Scotland welcomes the investment that has been made in recent years however this investment has been long overdue. In our response to the Scottish Ferries Review Public Consultation in 2010, we stated then that there was an urgent need for investment in both the ferries and port infrastructure. In the intervening fourteen years it is frustrating to see what little progress has been made.

We therefore call on the Scottish Government to take action to secure the resilience of the service until the new ferries are in place. It has recently been suggested to Scottish Government that MV Isle of Lewis and MV Isle of Mull should be retained as standby vessels when the new boats come into the fleet, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deal with peak demand, dry docking and breakdowns in future. We would welcome confirmation that these ferries will be retained to provide that much needed resilience.

Future engagement

On the wider issue of joint engagement with CalMac and Transport Scotland, we would welcome the opportunity to secure a regular meeting with both organisations, on an annual basis. This would provide the opportunity to develop and improve two-way dialogue on transport issues and allow a joint approach to rectify key issues facing the sector and that impact our members' businesses. As underlined earlier, we sought this independently with Transport Scotland but have had no response.

NFU Scotland has representation on HITRANS meetings for the Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group where many of the issues highlighted in this letter have been repeatedly raised. However, an action from the Ministerial meeting last year was the suggestion that NFU Scotland should be part of a Transport Group considering issues specifically around freight. We sought further information on this group but have not heard from Transport Scotland. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in this.

The CHFS is a life-line service, and as such an efficient and reliable service that serves the needs of the island communities is essential to ensure the continued economic viability of agriculture on the islands, thereby delivering on the wider environmental and social benefits that we know active farming and crofting provides.

We would welcome confirmation from you that the issues highlighted in this letter will be resolved.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin C. Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Martin Kennedy
President, NFU Scotland

Document 9C

T : [REDACTED-Regulation 11]
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot
[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
[\[REDACTED-Regulation 11\]](#)

Our Reference: 202400436007
Your Reference: NFU Scotland

5 November 2024

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11] [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Thank you for your correspondence dated 10 October 2024 concerning improvements required to the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) for farmers and crofters residing on our Islands.

My visits to Mull and Islay during the summer were informative. Meeting members of farming communities and having the opportunity to hear from them directly provided an excellent insight. Some of the points raised are familiar to me from other discussions and feedback received. I am happy to work together with all stakeholders, including the NFU Scotland (NFUS).

At the meeting on 11 October 2023, between Ms Hyslop MSP, when she was Minister for Transport, I understand a number of issues were discussed regarding both ferries and roads. With regards to actions concerning ferry services, it is my understanding that these were forwarded to CalMac who subsequently contacted NFUS directly concerning them. Officials have checked their systems regarding correspondence received, and have advised that there is no record of any outstanding correspondence from NFUS. However, if you are able to provide dates and to who any correspondence was addressed to, officials will be able to investigate this further.

New Vessels and Fleet Management

I fully understand that delays to the new vessels are concerning and are as a result of ongoing global supply chain issues which have impacted the entire shipbuilding industry. In addition, Cemre shipyard have also encountered issues affecting the availability of specialist contractors. Officials in Transport Scotland continue to work closely with Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) and CalMac to closely monitor progress on delivery and deployment timescales. With regards to MV Glen Sannox, handover to CalMac will follow on completion of the latest works and sea trials, allowing her to enter service.

The procurement process has commenced for the Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP). This will see seven new vessels serving communities across the network, along with associated port enabling works. The delivery of these

vessels will improve reliability of individual services and increase resilience of the wider network, for the benefit of our island communities.

In terms of the future of the fleet, as we welcome new vessels it does also mean we need to consider how best to address those that are nearing the end of their working life. This will of course be done in conjunction with the operator and CMAL so that decisions are informed, and we are making full use of the resources available, including considering much needed resilience across the network.

Operational

You have highlighted various issues across the network. I met with senior management of CalMac on 23 October, where I raised the question of livestock movement and have requested more detail from Duncan Mackinson, Interim CEO.

During my meeting I challenged CalMac on how they address periods of disruption if a vessel is required to be removed from service, for example Lochboisdale. CalMac undertakes a network wide review using their Route Prioritisation Matrix to ensure that a core service is delivered to all parts of the ferry network, this will result in vessels being redeployed from elsewhere on the network. CalMac will ensure that disruption to a community will be for a restricted time period only. As you will appreciate this is a very complex process.

During the winter months this becomes increasingly difficult. You will be aware that every vessel within the CalMac fleet requires regular maintenance work and CalMac are contractually obliged to ensure annual overhauls are completed successfully. These overhauls are undertaken over the winter months, and because not all vessels are suitable for every route, the scheduling of the overhaul programme, is a long and complex process which also had to take into account the availability of dry dock facilities.

I understand that CalMac's previous booking system allowed port staff to book livestock trailers, however they have experienced some issues with the new system. CalMac acknowledge the challenges customers have been facing in securing advance bookings for livestock trailers, particularly during peak livestock season. They are considering implementing a dedicated phone line for agricultural vehicles as an interim solution until they are able to provide a full digital service.

You mentioned specifically concerns about the MV Loch Frisa. Transport Scotland officials have raised this directly with the operator and CalMac have advised that she does not have a height restriction that would limit her from accommodating the movement of hay, straw and livestock lorries. However, depending on demand and vehicles travelling on specific sailings, there may be limited availability. This is

because, high-sided vehicles can only travel in the centre of the vessel due to the configuration of the overhead deck.

I share your frustrations regarding the Ardrossan Harbour redevelopment, and we are progressing the Business Case and Cost Exercise Review as quickly as possible. However, it is critical that all legal and financial agreements are clearly defined to ensure these are affordable and ensure value to the public purse.

The Scottish Government remains committed to delivering a first-class sustainable ferry service to our communities, stimulating socio economic growth across Scotland and the Islands. CalMac recently agreed an extension to the charter of MV Alfred from Pentland Ferries. The introduction to the fleet of the MV Glen Sannox will help maximise available capacity on the Arran service and bring much needed resilience to the network, with ongoing engagement with the island community.

As part of the ongoing development of the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) and the new Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services contract (CHFS3), officials conducted extensive stakeholder engagement along with formal public consultations. I understand the NFUS submitted a corporate response to these public consultations. Transport Scotland also met with the NFUS Regional Manager for Argyll and the Islands in Spring 2024. The final report and summary is available by following the link [Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service 3 | Public consultation | Transport Scotland](#). The ICP consultation has been published, and is available by following the link: [Islands Connectivity Plan | Transport Scotland](#).

Transport Scotland will continue to engage with stakeholders, including NFUS and its members – with recent examples in the Islay Forum organised by Jenni Minto MSP and at the regular Shetland External Transport Forum. I also understand that CalMac's Head of Operations continues to engage with you.

