



Scottish
Environment
LINK

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Dear Mr Ewing

Cc Ms Cunningham and Mr Macpherson

We write to register our growing and significant concern over the lack of clear direction underpinning the Scottish Government's current approach to existing and future land management support schemes. We were optimistic that the Food and Farming Policy Futures Group, set up by Parliament in 2019 might offer that direction. It was set up to make *clear recommendations for future policy development for Farming and Food Production* and was originally due for publication in the summer of 2020. Those recommendations were to *help government thinking through challenges faced by farmers and crofter and how policies might be adapted to help*. However, the delay in publication of the group's report, brings a vacuum for strategic direction for Scotland's agricultural support after 2024. Not least, we believe such strategic direction and framing is essential to guide the current work of the farmer-led sector groups, who are developing sector-led responses but with no wider national context. We call on the Scottish Government to publish the FFP-FPG report as a matter of urgency.

As well as ensuring future policy responds effectively to both the nature and climate challenges, it is vital we use every immediate opportunity to do more. In the 2021-2022 Scottish Government budget proposals, of the £585 million total budget for agricultural support, just 6% now supports the Agri-Environment-Climate Scheme. This marks a reduction in current funding available to farmers to tackle climate emissions and nature loss, at a time when they need support to be able to do more. Many currently in this scheme will no longer be eligible, which will be a hugely disappointing step backwards in our ability to contribute to nature and climate actions. We have published our response to the proposals [here](#).

Scotland's overall investment in agricultural support is substantial, but it is doing far too little in the battle to reduce the significant climate emissions from the sector and far too little in the battle to address biodiversity loss, for which agricultural management is a major driver. The need for significant, coherent and urgent action is clear.



Scottish Environment LINK the voice for Scotland's environment



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What we can do with this huge amount of public money is choose to make our natural environment better or worse and support farmers in the transitions needed to make that happen. At the moment, with no strategic direction for the sector as a whole and cuts in key budget areas, it is not at all clear which direction of travel the Scottish government is embarked upon.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Long, CO Scottish Environment LINK

Lang Banks, Director WWF Scotland

Jo Pike, CEO Scottish Wildlife Trust

Pete Ritchie, Director Nourish Scotland

Eddie Palmer, Chairman Scottish badgers.

John Mayhew, Director of Association for the
Protection of Rural Scotland

John Thomson, Chair of Scottish Campaign for
National Parks

Alistair Whyte, Head of Plantlife Scotland

Anne McCall; Director, RSPB Scotland

Michael Clark, Chair, Nature Friendly Farming
Network

Richard Lockett, Chair, ScotFWAG

Aoife Behan, Director, Soil Association Scotland

Carol Evans, Director, Woodland Trust Scotland

Miranda Geelhoed, Policy & Campaigns
Coordinator Scotland, Landworkers' Alliance

Louise Ramsay, Chair, Scottish Wild Beaver Group



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