

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Islands
Mairi Gougeon MSP
Minister for Environment and Land Reform
Mairi McAllan MSP



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Fiona Hyslop MSP
Deputy Convener
Committee for Net Zero, Energy and Transport,
Scottish Parliament

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8 September 2022

Dear Fiona,

INTER-MINISTERIAL GROUP FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS (IMG EFRA) MEETING

This letter updates the Committee on the key points from the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs meeting held on 20 July 2022.

The hybrid meeting was hosted by the Welsh Government with Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd acting as chair. Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Islands and Mairi McAllan MSP, Minister for Environment and Land Reform represented the Scottish Government.

The main items of discussion were the Welsh Government's proposals for a Sustainable Farming Scheme in Wales, issues stemming from the war in Ukraine, retained EU law, and the UK Government's proposed Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill. The group also received updates on negotiations for the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), borders, and confirmation that an exclusion to the Internal Market Act on single use plastics had received UK Parliamentary approval.

The group noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place in September. A read out of the meeting and summary of attendance is included in the attached communiqué and has been published on the Scottish Government website.

We hope this summary is helpful.

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Yours sincerely,

MAIRI GOUGEON

MAIRI MCALLAN

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Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA) Communiqué: 20 July 2022

The Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA) met on Wednesday 20 July at the Royal Welsh Show and by video conference.

The meeting was chaired by Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd

The attending ministers were:

- from the Northern Ireland Government: Minister Edwin Poots MLA – Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
- from the UK Government: George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, David TC Davies MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, Lord Malcom Offord, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to the Scotland Office.
- from the Scottish Government: Mairi Gougeon MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands), and Mairi McAllan MSP (Minister for the Environment and Land Reform).

The meeting opened with a presentation by the Welsh Government on its proposals for a Sustainable Farming Scheme. This was followed by a discussion and feedback on the content of the proposals and the plans for their co-production with farmers and stakeholders.

Ministers went on to discuss the implications of the invasion of Ukraine and wider increased costs on agri-businesses, including a presentation on the modelling of the impact of agri-inflation in Wales and a commitment to ongoing engagement between the four administrations as the situation evolves further over the coming months.

A discussion of retained EU Law and the proposed Brexit Freedoms Bill followed where the UK Government outlined the rationale for the legislation. Ministers discussed concerns regarding how devolved aspects of the Bill would be addressed, respecting the position of the devolved administrations and enabling the proper functioning of the UK internal market.

Next up was a discussion of the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill where discussions focused on the implications for devolved administrations and the need for greater engagement to avoid unintended consequences for competition and trade.

Ministers then discussed the development of the borders Target Operating Model for future border import checks with a particular emphasis on timescales for implementation, the importance of maintaining UK biosecurity, and the possible role of a proposed trusted trader approach.

The UK Government then provided an update on progress regarding the negotiations for the Convention on Biological Diversity COP 15 and the planned summit in Montreal later this year.

Finally, the UK Government confirmed that the exclusion to the Internal Market Act on single use plastics has received Parliamentary approval.

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