

**Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform  
and Islands**

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Chùisean Dùthchail, Ath-  
leasachadh Fearainn agus Eileanan  
**Mairi Gougeon MSP/BPA**



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Our Reference: 202300372575  
Your Reference: Agriculture Bill

1 September 2023

Dear Pete Ritchie,

Thank you for your letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023 regarding the forthcoming Agriculture Bill and the proposed CAP replacement scheme.

I note and thank you for your ongoing support with our efforts to secure long term commitments on agricultural funding.

The Scottish Government has made plain our expectation that the UK Government lives up to their public commitment to collectively and meaningfully engage on future rural budgets. The Deputy First Minister raised this issue directly to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury at the Finance: Interministerial Standing Committee in June and we shall continue to press this matter to ensure that Scotland's rural economy does not lose out from EU exit and that we have certainty on future planning.

The purpose of the Bill is to deliver the Vision for Agriculture. The Bill sets out an adaptive framework focused on key outcomes: high quality food production; climate mitigation and adaptation; nature restoration; and wider rural development.

The proposals in the Bill aim to provide the adaptive four-tier framework to respond flexibly to future social, economic, and environmental changes, challenges and opportunities. This framework approach also enables tailored provisions and support to be implemented through secondary legislation and potentially adapted on a regular basis as required to meet future challenges and uncertainties, including climate impacts, food security risks and challenges and market changes, whilst reinforcing our

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commitment to continue to support the agricultural industry.

A new Agriculture Bill enables us to reform and modernise how we support rural communities and the rural economy. The end of CAP Pillar 2 schemes provides opportunity to review how we support rural communities and rural networking – ensuring coherence with wider Scottish Government action in these areas. A new Agriculture Bill also provides the opportunity to modernise and update the law on areas relating to animal health and welfare, and plant health.

I welcome your views on future budgeting and will continue to work with stakeholders to deliver the optimal outcome to realise the Vision for Agriculture.

I have made clear that I am committed to co-development of our future support. We continue to work closely with the agriculture industry building on the excellent work completed by the successful Farmer-Led Groups (FLGs) initiative, including through the Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board (ARIOB) as well as with other industry stakeholder groups and directly with Farmers and Crofters.

I look forward to meeting on the 13th September to discuss your report, Farm for Scotland's Future: the case for change, High Nature Value Farming and Crofting in relation to the Agricultural Bill, Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill and Deer Management. Separately, I will ask my officials working on the Bill to arrange a meeting with you to talk on the Bill prior to its introduction.

Yours sincerely



**MAIRI GOUGEON**

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