

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Finlay Carson MSP
Convenor
Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment
Committee

By email: rural.committee@parliament.scot

26 January 2023

Dear Finlay,

The Common Organisation of the Markets in Agricultural Products (Poultrymeat) (Miscellaneous Temporary Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2022

I am writing to provide further information regarding a question you raised at the Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee on 14 December 2022, regarding the above-mentioned Regulations. During the session, I outlined Scotland's approach in answer to a request from industry to be able to sell festive birds as defrosted. This required a change to existing legislation to allow producers to process their turkeys early, thus mitigating the risk of birds getting infected with avian influenza and leading to a possible shortage of turkeys prior to the festive holidays.

You asked for an indication of what the take-up had been like, given that the change in Regulations had been in place since 28 November 2022. This kind of data is not routinely gathered and so it is difficult to provide precise numbers. Defra officials are still working on piecing together the UK numbers by speaking to retailers, albeit they have received positive feedback on the additional marketing option provided.

What we do know is that, in Scotland, the temporary change in Regulations was very much welcomed and that around 3000 turkeys (out of a total number of 19,000 turkeys) were slaughtered early and sold to approximately 50 butchers throughout Scotland. The option of course also allowed festive birds from across the border to be sold as defrosted by Scottish retailers.

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I hope the above information answers your question, while showing the positive outcome this temporary legislative amendment has had for Scotland. Should you have any further queries, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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