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Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
Scottish Parliament

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16 March 2026

Dear Edward,

INTER-MINISTERIAL GROUP FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS MEETING

This letter updates the Committee on the key points from the meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA) held virtually on 5 February 2026.

The meeting opened with a discussion on allocations for the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund. I, and the other attending devolved government ministers from Northern Ireland and Wales, expressed significant disappointment on the use of the Barnett formula as this did not reflect funding allocations from previous rounds or the size of the fishing sector in each of the devolved nations.

The group then discussed progress on negotiations on the EU-UK sanitary and phytosanitary agreement. Devolved government ministers emphasised the need for UK Government to maintain meaningful engagement throughout negotiations and the importance of scrutiny processes in the devolved legislatures on implementing legislation.

The meeting discussed the farm profitability review and UK Government food strategy. While both items primarily related to England, ministers recognised the potential effect of some of the recommendations on the other nations of the UK and the need for collaborative working.

Other items included discussion on the legislative approach to banning the use of peat in horticulture, the impact of visa rules on the availability of sheep shearers and implications arising from the outbreak of African Swine Fever in Spain.

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A readout of the meeting and summary of attendance are included in the communiqué that has been published on the Scottish Government website at [Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/inter-ministerial-group-for-environment-food-and-rural-affairs)

While the group agreed to meet later this month ahead of upcoming legislature elections in Scotland and Wales, diary constraints across the nations mean that the next meeting will be scheduled after the elections.

I hope this summary is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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