I hope that this detailed reply addresses your concerns

Yours sincerely,

JIM FAIRLIE

Document 10A

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Please find attached a letter from Ms Gougeon for your consideration.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

[\[REDACTED-Regulation 11\]](#)

Deputy Private Secretary - Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon, MSP
Scottish Government, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG
Tel [REDACTED-Regulation 11]
E-mail: cabsecforRALRI@gov.scot

Document 10B

3 July 2024

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11],

I would like to make you aware of the current appointments round for the Scottish Land Commission. We are looking for two new Land Commissioners, and a Tenant Farming Commissioner.

This is a particularly important time for land reform in Scotland, with the Scottish Government having introduced an ambitious Land Reform Bill, based on recommendations made by the Scottish Land Commission. The role of the Scottish Land Commission is to stimulate fresh thinking, advise the Scottish Government on an ongoing programme of land reform, and to provide leadership for change in culture and practice. You can read more about the Scottish Land Commission on their website: About us - Scottish Land Commission.

Land Commissioners

A Land Commissioner's non-executive role is to provide leadership, direction, support and guidance to ensure the Scottish Land Commission delivers its functions effectively and efficiently, and in accordance with the aims, policies and priorities of Scottish Ministers.

To be successful in its role, the Board needs Land Commissioners with a range of knowledge, skills and experience. We are currently looking for people with either: knowledge and experience of community empowerment, including in relation to ownership, engagement, and wealth building; or experience of human rights and equal opportunities. Candidates will also need to demonstrate evidence of: knowledge of land reform and policy; strategic thinking and judgement; communication, influence and constructive challenge; and teamwork and collaboration. Further information is available in the application pack which can be found on the Scottish Government website at Appointment Listings at Scottish Government (icims.com).

The Tenant Farming Commissioner's non-executive role is important to improving relationships between landlords and tenant farmers. The TFC will work with the main stakeholder organisations within the industry and be responsible, among other things, for establishing codes of practice providing practical guidance to landlords and tenants of agricultural holdings, promoting the use of those codes and keeping them under regular review.

To be successful in its role, the Board needs a Tenant Farming Commissioner with a range of knowledge, skills and experience. We are currently looking for someone with expertise or experience in agriculture, including an understanding of agricultural holdings legislation in Scotland, and how this impacts on landlords and tenants, including small landholdings; experience of facilitating negotiation and mediation to avoid, assist and enable dispute resolution. Candidates will also need to demonstrate evidence of strategic thinking and oversight; communication, influence and constructive challenge; teamwork and collaboration; and sound judgement. Further information is available in the application pack which can be found on the Scottish Government website at Appointment Listings at Scottish Government (icims.com).

Candidates do not need to have previous experience of being on a Board. New Commissioners will have the opportunity to receive comprehensive training. This will include being assigned an existing Commissioner as a mentor, who will offer individual support and guidance, in order to learn the new skills they require during their time on the Board.

The Scottish Land Commission is seeking to broaden the diversity of its Board further, as it values highly the benefits that diverse perspectives and experience brings. We strongly encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds and currently under-reflected groups to apply, including those from varied socio-economic background. It is desirable to appoint an additional Gaelic speaker to the Board although this is not an essential requirement.

I would be grateful if you could please raise awareness of the appointments with your members and networks, and encourage them to consider submitting an application.

The role of a Commissioner is a fulfilling and rewarding role. To find out more about being part of the Scottish Land Commission, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Lorne Macleod, one of the current Land Commissioners, by emailing [REDACTED-Regulation 11]t or [REDACTED-Regulation 11], the Tenant Farming Commissioner, by emailing [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

We are also holding an online event to provide further information on the Scottish Land Commission, the Board of Commissioners and the roles. Please visit Events - News & Events - Scottish Land Commission for the date and to register for this online event.

Yours sincerely

MAIRI GOUGEON

Document – 11A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 10:13 AM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity 2023 <ministerac@gov.scot>

Subject: Letter from NFU Scotland to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

Please find attached a letter from Martin Kennedy, President NFU Scotland, to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government Shona Robison MSP.

I have copied in the offices of the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands Mairi Gougeon MSP and the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity Jim Fairlie MSP.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Document 11B

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11],

Thank you for meeting with NFU Scotland on 5 June at the Scottish Parliament. We appreciated the opportunity to speak with you about future funding for the agricultural sector and welcomed your willingness to work closely on securing an increase of funding for our sector from the next UK Government. I provide further details on what we discussed below and my team would be happy to liaise with your officials if further information would be helpful.

Future funding commitment from next UK Government

The most important issue for NFU Scotland following the General Election in July is securing a commitment from the next UK Government on agricultural and rural funding. We have been unequivocal for some time in stating we need an increased, ring-fenced and multi-annual budget for farm support across the UK.

A multi-annual commitment is essential as it will provide certainty to the sector and enable farmers and crofters to invest, plan better and deliver the required outcomes. Farming and

crofting work to a long timescale and many environmental actions and decisions are based on the need to have repeated funding over a period of years. It would also deliver a degree of certainty to our sector.

Increase to funding

An increase in funding for agriculture is required. There has been real term erosion in the value of current support at the same time as farmers and crofters are being tasked with so much more in terms of policy objectives. We have called for at least an extra £1 billion which, on current allocations to Scotland, would equate to at least an extra £170 million for Scotland.

Increase to the 17 per cent share

Scotland's current existing share of UK farm funding is 17 per cent. This share is very historic and relates back to the distribution of funding prior to 2005. We strongly believe that there is a need for the next UK Government to review and deliver an increase in the 17 per cent allocation from the UK's Agriculture Support Budget. Given that current and future agricultural policy across the UK has a much greater focus on delivering environmental and social outcomes, as well as food production, there is a valid argument for a greater share of future funding to be allocated to where in the UK these outcomes can best be delivered to the significant degrees required.

Scotland has around:

- 32 per cent of the UK's utilisable agricultural area (UAA)
- 56 per cent of the UK's less favoured areas
- 21 per cent of the permanent grass
- 71 per cent of the UK's rough grazing
- 60 per cent of the UK's peatlands
- 34 per cent of designated sites.

Funding from the Scottish Government

With regards to funding from the Scottish Government going forward, I highlight the importance of farmers and crofters to Scotland, not just in relation to agricultural production, but also to rural communities.

The return on investment from active farming is significant. We therefore need to ensure that future funding from both the next UK Government and Scottish Government for the sector is right for farmers and crofters, and the thousands of supply chain companies that are supported by the sector. NFU Scotland recently published an overview of just 12 farms

across the length and breadth of Scotland that spent £12.6 million annually on over 722 supply chain businesses.

