



Scottish
Environment
LINK

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Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands
Scottish Government

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Transparency of agricultural reform process

I am writing on behalf of Scottish Environment LINK's Food and Farming Group to raise the issue of transparency and open governance approaches in the agricultural reform process.

It is imperative that the Scottish Government take a more transparent approach to future policy development for agriculture and land management. With the Agriculture Bill due to progress in the next Parliamentary term, Scottish Environment LINK members and supporting organisations are keen to ensure that a full range of farming and crofting organisations, including those currently taking steps to implement nature-friendly approaches on farm, as well as environmental and rural development organisations have opportunity to meaningfully engage with the policy development process.

Meaningful engagement in policy development will only be possible if the Scottish Government provides greater opportunities for dialogue alongside the ARIOB process. We recognise the principle of co-production and the Scottish Government's commitment to having those most affected by the change involved in planning the change. This should include not only the full range of farming and crofting perspectives but also the communities and organisations concerned to see our land play its full part in tackling the climate and nature emergencies. Previously, for example, stakeholder engagement in relation to CAP implementation decisions in Scotland was more open and inclusive than current arrangements for policy development though even this approach had its shortcomings.

The timely sharing of information, as well as relevant research, reporting and minutes, will be essential in ensuring that the design and the implementation of a policy to replace the Common Agricultural Policy is sufficiently robust.

It is also essential that the Scottish Government ensure that the forthcoming consultation on the Agriculture Bill is inclusive. This means ensuring that questions posed in the consultation document are accessible to everyone who is impacted by land management decisions, using terminology and references that are understandable to all. LINK members are keen to support this inclusive consultation by organising meetings with a range of stakeholders



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including environmental organisations, rural organisations, local authorities, organisations interested in local and sustainable food, animal welfare organisations and so on. We would be very happy to discuss how this could add value to the consultation as a whole.

We look forward to further engagement with you, as the Agriculture Bill and other policy developments progress through the Scottish Parliament.

Yours Sincerely,

Dan Paris
Advocacy Manager, Scottish Environment LINK

on behalf of Scottish Environment LINK's Food & Farming Group



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