

**Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA)
Communiqué
24 June 2019**

The Inter Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs met on Monday 24 June at the Defra offices in 2 Marsham Street, London and via video conference from Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. The meeting was chaired by Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The attending Ministers were:

From the UK Government: Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Lord Duncan, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland and Northern Ireland; and Kevin Foster, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales.

From the Scottish Government: Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy; Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; and Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment;

From the Welsh Government: Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Energy, Environment and Rural Affairs;

In the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, Norman Fulton, Head of Food and Farming Group at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs attended the meeting.

The Chair opened the meeting by providing an update on the recent political developments and presented the jointly developed future work programme for the period between now and December 2020. Key areas of work include the preparations for the UK's exit from the EU, domestic policy and legislation, common frameworks and funding.

All administrations agreed that it was important to continue to prepare for a no deal exit while this remained a potential outcome and the group considered the potential impacts focussing on food supply and support for sectors, including the impact on markets and non-tariff barrier delays. With four months until a potential no deal exit, ministers also raised a number of outstanding issues that require resolution, including support for the sheep, beef and dairy sectors, Geographical Indications recognition and addressing operational challenges on export health certificates. Discussions then focused on the implications of the timing of the Agriculture Bill, the importance of timely collaborative discussions and agreement on how environmental governance within each administration will work cohesively and issues relating to other bills and secondary legislation.

Noting disappointment that a Minister from HM Treasury had not been able to attend, the group agreed that a Minister should be invited to join the next meeting in September. The group also discussed progress with the current independent review of intra-UK allocation of domestic farm support funding. Scottish Government

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requested that officials follow up on: i) a visa scheme for non EU national in the fishing industry; ii) plant passporting (timber); and iii) the fruit and vegetables aid scheme.