I look forward to continue to work with you, Cabinet Secretary Gougeon and Minister Fairlie to deliver future funding which is critical if our shared goals around high-quality food, climate, nature and rural communities are to be delivered.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy, NFU Scotland President

Document 12A

Fri 05/07/2024

Good afternoon,

Please find attached an invitation from Mr Fairlie MSP, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, inviting you to participate in a in a roundtable on decarbonising rural machinery and equipment on 23rd July.

We would be grateful if you could please confirm your attendance and any dietary requirements / accessibility requirements by Friday 12th July.

Best regards,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Document 12B

5 July 2024

Good afternoon

Invitation to participate in a roundtable on decarbonising rural machinery and equipment.

Rural machinery and equipment in Scotland can be used in a broad range of different operating environments and across a range of sectors, including in agriculture, forestry, construction, marine, mining, recreational, and wider transport. There is considerable use of similar equipment within these sectors due to the crossover in technologies available, similar business needs and operational challenges.

There are opportunities for cross sectoral collaboration on some solutions, which is why we are delivering our Programme for Government commitment to host a roundtable discussion on the issue.

This is a new policy area, and we are therefore seeking to build and facilitate relationships with the relevant industry and stakeholders from across the different sectors. You have been identified as a key stakeholder, given your valuable knowledge and expertise in your area.

I kindly request that you join me at our roundtable discussion to share your insights and knowledge on **Tuesday 23 July, between 9:30 am to 1:30 pm at SASA, Roddinglaw Road, Edinburgh, EH12 9FJ.**

The outline Agenda includes:

1. Welcome from Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity.
2. Breakout Session 1 - User needs - Roundtable discussions on needs and requirements for machinery and infrastructure and current challenges in decarbonising.
3. Breakout Session 2 - Opportunities - Roundtable discussion on opportunities and new technologies.
4. Next Steps and conclusion.
5. Net-working lunch.

Your attendance will help us identify cross sectoral challenges and explore collaborative approaches to decarbonising rural machinery and equipment. Contributions from attendees at this roundtable will also be a first step for the Scottish Government in the development of any future machinery policy.

I look forward to the opportunity to engage in a productive and collaborative discussion with you.

I would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance with [REDACTED-Regulation 11] [REDACTED-Regulation 11]) and [REDACTED-Regulation 11] in our Agriculture Policy Division by 12 July 2024. They will make any further arrangements with you.

Yours sincerely

JIM FAIRLIE

Document 13A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Sent: Wednesday, June 12, 2024 12:26 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Subject: NFU Scotland letter - National Parks

Please find attached a letter to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, from Martin Kennedy, President NFU Scotland.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Public Affairs Manager NFU Scotland
[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

DOCUMENT 13B

Dear Mairi,

National Parks Concerns

I write regarding the proposal for at least one new national park in Scotland.

I understand that consideration of the proposals has now completed. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you prior to an announcement being made as to which proposal, or proposals, will be considered further. Our members have expressed concern over a lack of clarity on the future benefits of the proposal for their businesses and I provide some further information on this below.

1. Planning

- There are serious concerns over planning stifling agricultural businesses and rural development. For farming businesses to be profitable and sustainable, they must be able to invest, expand and grow, and there are real concerns among our members that national park designation would increase bureaucracy and stifle innovation.

- If Galloway is chosen for the new national park, it would be the first to be located in a highly productive agricultural area.
- The proposed area in Tayside encompasses many upland units. Any further restrictions or regulations may impact on their viability which in turn will impact on other rural businesses.
- National Parks have in general been against renewable developments and as such, stifle rural development and contradict other Scottish Government policies. Renewable energy of all types must play a part in the Scottish Government's Net Zero targets. We understand that the nomination guidance includes some changes with regard to onshore wind, however we seek assurances of what the approach will be going forward.

2. Access

- Increased visitor numbers cause a number of serious access related concerns and there are a lack of rangers and resources to tackle these problems:
 - Increased livestock worrying cases.
 - Health and Safety (both with access and transport on roads unsuitable for large numbers of vehicles)
 - Disease transfer/spreading, human and dog faeces, food waste.
 - Littering – animal welfare and human health issue for those cleaning it up.
 - Antisocial behaviour. Many people believe they have a 'right to roam' and no understanding what 'a right to responsible access' means.
 - All of the above places an increased demand on already stretched police and council service.
- Increase in footfall could damage natural habitats and impact on nesting birds.
- Prioritising tourism and visitor access in any areas over farming and crofting businesses will be to the detriment of the rural economy and the natural environment. There could also be an impact on existing biodiversity which is already being threatened by the huge volumes of visitors in many, if not all, of the proposed areas.
- Loch Awe covers an area of largely extensive hill units that already are struggling with irresponsible access, the network across this area is made up predominantly of single-track roads that would simply not be safe with increased traffic. The Lochaber bid covers an area which is already saturated with visitors and has seen years of under investment in basic visitor amenities.

3. Transport

- Extremely limited public transport that is not fit for the existing local population and would not support increased visitor numbers is a concern in many of the proposed areas. In Dumfries and Galloway, Loch Awe and Lochaber this is particularly the case.
- In Dumfriesshire, the A75 and A77 the two main roads to the proposed area, would require fully upgrading to motorway status to sustain the increase in visitor numbers alongside existing Euro route freight, agricultural and rural business traffic. Laggan Outdoors is an example of an existing diversified rural business who was unable to expand due to A75 transport/junction issues. Neither road is suitable. The A713 is also in need of upgrade.
- In Loch Awe and Lochaber, the A85 and A83 is being closed on an almost weekly basis during the summer months often in excess of six hours due to serious accidents. The network of single-track roads that are life-line routes for our members already become impassible due to the volume of traffic when the main routes are affected.
- The Perth and Kinross Road network is already under significant amount of pressure due to high volumes of tourists in areas such as Aberfeldy. The roads are in need of significant investment to maintain the current volume of traffic.
- Many of the roads within the Tay Forest Park area are narrow and with the added volume of traffic this will lead to congestion and frustration by road users which may in turn result in increased accidents.

4. Housing

- One of the key outcomes for the Scottish Government is to prevent rural depopulation. The price of houses is likely to rise significantly possibly forcing local people to move from the area and there is already a lack of affordable rural housing for young local people.

- Labour is already an issue for all farm and rural businesses across the proposed areas and the reduction in available housing is a further threat. Limiting the ability of locals being able to buy affordable housing will impact public services and the community as a whole.
- Short term let licencing has reduced the number of overnight accommodation suppliers resulting in less accommodation available for visitors.

