Dear Graeme,

CAP GREENING 2018 GUIDANCE UPDATE

I am writing to provide an update to my letter of 17 February regarding proposed changes to greening rules for farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

As I detailed in my previous letter in my address to the NFUS AGM on 6 February, I announced plans to introduce three changes to Scottish greening rules from 2018:

- hedges will be able to count as a separate type of EFA;
- agro-forestry supported under the Forestry Grants Scheme of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP), and located on temporary grassland, will be able to count as EFA; and
- we will seek confirmation from the European Commission (via Defra) that it is acceptable to shorten the period during which maintenance of field drains is prohibited on EFA fallow.

I also confirmed that the First Minister in her address to the NFUS AGM, announced that Professor Russel Griggs would lead a group to review the Scottish Government’s approach to greening and specifically consider the detailed implementation rules for the three planned changes to the 2018 greening rules.

Since I last wrote to you Professor Griggs and his group has (with officials):

1. Developed a revised approach to the management of EFA fallow that while allowing the protection of the environment allows the maintenance of field drains during part of the fallow period. This approach has been the subject of correspondence with the European Commission which has raised no objection to the proposal.

2. Reviewed the detailed operational rules on the implementation of EFA hedges including the decision to treat hedges as a linear feature with associated weighting
and conversion factors resulting in each linear m of hedges contributing 10 sq m to a claimants EFA requirement.

3. Reviewed the detailed operational rules regarding Agro forestry.

I can now confirm that these changes and further changes proposed by the European Commission’s (following the Simplification Review) published in June 2017 have now been incorporated into the 2018 greening guidance which has today been published on the Scottish Government web site, which can be found by following this link


I have also written to the Convenor of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee.

Yours sincerely,

FERGUS EWING