

**Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and
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Environment, Climate Change and Land

Reform Committee

Scottish Parliament

Sent by email to:

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Dear Graeme

DEFRA AND DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS MINISTERIAL MEETING

Following on from my letter of 19 April 2017, where I informed you that I was due to participate in a Defra and devolved administrations ministerial meeting on 20 April on the UK leaving the EU, I can now update the Committee on the key points from that meeting.

The meeting was held in London and attendees included: Mr Eustice, Minister of State for Farming, Fisheries and Food and Mr Bebb, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales, for the UK Government; Ms Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs in the Welsh Government (who dialled in); and Mr Lavery, Permanent Secretary for the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in the Northern Ireland Executive.

The meeting followed the agenda that I outlined in my previous letter and included an update on recent developments including the Article 50 letter and the UK Government's Great Repeal Bill White Paper.

There was discussion on matters progressed through the short-life working groups in which officials from each administration are participating, including the need for sufficient space to discuss the environment going forward.

The meeting provided an opportunity to hear case studies from each administration highlighting the complexity of product supply chains, trade flows and the potential ways they might be affected by the UK leaving the EU.

In the context of the future work programme over the coming months, the four administrations discussed the structures required to take forward this work and agreed to set up two additional groups on forestry and trade to add to the existing work being progressed through groups on marine matters and fisheries; farming and food; environment; animal and plant health; and legislation.

Finally, it was agreed that the next Ministerial meeting would take place at the end of June, following the UK election. An update to the Committee will be provided in due course.

I am writing in similar terms to Mr Mountain, convener of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee.

FERGUS EWING