

# Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

6th Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday, 1 March

## Future agriculture policy: farmer-led groups and the UK Climate Change Committee

### Background

1. The Scottish Government launched [a consultation on its proposals for future agriculture policy](#) on 29 August 2022. The consultation closed on 21 November 2022. These proposals and consultation are expected to inform the development of a new Agriculture Bill, expected to be introduced later in 2023. The proposals focus on the delivery of outcomes in the following areas—
  - Replacement of the Common Agricultural Policy;
  - Climate change mitigation and adaptation;
  - Nature restoration;
  - High quality food production;
  - Wider rural development; and
  - Improving farm incomes and competitiveness.
2. On 10 February 2023, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands wrote to the Committee with [an update about the future support framework for agriculture](#) in Scotland. The update included [an agricultural reform route map](#) that sets out the timescales for the transition towards a future support framework and for the Scottish Government's interaction with the agricultural industry.

### Pre-legislative scrutiny

3. The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee agreed to undertake pre-legislative scrutiny work on future agriculture policy ahead of the introduction of a new Agriculture Bill. The purpose of this pre-legislative scrutiny is to explore the wider policy context that a future agriculture policy will operate within and the outcomes it is intended to achieve.
4. At its meeting on 22 February 2023, the Committee began its pre-legislative scrutiny with a roundtable discussion with stakeholder organisations from the agriculture and wider food production sector to explore some of the economic, environmental and social issues affecting agriculture.
5. The Committee agreed to hold evidence sessions on the theme of climate change and agriculture with representatives from the [farmer-led climate change groups](#) followed by the [UK Climate Change Committee \(CCC\)](#).

6. The farmer-led groups were set up to make recommendations to the Scottish Government on reducing emissions and tackling climate change within each of their respective farming sectors. The Committee will discuss the groups' reports with their representatives and consider their views on the Scottish Government's agriculture policy proposals. The Committee will hear evidence from—
  - Jackie McCreery, Chair, [Dairy Sector Climate Change Group](#);
  - Andy McGowan, Chair, [Scottish Pig Industry Leadership Group](#);
  - Andrew Moir, Chair, [Arable Climate Change Group](#);
  - Claire Simonetta, Member, [Hill, Upland and Crofting Group](#); and
  - Jim Walker CBE, Chair, [Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board](#).
7. The CCC is an independent, statutory body established to advise the UK and devolved governments on sectoral emissions targets and to report to legislatures on the progress made in emissions reductions and preparation for the impact of climate change. The CCC's [most recent progress report to the Scottish Parliament](#) was published on 7 December 2022. The Committee will hear evidence from—
  - Chris Stark, Chief Executive, UK Climate Change Committee
8. Further information about the Committee's programme of pre-legislative scrutiny of future agriculture policy can be found on [the Committee's webpage](#).

**Rural Affairs and Islands Committee clerks  
February 2023**