5. Regulation

- There are concerns in relation to another layer of bureaucracy. As farmers and land managers, we will have the new Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill and the Biodiversity Strategy. There must be strategic and cohesive policy alignment between different Government strategies and aims. We are concerned that a national park does not have this.
- For example, we believe that creating a new National Park goes against a fair and just transition for Scotland. Neighbours, with similar land types and businesses, living outwith and within any boundary will have significantly different challenges and opportunities.
- It is important to consider the importance of agricultural and food production, what agricultural businesses deliver to the economy not just through direct employment but the thousands of supply chain companies that are supported by farmers and crofters.
- There is a concern that national parks will create conflicting sectoral priorities, for example agriculture versus tourism. Where agriculture is a key economic driver in an area, we seek reassurance that this will not be threatened or reprioritised in favour of other business types, like tourism.

6. Engagement

- We are concerned over the conduct and transparency of some of the applications. Despite asking the Galloway National Park Association at a public forum whether they would not submit if the majority of local people didn't support the application,

they said they would apply regardless. There was also a lack of any engagement with the farming sector in the Borders and Lochaber.

- Within Loch Awe, the meetings were poorly advertised with some public meetings closing earlier than advertised and in many cases ran during normal working hours (9-5) which made it difficult for some to attend.
- Within the Tay Forest Park area, we were concerned that meetings had been arranged with politicians, yet the advertising of such meetings was limited and very much aimed at those in favour of a National Park. In some cases, local councillors were also not notified of the meetings.

7. Resources

- Local councils are understaffed, as are the police and health service, and education and social care are hugely underfunded. Health (of which good food is a major contributor) and education underpin a thriving society. The budget for at least one new national park would be better spent on those areas.
- We also believe that the aims that a National Park wants to achieve could be delivered through existing organisations already working across Scotland.

I look forward to hearing from you on these important issues and once again thank you for your continued engagement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin C. Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M'.

Martin Kennedy
President NFU Scotland

Document 13C

T : [REDACTED-Regulation 11]
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot
Martin Kennedy [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Our Reference: 202400418927

Your Reference: FW: NFU Scotland letter - National Parks 26 July 2024

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your letter of 12 June setting out your concerns relating to our commitment to designate at least one new National Park during the lifetime of this Parliament. I am sorry that I did not get the chance to reply before the announcement was made.

I have noted the points you raised in your letter. As you will have seen in material relating to the announcement, and as set out in my letter to you of 22 July, the next stage in the process of selecting a new National Park will be a Reporter phase conducted by NatureScot, during which there will be extensive engagement and consultation. I have directed them specifically to engage with farmers and other land-owners and managers given their importance within the area. I am very keen that your members get involved and I would encourage you to take the opportunity to present evidence in support of your views to the Reporter during the forthcoming investigation so that their report can accurately reflect the full range of views and perspectives and test the proposal for a National Park in Galloway effectively.

I look forward to seeing you next week during my visit to your farm with the First Minister.

Yours sincerely

MAIRI GOUGEON

DOCUMENT 14A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 2:40 PM
To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11] Colin McAllister <colin.mcallister@gov.scot>
Subject: NFU Scotland letter to Cabinet Secretary Gougeon

Please find attached a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, from Martin Kennedy, NFU Scotland President.

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Document 14B

31 May 2024

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
Scottish Government
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Mairi,

Thank you for meeting with NFU Scotland on 23 May at the Scottish Parliament. We welcomed the opportunity to speak with you about the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill. We also briefly discussed funding and I provide further information on two aspects of this below:

- The future funding split for Tiers 1 and 2 from the Scottish Government's Agriculture and Rural Development Budget
- The need for an increase in the 17 per cent allocation from the UK's Agriculture Support Budget

The return on investment from active farming is significant. We therefore need to ensure that future funding for the sector is right for farmers and crofters, and the thousands of supply chain companies that are supported by the sector. NFU Scotland recently published an overview of just 12 farms across the length and breadth of Scotland that spent £12.6 million annually on over 722 supply chain businesses.

I therefore look forward to speaking to you, and the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity. Future funding is critical if our shared goals around high-quality food, climate, nature and rural communities are to be delivered.

Future Funding Split

NFU Scotland welcomed the announcement in February at our AGM that at least 70 per cent of future portfolio funding will be as direct support via Tiers 1 and 2, with Less Favoured

Areas support in addition to this. We understand that the Scottish Government is planning to announce the future split across Tiers 1 and 2 in June.

It is clear that the allocation between the two Tiers needs to ensure the delivery of the required outcomes from the Vision for Agriculture by sustaining active farming and crofting. As you have often said, and we completely agree, there can be no 'cliff edge'.

The intention of 50 percent of future direct support will be 'conditional' has been clear for some time. This led to an assumption of an equal split of direct support between Tiers 1 and 2. However, given that much more conditionality will now be attached to Tier 1, starting with Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in 2025 with a Whole Farm Plan eligibility requirement, in the first year at least of the new support framework, at least 70 per cent of that direct support should be allocated to Tier 1 with the remaining 30 per cent devoted to Tier 2.

Moreover, the precedent for such a starting point is the current allocations between BPS and Greening – not least as the initial Tier 2 payments are very likely to be based on enhanced Greening requirements.

To achieve the non-contradictory policy objectives relating to high-quality food production, climate and biodiversity, we strongly believe that retaining 70 per cent in Tier 1 in the first year at least will underpin and incentivise agricultural activity and management changes to drive efficiency and productivity, while building resilience and enhancing our environment and continuing to support rural jobs and supply chain businesses. However, this does not mean that we are seeking the status quo.

Allocation of UK Funding

The most important issue for NFU Scotland at the General Election in July is securing a commitment from the next UK Government on agricultural and rural funding. We have been unequivocal for some time in stating we need an increased, ring-fenced and multi-annual budget for farm support across the UK.

Moreover, that increase in funding must be at least an extra £1 billion – given the real terms erosion in the value of current support and because farmers and crofters are being tasked with so much more in terms of policy objectives. On current allocations, that would mean at least an extra £170 million for Scotland – given our current existing share of UK farm funding is 17 per cent.

However, that 17 per cent share is very historic and relates back to the distribution of funding prior to 2005 – before the introduction of decoupling and the Single Farm Payment Scheme (SFPS). In other words, today's allocation of support is almost entirely based on expenditure under production-related schemes such as the Arable Areas Payments Scheme (AAPS), the Suckler Cow Premium Scheme (SCPS) and the Sheep Annual Premium Scheme (SAPS), etc.

After almost twenty years of decoupled support, and with an increasing focus on delivering on food, climate, biodiversity and people-related outcomes, as well as changing the structure and conditions relating to support measures, we are adamant that the allocation of funding across the UK should be reviewed as a matter of urgency by the next UK Government.

Significantly, the Bew Review also looked at how funding should be prioritised increasingly in line with a desire to address environmental challenges, including climate change, whilst also recognising the social value of farming and sustainable food production.

