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13 December 2024

Dear Edward,

## **INTER-MINISTERIAL GROUP FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS MEETING**

This letter updates the Committee on the key points from the meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA) held virtually on 18 November 2024.

The main item of discussion was the impact of the UK Government budget on the agriculture, rural and marine sectors. Ministers from the devolved governments expressed disappointment on the funding settlement, including the absence of multi-year certainty, the inappropriateness of Barnett allocations and concerns on the introduction of new tax provisions. Ministers urged UK Government to engage in four-nation dialogue and with stakeholders to address the impacts arising for the agriculture, rural and marine sectors.

Other items included agreement to hold a series of policy discussions over 2025 on areas for enhanced collaboration between the four governments and discussions on implementation of the Border Target Operating Model, potential negotiations on a UK-EU sanitary and phytosanitary/veterinary agreement, and the impact of labour shortages in the environment, food and rural affairs sectors.

A read out of the meeting and summary of attendance are included in the communiqué that has been published on the Scottish Government website at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/inter-ministerial-group-for-environment-food-and-rural-affairs-november-2024/>.

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The next meeting of the group is scheduled to take place in January 2025.

I hope this summary is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**MAIRI GOUGEON**

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