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Finlay Carson MSP
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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23 March 2023

Dear Finlay,

During the Scottish Parliament debate regarding the agricultural reform route map on 15 March, I committed to writing to you setting out timescales for the publication of good food nation plans.

Work on the first iteration of the national good food nation plan is currently underway. The Scottish Government expects to publish a draft of the national good food nation plan for consultation in summer 2023. Our intention is that, following completion and analysis of the consultation, the draft plan will be laid before the Scottish Parliament in spring 2024, with the final version of the plan published in late 2024.

In addition, the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 requires that the Scottish Ministers must, when exercising a specified function or a function falling within a specified description, have regard to the national good food nation plan. These specified functions must be set out in secondary legislation. We expect to consult on the proposals for specified functions in 2023, and to lay the relevant secondary legislation in time for it to come in force around the same time as final publication of the national plan.

The Act also requires that relevant authorities (defined in the Act as health boards and local authorities) must produce their own good food nation plans. We expect that relevant authority plans will be published in 2025. This allows time for relevant authorities to have regard to the content of the national plan when preparing their own plans, and to consult on the content.

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Finally, the Act contains provisions to establish the Scottish Food Commission. Establishing a new public body is complex and it takes time to work through the processes associated with setting up a new body. The Scottish Food Commission's functions are directly linked to the good food nation plans required by the Good Food Nation Act. We therefore intend to establish it in a similar timeframe to the publication of the final version of the Scottish Government's first national good food nation plan, which is expected in late 2024. This will allow the Food Commission to take up one of its key tasks, which is to scrutinise and make recommendations in relation to the first national good food nation plan.

I hope that you find this information about the ongoing progress of the good food nation work reassuring.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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