Given that current and future agricultural policy across the UK has a much greater focus on delivering environmental and social outcomes, as well as food production, there is an increasingly valid argument for a greater share of future funding to be allocated to where in the UK these outcomes can best be delivered to the significant degrees required.

While devolution dictates that policy decisions on how the money is spent lies with individual administrations, rather than with the UK Government, both devolved and UK governments collectively should be looking to agree some principles for intra-UK allocations of agriculture funding going forward. While Ministers should try to avoid giving farmers in any one part of the UK an unfair competitive advantage, the principles behind funding allocations must also recognise the social and environmental value of agricultural management in different parts of the UK, i.e. the potential for delivering public goods alongside sustainable, high-quality food production.

In that context, and to validate the case, some 32 per cent of the UK's utilisable agricultural area (UAA) is in Scotland and is home to some 56 per cent of the UK's less favoured areas. Equally, Scottish farmers and crofters manage some 21 per cent of the permanent grass and 71 per cent of the rough grazing in the UK. And Scotland holds some 60 per cent of the UK's peatlands and 34 per cent of designated sites.

The policy objectives have shifted a long way since the production-related support of CAP schemes pre-2005. It is time to open the debate around the fairer allocation of funding across the UK – based on the potential to deliver the desired environmental and social outcomes, as well as sustainable food production. In addition to the cast iron case for significantly increased UK funding, committed on a ring-fenced and multi-annual basis, there is an equally strong justification to revisit how those funds are shared out across the UK.

I look forward to hearing your views as to how we can identify ways in which this could be taken forward so as to deliver a fairer share for Scotland's primary producers. I also am keen to hear your views in relation to the future budget split from the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy
NFU Scotland President

Document 14C

T : [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Your Reference: NFU Scotland letter to Cabinet Secretary Gougeon

2 August 2024

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your letter of 31 May regarding future budget considerations and on the case for Scotland to receive a fair share of the total of UK agriculture funding.

I can confirm that the proposed announcement on budget splits was deferred due to the General Election. We will provide the industry with certainty on this split as soon as possible. As you mention in your letter, the Scottish Government is committed to no cliff edges in support.

have spoken many times about the need for future funding certainty for agriculture due to its multiannual funding commitments and long lead-in time for farmers,

crofters and land managers, most recently when I visited your farm on 29 July with the First Minister.

I am aware of the positive meeting you had with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government where you discussed Scotland's allocation of UK funding. The Scottish Government is in full agreement that the current allocation of funding from the UK Government does not fairly reflect the contribution that Scottish Agriculture can make to deliver on social and environmental outcomes and high quality food production. As the Cabinet Secretary highlighted during your meeting, the First Minister will raise future agriculture funding with the new UK Government.

This will also be one of my key priorities when I engage with the next DEFRA Secretary of State.

I agree with the Cabinet Secretary on the value of NFUS continuing to lobby political parties for Scottish agriculture and thank the NFUS for the work they did on this during the UK general election period. As we discussed on my recent visit, now there is a new UK government, it is important that we continue to work together to ensure a fair deal for Scottish agriculture.

Yours sincerely,

MAIRI GOUGEON

Document 15A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Sent: Friday, April 19, 2024 4:44 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <ministerac@gov.scot>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Subject: Letter from NFU Scotland to Cabinet Secretary Gougeon

Please find attached a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, from Martin Kennedy, President NFU Scotland,.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Document 15B

19 April 2024

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh

Dear Mairi,

It is appreciated that both you and the Scottish Government increasingly recognise the strategic importance of a sustainable, productive and resilient agricultural sector. We welcome and fully support your intentions to enable our farmers, crofters and growers to continue to produce high quality food and, in so doing, sustain our rural communities and our food and drinks industry while also playing our unique role in tackling climate and nature challenges.

However, as you know, agricultural businesses across Scotland and the UK are suffering as a result of sustained cold and wet weather. It is increasingly evident that the prolonged harsh weather has taken its toll on livestock businesses across Scotland. Lambing and calving have been extremely challenging. Livestock losses, late turnout and additional feeding requirements will result in significant financial pressures. As a consequence, while impossible to quantify, many are also facing emotional stresses at the expense of their own wellbeing.

In our arable sectors, cereals and oilseeds businesses have been unable to get spring sown crops established, whilst winter sown crops have struggled so badly in some locations that effectively they have been written off. Other routine but highly time-dependent tasks, such as fertiliser applications, have not been completed. This can only result in yield and financial losses come harvest time. Again, physical and financial pressures are impacting on wellbeing.

Farming and crofting have always been at the mercy of the weather, and it is obvious that every agricultural business must adapt and build resilience in the face of more extreme and less predictable weather.

In helping to achieve that, we consider that the Scottish Government can and should act in the short and medium term to protect then enhance our unique role in the provision of food and public goods – a productive and resilient agricultural sector is key to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of Scotland.

As a result, we are seeking Scottish Government action as follows:

Short Term

The Scottish Government should temporarily suspend all farm-based inspection requirements, adopt a pragmatic approach, and demonstrate flexibility and understanding in the enforcement approach to environmental regulations, including elements of the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC), the Diffuse Pollution General Binding Rules (GBRs) and the requirements of Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZs) Action Plans. This should be done in conjunction with SEPA.

In addition, and relating to Greening, we are seeking a temporary derogation from EFA Fallow requirements - including the option to graze livestock on such land and a further option to utilise any available forage from such land ahead of the 15 July end date.

In terms of flood risk management policy, greater emphasis is needed on properly valuing and protecting agricultural land. In the context of alleviating flood risks, the Scottish Government should instigate an immediate and comprehensive review of the The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (the 'CARs') to better ensure proactive water course management could be more effective in protecting agricultural land from flooding risks. Again, this should be done in conjunction with SEPA.

A related point, particularly affecting highly productive land in Tayside, relates to beaver damage of floodbanks resulting in losses of high value crops. Taking forward the discussions we have already had, and subsequently with Minister Slater, the creation of beaver 'exclusion zones' (including Prime Agricultural Land and other productive land) should be considered as a matter of urgency. This should be done in conjunction with NatureScot.

Medium Term

One of the clear purposes of current direct support payments, notably BPS and Greening, is to act as a safety net for Scottish farmers and crofters by underpinning financial viability when threatened by volatility and/or poorer margins. Given the financial impacts the weather

will undoubtedly have, both now and later in the farming calendar, there is justification for bolstering such direct support payment.

The Scottish Government has repeatedly assured us and the wider agricultural industry that uncommitted funds from the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Scottish Budgets will be returned to the Agriculture and Rural Economy (ARE) portfolio. Whilst £15 million is apparently on its way back, that still leaves £46 million which the Scottish Government could spend as resource and capital funding.

