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The Scottish Parliament
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By email: rural.committee@parliament.scot

26 October 2026

Dear Mark,

I am writing to inform you of the forthcoming publication of the monitoring framework for the impact of the support delivered as set out in the Rural Support Plan 2026-31: “Measuring the impacts of Scotland’s agricultural support – a national-level monitoring framework”.

The need for a clear monitoring plan for the impact of agricultural support, and a baseline for that monitoring, was a topic that was raised through the committee's recent inquiry into the Rural Support Plan. Through this work, we are establishing a national framework to measure whether Scotland's agricultural support is delivering the outcomes set out in the Rural Support Plan. A 2025 baseline will provide the starting point against which future progress can be assessed. Together, these reports will fulfil the commitment made in the Rural Support Plan, and in our previous letter to the Committee, to publish a monitoring framework in 2026, with 2025 as the baseline year.

The framework has been developed with input and challenge from policy officials, external experts and academic specialists to ensure it is robust, credible and aligned with policy priorities, and we are grateful for their input to this process. Where evidence gaps exist, and it has not been possible to adequately report against an outcome, we have been transparent and identified work underway to improve the evidence base over time.

The framework report will be published on 2 November this year and the baseline report available by Spring 2027. This allows for the required data from 2025 to be available and analysed. It is the intention to report against these outcomes every 5 years, in line with Rural Support Plan reporting, and this will enable us to assess progress towards the outcomes over time and understand where further action may be required.

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This report outlines the indicators that will be used for this baseline and ongoing monitoring against the outcomes set out in the Rural Support Plan. The indicators are aligned with the “sub-outcomes” of the Strategic Outcomes Framework.

The distinction between “sub-outcomes” and “strategic outcomes” was raised at the committee inquiry. It is important to note that “sub-outcomes” are not secondary, denoting a lower level of importance. Rather they are “subsidiary”: they provide greater detail on what the delivery of each strategic outcomes means in practice. They are integral to the achievement of the strategic outcomes and provide the level of specificity required for selecting and monitoring indicators. The “strategic outcomes” provide the grouping mechanism for these.

On the point that was raised on Animal Health and Welfare specifically, this is listed as part of “High Quality Food Production” to highlight that high animal health and welfare standards are essential to the delivery of high quality food. Food is not, and cannot be, high quality, if this is not the case.

Thank you for the opportunity to answer committee’s questions on the Rural Support Plan and I hope this note and forthcoming report provide further clarity on some of the issues raised.

Yours sincerely,



JIM FAIRLIE