



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

**Wednesday 11 November 2020**

**Session 5**



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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**RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**  
**29<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2020, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

\*Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP)

\*Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)

\*Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP)

\*Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con)

\*Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD)

\*Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab)

\*Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

\*attended

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Steve Farrell

**LOCATION**

The Sir Alexander Fleming Room (CR3)



## Scottish Parliament

### Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

Wednesday 11 November 2020

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:00]

### Decision on Taking Business in Private

**The Convener (Edward Mountain):** Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the 29th meeting in 2020 of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee. Please make sure that your mobile phones are on silent. The meeting will be conducted in hybrid format, with some members participating remotely.

We have several items on the agenda. I remind members that we will pause at 11 o'clock to recognise remembrance day.

Do members agree to take item 3 in private to allow the committee to discuss its work programme?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Thank you.

## European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018

### Seeds (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020

### Animals, Aquatic Animal Health and Seeds (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020

### Alien Species in Aquaculture, Animals, Aquatic Animal Health, Seeds and Planting Material (Legislative Functions and Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020

09:01

**The Convener:** We move to item 2. We have received a consent notification in relation to three United Kingdom statutory instruments, which are being laid in the UK Parliament under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

Several issues have been highlighted in our briefing paper, in particular in the context of the interaction with other pieces of legislation and policy. For example, the common framework on plant varieties and seeds, which the notification covers, will be available for the committee to consider only after the SI has come into effect.

Do members have comments on the instruments?

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** I have a couple of questions about the information on the SIs that is in the briefing paper. On page 2, in the section on animal by-products and transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, there is a reference to

“The power to set conditions for the use of ABPs for research, diagnostic and artistic purposes”.

Why “artistic purposes”? Why would we need that?

**The Convener:** I am sorry, Emma, I did not quite catch that. Why would we need what?

**Emma Harper:** Why do we need the power to set conditions for the use of animal by-products for “artistic purposes”?

**The Convener:** I do not know the answer to that; we can ask the question. I assume that it has to do with there being some requirement to test by-products for bovine spongiform encephalopathy and TSEs, and that that is why the power is needed. We can ask the question when we ask other questions that I assume we will ask.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** It would be perfectly proper to ask

the question. I suspect that the point about “artistic purposes” relates to the use of deceased animals—whether they are soft or otherwise preserved—as part of artistic displays. I recall an occasion on which the National Gallery in London exhibited a deceased animal in a glass case, in formaldehyde. I can sort of see what the provision might mean, but greater clarity might be useful to enable the committee to understand the issue that Emma Harper identified.

**Emma Harper:** Thank you for that clarification, which was interesting.

The other issue that I want to raise is dealt with on page 11, under the heading “Veterinary medicines and residues”. I assume that “residues” means chemicals that are retained in an animal, which can then enter the food chain. Aspects of veterinary medicine are reserved, but public health and food safety are devolved. In paragraph 41, it says:

“functions will be conferred on the Scottish Ministers in relation to the detection and enforcement of non-compliance regarding the presence of residues of veterinary medicines.”

I have been doing work recently on antibiotics and chemicals, including Carbamax, which is given to pigs, and ractopamine, which is a hormone that makes pigs leaner. Carbamax and ractopamine are used in the United States, and I have expressed concern about the potential for residues of those chemicals to get into our food supply chain. I am interested in pursuing the issue, in whatever way necessary, to see whether it is something that I should be concerned about.

**The Convener:** That is another question that we can pose when we submit other questions to the Government. I do not think that anyone is brave enough to venture an answer on that now.

If there are no more comments, does the committee agree to write to the Scottish Government, bearing in mind the additional two questions that have been raised today—

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** Convener, you referred to two “additional” questions; where did the other questions come from?

**The Convener:** They are in the paper; they are based on the legal advice on the instruments that was submitted to committees.

**Maureen Watt:** Okay.

**The Convener:** If members are happy with that, does the committee agree to write to the Scottish Government to confirm that it is content for consent for the SIs to be given and to ask for answers to the additional questions that Emma Harper raised?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Thank you. We move into private for the next item.

09:07

*Meeting continued in private until 11:38.*

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