We ask that £40 million be spent as resource via a top up to BPS and Greening payments. That would equate to a pro rata top up of approximately 9.5 percent of the annual BPS plus Greening expenditure (£424 million). This could provide a significant cash injection for almost all agricultural businesses – not least those most impacted by the extreme weather and could be delivered as part of the BPS 2024 payments schedule.

In addition, we also ask that the remaining £6 million is spent as capital through a grant scheme open to all agricultural businesses with the explicit intention of starting to build resilience. With very tight margins and significant volatility across all sectors, it is even more important that businesses adapt to physical (weather) extremes.

For example, while flooding headlines have dominated recent months, we also need to see more investment in water storage and increase our ability to store water when it is in plentiful supply. There are numerous other capital investment options that we think would be of benefit. This would help agricultural businesses adapt in the medium term to build resilience in the longer term.

Finally, we are currently drafting our response to the Draft Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029. We fully agree that as well as taking action to reduce emissions and sequester more carbon, we must also take steps to adapt to climate change. That must be a priority if Scotland's farmers and crofters are to fulfil their unique role in delivering on the shared objectives around food, climate, biodiversity and people. However, right now, action is required to help ensure Scottish agriculture is on a sure footing and is enabled to play its part to best effect.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy
President NFU Scotland

Document 15C

T: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Martin Kennedy
[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Our Reference: 202400410527

Your Reference: Letter from NFU Scotland to Cabinet Secretary Gougeon 28 May 2024

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your letter dated 19th April to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP on the matter of the sustained cold and wet weather that has been experienced by farmers during April.

I am responding to you on her behalf following our opportunity to meet on 22nd April and discuss these matters in person.

We have made clear in the Vision for Agriculture our intention to enable our farmers, crofters and growers to deliver high quality food production, climate mitigation and adaptation, nature protection and restoration, and wider rural development.

I share your concerns and do understand that farmers and crofters experience significant challenges presented by adverse weather. Please be assured that the Scottish Government will continue to consider proportionate responses to extreme weather events.

Officials engage regularly with RSABI, a charity who provide emotional, practical, and financial assistance to people living and working in Scottish Agriculture. The charity has a 24/7 freephone service, along with a webchat facility, where a team of Case Officers are available to provide support with a myriad of challenges including the cost-of-living crisis, and business and animal welfare related concerns. Access to professional counselling services is also available. Last October, the charity launched a flooding fund for farmers, which provided payments for those who had been affected by the adverse weather. The Scottish Government strongly appreciate the essential service that RSABI provides to those in need of help and are committed to continuing to support the charity to deliver on these important service provisions. The inspections and schemes you ask for delays to form part of the rural development regulations and we will continue to take a pragmatic and proportionate

approach to these matters. Land based inspections are not due to start until late May with the expectation that they will be low numbers initially, increasing throughout June and onwards. We are currently performing Spring checks on selected Agri environmental options but to confirm there are only around 60 and they require limited input from the farmers and crofters. Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme inspections were all completed by the end of March and there are no 2024 Sheep and Goat Identification Inspections currently being undertaken. These will not start until June and initially these will be at a very low level until September onwards when the numbers will increase. The majority of Cattle Identification Inspections are completed with a small number still ongoing and nearing completion.

While gravel removal and water course management can play a role in flood and river management, it is not always effective in reducing water levels and can increase flood risk downstream, as well as causing serious environmental damage. Applications for in-river works are carefully assessed by SEPA, who also provide advice on legislative requirements. I am grateful for NFUS engagement with SEPA on streamlining regulatory regimes and would encourage opportunities for continued collaborative work on climate change adaptation.

I appreciate that beavers can cause problems for farmers in areas such as Strathmore, however they are not the only risk factor, especially in the context of the changing climate due to increased rainfall and river flows. I understand why it might be desirable to exclude beavers from these areas, however I have concerns about the practicalities in achieving this, and it would be helpful to discuss your proposals further with my officials.

You have previously acknowledged the need for effective use of the rural support budget in order to support our producers to actively transition to the new ways of working. We have a duty to ensure reasonable and fair allocation and a one-off uplift as suggested might be welcomed by some, however it would not serve the long-term interests of Scotland's producers and enable them to be ready for future markets.

As you will appreciate future budgets are set through the annual parliamentary Budget Bill process and the appropriate profile for returning this funding will be considered as part of that.

You will be aware that applications have been submitted through AECS for irrigation lagoons, and slurry storage with increased payment rates this year. These applications are currently being processed and we are open to further discussion on what a capital support scheme to build resilience could look like in future years.

Finally, I am pleased to hear that you are responding to the consultation on the Scottish National Adaptation Plan. Farming is particularly exposed to the impacts of a changing climate, so while we need to support farmers in the short term, a longer term strategic approach will be important.

Yours sincerely

JIM FAIRLIE

Document 16A

Thu 14/03/2024

Good morning

The [Land Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was published today by the Scottish Parliament. I'm grateful to you as one of the 537 responses to the consultation - 375 of you were individuals while another 162 represented groups or organisations – to give your time to provide your views on the proposals.

Much progress has been made in in land reform since devolution, much remains to be done. This Bill sets out ambitious proposals to allow the benefits and opportunities of Scotland's land to be more widely shared, including:

- Measures that will apply to large landholdings of over 1,000 hectares will prohibit sales in certain cases until Ministers can consider the impact on the local community. This could lead to some landholdings being lotted into smaller parts if that may help local communities.
- Helping to empower communities with more opportunities to own land through introducing advance notice of certain sales from large landholdings. Large landholdings of over 1,000 hectares represent more than 50% of Scotland's land.
- Placing legal responsibilities on the owners of the very largest landholdings to show how they use their land and how that use contributes to key public policy priorities, such as addressing climate change and protecting and restoring nature. These owners will also have to engage with local communities about how they use the land.
- A duty on Scottish Ministers to publish a model Land Management Tenancy which will support people to use and manage land in a way that meets their, and the nation's, needs. It also includes a number of measures to reform tenant farming and small landholding legislation, providing more opportunities to improve land, to become more sustainable and productive and to ensure that tenants are fairly rewarded for their investment of time and resources in compensation at end of tenancy.

As the Bill is scrutinised by the Scottish Parliament, you will likely have other opportunities to comment on the proposals. I welcome this – the Scottish Government is accountable to both the Parliament and the people of Scotland and I look forward to this detailed consideration of this important next step in our land reform journey.

Yours sincerely

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

Document 17A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 1:30 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Subject: Letter from NFU Scotland

Please find attached a letter from Hugh Fraser, NFU Scotland Livestock Chair, to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands Mairi Gougeon MSP.

