



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

Jim Fairlie MSP
Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
Scottish Government

14 January 2025

Dear Minister,

Implementation of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024

As you will be all too aware, 2025 will be a significant year for Scottish agriculture as the future post-EU exit agricultural support will be rolled out and much of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024 will be implemented. The Committee looks forward to working constructively with you in delivering these new support mechanisms.

You will also recall that, during its consideration of related statutory instruments towards the end of 2024, the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee had a number of questions about how these individual instruments sat within the wider context of a new system of agricultural support. You [informed the Committee that regulations to introduce the whole farm plan requirement](#) would be forthcoming in 2025.

As it looks ahead to its 2025 work programme, the Committee would find it helpful if you could provide some further information relating to the next stages of agriculture policy. A number of questions are set out below and the **Committee requests a response by Friday 7 February**. The Committee also **invites you to discuss the new system of agricultural support at its meeting on 19 February 2025**, in advance of its consideration of the draft Rural Support (Improvement) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2025.

The Committee would find it helpful if you could provide an indication of when the key sections of the 2024 Act will be commenced.

In relation to the **code of practice for sustainable and regenerative agriculture**, it would be helpful if you could provide further information about:

- Its purpose and how it will work in practice. For example, whether it will be a guidance document or whether it will set minimum requirements for sustainable and regenerative agriculture; and how it will be flexible in order to apply to all farm/croft types and topographies.

Contact: Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email rural.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

- The consultation process, including how consultees are identified and what scientific evidence and consultation is being used to inform the code.
- The anticipated timetable for laying the code in the Scottish Parliament.
- Whether any regulations made under section 9 of the 2024 Act will be laid at the same time as the code.

In relation to the **rural support plan**, the Committee asks for an update on the [draft plan that was circulated by the Cabinet Secretary on 7 June 2024](#). In particular, it would be helpful if you could confirm whether the plan will comply with section 2(3) of the 2024 Act and describe how the Scottish Ministers consider the support provided under the plan will meet eight specific outcomes.

As stakeholder consultation on the rural support plan was a key theme from the Committee's stage 1 inquiry, the Committee asks if you could also update on stakeholders' participation in the consultation process and how their views are informing the rural support plan.

In relation to the **subordinate legislation**, the Cabinet Secretary's letter indicates that SSIs will be laid this autumn to introduce tier 1 (base) and tier 2 (enhanced) support. The Committee would be grateful if you could provide an indication of the number of instruments expected to be laid as part of this package.

In addition, it would be helpful if you could confirm:

- When the funding allocation between the two tiers will be announced.
- An indication of what tier 2 will look like, and if it will be using the [draft list of measures](#) as a basis to build on.
- What lessons the Scottish Government has taken from its [own 2023 research on the effectiveness of the CAP](#) and how these will be reflected in tiers 1 and 2.

The Committee also requests an update on the **ARIOB's role** in developing the code, rural support plan and new support tiers.

Yours sincerely,



Finlay Carson MSP
Convener