

# Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

8<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday, 15 March

## Future agriculture policy: biodiversity

### 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 the 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. The Committee agreed to hold an evidence session on the theme of biodiversity and agriculture with [NatureScot](#), Scotland's nature agency. NatureScot has piloted [a results-based approach to farm payments](#) that aims to support outcomes for biodiversity and climate change. The Committee will hear evidence from—
  - **Ross Lilley**, Head of Natural Resource Management, NatureScot.

5. This evidence session continues the Committee's programme of pre-legislative scrutiny of future agriculture policy—

<b>Committee meeting date</b>	<b>Evidence session</b>
<b>22 February 2023</b>	<a href="#">Agriculture sector stakeholders</a>
<b>1 March 2023</b>	<a href="#">Climate Change</a>
<b>8 March 2023</b>	ARIOB
<b>15 March 2023</b>	Biodiversity
<b>29 March 2023</b>	Ecological resilience

6. 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  
March 2023**