Document 17B

February 2024

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I am writing to you regarding the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme Reform as announced at last year's Royal Highland Show. While we welcome the First Minister's commitment to retain direct support and his recognition of the importance of livestock at our AGM and Conference, we urge you to share the detail on the upcoming reform.

We have been actively engaged in the stakeholder group and believe that the reform must be ambitious yet achievable in the interest of a Just Transition. We would be strongly in favour of a split payment delivery of the scheme as well as the importance of retaining an island uplift as well as the current £40 million budget.

The value of this scheme to Scotland's iconic red meat sector cannot be underestimated. It ensures producers around the country are encouraged to keep producing beef calves to underpin the production of quality Scotch Beef. While trade has recently been strong, the years of turbulent market returns cannot be forgotten, our industry remains fragile. We need clarity on what the reform will look like to provide some form of stability for the suckler herd.

We ask you and your officials to communicate the finer details of the reform quickly with the industry so that farmers and crofters have as much time as possible to make the necessary management decisions.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Livestock Committee Chair, NFU Scotland

Document 17C

Our Reference: 202400399353

Your Reference: NFU Scotland Suckler Beef Support Scheme Reform

8 March 2024

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Thank you for your letter dated 14 February 2024 on reform to the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme.

Your engagement via the reform stakeholder group, which was established to support Scottish Government officials with the detail of SSBSS reform, has been invaluable and we are grateful for your time and that of your NFU Scotland colleagues.

In your letter you have asked that we communicate the finer details of the policy reform quickly to allow farmers and crofters to adapt. We are working at pace to finalise the details of SSBSS reform as well as the other changes which we will be making to agricultural support in Scotland. As more information becomes available we will endeavour to update the Agricultural Reform Route Map timeously as well as communicate directly with stakeholders such as NFU Scotland.

In your letter you note the SSBSS Islands budget. Rather than being an uplift for island producers this is a distinct £6 million budget for island producers, alongside the £34 million budget for mainland producers. The Scottish Government intends to continue to support island producers via a distinct SSBSS Islands budget.

Reform to the scheme will ensure continued support to beef producers for the years to come as we transition our agricultural support.

Yours sincerely

MAIRI GOUGEON

Document 17D

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 10:22 AM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Subject: Reference: 202400399353 - Letter response from NFU Scotland to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land reform, and Islands

Please find attached letter from NFUS Livestock Chair, Hugh Fraser, in response to letter we received Friday 8 March 2024.

[REDACTED-Regulation 11] | Political Affairs Assistant

NFU Scotland | Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston, Newbridge, EH28 8LT

Document 17E

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I write to thank you for your response dated 8 March 2024. I also thank you for your continued support for beef producers, most notably your assurance that the Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme (SSBSS) Island budget will be retained moving forward.

As you are aware, we remain very concerned that the full details on the calf scheme reform are still unknown. This is particularly frustrating as significant time has passed since Scottish Government Officials concluded the final Stakeholder Group meeting in November.

Unlike other elements of the Agricultural Reform Programme (ARP) announced at the Royal Highland Show 2023, the SSBSS reform requires a necessary and significant lead in time given that individual animals need to establish the start of their measured calving interval.

The time sensitivity of this reform is crucial. For example, we need clarity on the process for the registration of stillborn calves. It is currently common practice that when a calf dies before the 27-day legal time limit for tagging and registration, it is often not registered, therefore no record of the dam's calving date will exist. This means that for any future calves she has, their eligibility for payment will be penalised.

As we now approach the peak spring calving period, there will already be a significant number of cows whose dead calves are not registered to trigger her next year's calving interval period.

While we recognise your announcement at our Autumn Conference on 26 October 2023 that the new scheme will be based on individual calving interval rather than herd average, there was not enough detail for farmers and crofters to implement actions, that record officially, the necessary data to ensure eligibility for future calves under the scheme. It is unreasonable to expect farmers and crofters to make decisions when there is uncertainty on the finer details.

We have been clear that a split payment could mitigate some of the consequences of the current lack of information. If this is not an option Scottish Government is willing to consider, then, as calving is now well under way, the industry needs you to issue the full details of the new scheme. The opportunity to officially record dead calves is past for many cows, therefore absolute clarity and direction is urgently needed for farmers and crofters to fully understand what is needed from them to ensure their cattle meet the new scheme eligibility rules going forward.

Your sincerely,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
NFU Scotland Livestock Chair

Document 18A

From: [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:20 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands <CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Cc: Kate Higgins <Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>; [REDACTED-Regulation 11]>

Subject: NFU Scotland letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform, & Islands

Please find attached a letter to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, from Martin Kennedy, President of NFU Scotland.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Document 18B

Mairi Gougeon MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Sent by email: CabSecRALRI@gov.scot

Dear Mairi,

I write to thank you for your attendance at NFU Scotland's Annual AGM Conference and Dinner on 8th and 9th February in Glasgow.

We were delighted that you and the First Minister were able to answer so many questions from the audience and we welcomed the announcement in relation to funding allocation to Tiers 1 and 2 as that should help ensure no cliff edge for farming and crofting businesses across Scotland.

We are committed to deliver on high quality agricultural production, climate, and the environment, whilst underpinning rural communities, and we look forward to continuing to engage with you as the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill goes through the Scottish Parliament.

As discussed with you at the conference, we are keen to arrange a visit to discuss issues that our next generation face. In addition, a site visit to Argyll to see the impacts to agricultural businesses from sea eagles would be much appreciated. I understand that you were happy with these proposed meetings and I would appreciate it if your office would liaise with [REDACTED-Regulation 11] to identify suitable dates.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy
President, NFU Scotland

Document 18C

T : [REDACTED-Regulation 11]
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot
Martin Kennedy [\[REDACTED-Regulation 11\]](#)

Our Reference: 202400401210 11 March 2024

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your letter of 23 February inviting the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, to attend a meeting to discuss issues that the next generation into agriculture face, and to attend a site visit to Argyll to discuss the impacts to agricultural businesses from sea eagles.

Ms Gougeon would like to extend her sincere thanks for inviting her to attend NFU Scotland's Annual AGM Conference and Dinner. She finds the NFU Scotland's Annual AGM Conference an important opportunity to engage with the NFUS and its members, and she would like to express her appreciation to her fellow speakers and moderators for their thought-provoking and engaging contributions.

The Cabinet Secretary is keen to discuss issues relating to the Next Generation, who represent the future of agriculture and the rural economy. Understanding barriers to the Next Generation is key to the Scottish Government's ongoing work to create further employment opportunities in land-based sectors to promote rural development and sustainable communities. To ensure a focussed discussion on the Next Generation, the Cabinet Secretary would propose that this would merit separate meetings; one on the impacts of sea eagles, and one on issues relating to the Next Generation.

