

NFU Scotland (NFUS) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this petition. A short summary of the NFUS position is provided below. NFUS would be happy to elaborate on any of the points made in this submission in further depth if this is of use to the Committee's examination of the petition.

- Lyme disease is a real concern to farmers, as those who work outdoors in the countryside are identified as being at higher risk for contracting Lyme disease.
- NFUS supports the need for greater awareness of the disease and the need for prompt action to be taken when Lyme disease is suspected.
- NFUS appreciates that this is a difficult disease to diagnose and treat. It is clear that greater awareness of the disease and ongoing research into diagnostics and treatment should be a priority.
- As a long term, debilitating disease there needs to be ongoing support in place for those affected.
- As a tick-borne disease there needs to be greater focus on tick control. Sheep can play an important role in tick control, with properly treated sheep acting as 'tick-mops' on the hills.
- With fewer sheep and many of the products previously used on sheep to control ticks no longer available, this may be playing a role in the rise in tick numbers. Greater support is needed to keep sheep on the hills and maintain availability of effective products for tick control. Farmers should be encouraged and supported to treat sheep appropriately to help control tick numbers.