

Enhanced Greening

Meeting 13th January 2026, TG.22 parliament 11:15 to 12:00

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP and Young Farmers from Orkney

Attendees

Orkney Young Farmers

- Redacted Section 38(1)(b)
- Redacted Section 38(1)(b)

Scottish Government

- Jim Fairlie, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
- Jamie Halcro Johnston, MSP
- Tim Eagle, MSP (part attendance)
- Redacted Section 38(1)(b)
- Redacted Section 38(1)(b)

Apologies

- NA

Welcome

Introductions and background information were shared by attendees.

Agricultural support

- Confirmation of the importance of farm support grants and recognition that the Scottish farmers are being supported in a more acceptable way compared to other countries at this point.
- An ask to keep funding going forward, Orkney Farmers could not survive without it and if farmers had to reduce livestock numbers or stop farming, it would only leave tourism for the island.
- Budget concerns discussed especially the lack of Ring-fenced budgets and that budgets have not changed, therefore decreasing in real terms annually.
- Current lack of confidence in the future of farming, a document was shared showing an average farm budget for the island and minimal return on investment but acknowledged that on paper slightly better than the DEFRA averages recently published.
- Food security conversation and the importance of support linked to reduce food costs was stressed by young farmers present.

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- Concerns raised that over 400 businesses would have to manage EFA for 2026, discussion to confirm actual number was nearer 210
- Significant change for the island and concerns that the move in 2027 to 7% EFA was a step too far and would reduce livestock numbers.
- General conversation about the flexibility offered through the EFA options and the opportunity to use options that suit their business but recognition that this is a significant change for these businesses.
- NFU raised concerns about the 7% EFA change, this was considered but other NGOs raised similar concerns due to not going far enough asking for 10% or more. By improving the management prescription of some of the existing EFA options and adding four new options SG feel that 7% is a sensible transitional change that will recognise what farmers and crofters are delivering and will increase the policy outcomes gained.

Closing remarks:

- Keep in touch with RPID staff and raise concerns if you have them.
- Participate in the scheme for the next two years, if there is evidence that this is not working, we will listen.
- Meeting concluded with thanks to all attendees.

Meeting closed