Ms Gougeon gladly accepts your invitation, and we are pleased to inform you that Jim Fairlie, Minister of Agriculture and Connectivity, will also be in attendance, subject to any Parliamentary business. I would be grateful if you could contact the Cabinet Secretary's Diary Secretary via email at CabSecRALRI@gov.scot to finalise arrangements.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Assistant Private Secretary

Document 19A



2

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Majri Gougeon MSP
The Scottish Government
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG



020 7080 1000

If undelivered please return to:

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Ingliston
Newbridge
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Annual Dinner Invitation 2024



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— FOOD —

Document 19B

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Rural Centre - West Mains Ingliston
NewBridge Midlothian
United Kingdom EH28 8LT
[REDACTED-Regulation 11]

Our Reference: 202300390746

16 January 2024

Dear [REDACTED-Regulation 11],

Thank you for your letter of 13 December 2023, in which you kindly invited Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, to attend the NFU Scotland Annual Conference and Dinner, which is due to take place on Thursday 08 and Friday 09 February 2024.

Ms Gougeon would be delighted to accept your invitation, and would be most grateful if you could contact her Private Office at CabSecRALRI@gov.scot, to provide further information about the event and discuss any necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED-Regulation 11]
Assistant Private Secretary

Document 20A

Dear Mairi,

I write to follow up on food labelling which was discussed at the Agriscot Conference on 22 November. I welcomed your agreement to meet to discuss this.

As I set out in my speech, NFU Scotland is seeking food labelling changes to underpin the nation's food security, self-sufficiency and bolster the home production of high-quality food. I believe that a new labelling initiative backed by Governments, retailers, food processors, hospitality, catering and consumers would properly recognise the high production standards here and make it easier for all parts of the food chain to support domestic production. Alongside effective quality assurance, this would also underpin the integrity of food.

Greater transparency on where food has been sourced from would allow more informed choices and I believe that a labelling initiative would mean our consumers know about the origin of all the food and drink they are purchasing and allow them to make informed decisions.

Food sold in hospitality as well as retail should be included as it is such a significant market. Identifying where food has been sourced will also highlight how robust and genuine our retailer and food service sector promises on supporting local produce really are.

For information, we are currently doing some further work in this area and I have written to the UK Government seeking a meeting in the Spring. I would welcome the opportunity to secure a date for us to speak about this prior to meeting with them if possible. I will be in touch with your office to find a mutually convenient date.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Kennedy, President, NFU Scotland

Document 21A

13 December 2023

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I write this letter to thank you for your attendance at the Less Favoured Areas Committee meeting on Wednesday 6 December. We were delighted you were able to attend and answer questions from Committee members who represent the diversity of our hill and upland areas across Scotland. The Committee welcomed your assurances of continued support for disadvantaged areas and we are keen for ongoing engagement with you as we enter an important time for the sector.

We are also thankful that LFASS payments are now arriving into bank accounts. These payments are crucial to provide stability and enable us to continue to deliver high-quality food, as well as to continue to enhance the surrounding environment while boosting biodiversity. As the Agriculture & Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill progresses through Parliament, we still need future funding and support to come to disadvantaged areas which are the backbone to rural economies and communities

across Scotland. As we have already expressed, we need 80% of future agricultural support to be located within Tiers 1 and 2.

We are eager to discuss and develop the replacement disadvantaged support scheme (LFASS) and Tier 2 options with you and your officials. As mentioned, we would like to see more measures for extensive units which recognise and reward the role of grazing management in upland farms. The Committee have held some initial discussions on what disadvantaged support should look like, we will continue to discuss this following last week's meeting and send proposals to you and your officials in due course via the email you mentioned in addition to continued discussions with officials.

We also discussed species management and we underlined that the impact species predation has on our business cannot be underestimated. Particularly at a time where our margins are stretched, these predator species are also detrimental to our on-farm biodiversity. The Vision for Agriculture clearly underlines Scottish Government's commitment to enhance biodiversity, currently grazing management's ability to create habitats for ground nesting birds and other native species are undermined by these predators. We welcome your commitment to review guidance with NatureScot and to consider the careful balance delivered by grazing management required to deliver more biodiversity. As an industry we must be enabled to use all the tools in the toolbox to continue to deliver public goods.

As we both agreed in the meeting, our ongoing engagement with one another will be vital so we can all deliver on food, climate, nature and people. It would be great to arrange a meeting on farm in with you or your officials

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Kennedy

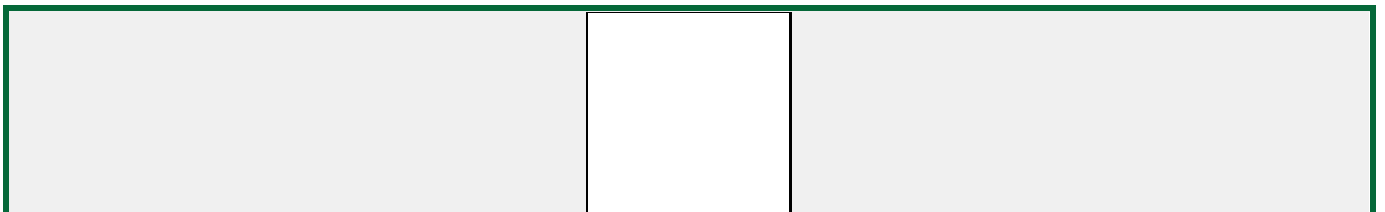
Document 22A

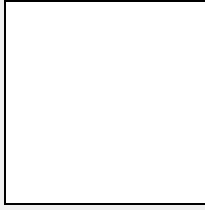
From: noreply@nfu.org.uk <noreply@nfu.org.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2023 11:51 AM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
<CabSecRALRI@gov.scot>

Subject: Join the NFU to celebrate the Presidency of Minette Batters





1.1 Invitation to celebrate the Presidency of Minette Batters

The NFU invites you to a drinks reception on **Wednesday 7 February** to celebrate the Presidency of Minette Batters.

Please join us at Church House, Westminster, Dean's Yard, London, SW1P 3NZ from **18:30hrs - 20:30hrs**.

Please RSVP by 19 January by clicking the link below:

If you have any questions, please contact nfulondon@nfu.org.uk.

RSVP

Response 22B

Dear NFU,

Thank you for your email of 13 December 2023, in which you kindly invited Mairi Gougeon MSP - Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands - to attend a drinks reception in celebration of the Presidency of Minette Batters, which is due to take place at Church House, Westminster on Wednesday 7 February 2024.

Regrettably, due to diary constraints, the Cabinet Secretary will be unable to attend on this occasion, and has asked me to pass on her best wishes for what she is certain will be a most enjoyable event, and an incredibly well-deserved celebration of Ms Batters' hard work and dedication.

Yours sincerely

MAIRI GOUGEON