

# Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

11<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday, 19 April

## Future agriculture policy: ecological resilience

### 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 themed on ecological resilience in the agriculture and wider food production industry in relation to the climate and nature emergencies. The Committee will hear evidence from—
  - Professor Tim Benton, Director Environment and Society Programme, Chatham House;
  - Ian Boyd-Livingston, Farmer, Stockfree Farming;
  - David Harley, Chief Officer Circular Economy, SEPA;

- Professor Pete Smith, Chair in Plant and Soil Science, University of Aberdeen; and
- Morgan Vaughan, Farm Manager, RSPB

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="#">Official Report for evidence session on agriculture sector stakeholders, 22 February 2023</a>
<b>1 March 2023</b>	<a href="#">Official Report for evidence session on Climate Change, 1 March 2023</a>
<b>8 March 2023</b>	<a href="#">Official Report for evidence session with ARIOB, 8 March 2023</a>
<b>15 March 2023</b>	<a href="#">Official Report for evidence session on biodiversity, 15 March 2023</a>
<b>22 March 2023</b>	<a href="#">Official Report for evidence session with NFU Scotland, 22 March 2023</a>

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  
April 2023**