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Finlay Carson MSP  
Convener, Rural Affairs & Island Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

31 July 2023

Dear Finlay,

**Public Intervention and Private Storage Aid (Amendment and Suspension) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 (SSI 2023/150)**

Thank you for your letter of 10 July, following the Committee's meeting of 21 June when the above SSI was considered.

You have sought further information regarding any assurances given to the NFUS regarding market intervention mechanisms and also to ask about the basis for how information to be included in the forthcoming Agriculture Bill has been shared with NFUS.

Following the NFUS's written submission about proposed changes to Public Intervention and Private Storage Aid, Scottish Government officials discussed with them the purpose of the SSI and explained that, similar to UK Government Ministers who have powers to act under *exceptional market conditions*, Scottish Ministers can achieve the same outcome through similar powers - to act to address *threats of market disturbance*.

Furthermore, the now closed Agriculture Bill consultation, in the context of the Common Market Organisation (CMO), noted that the CMO currently provides support for public intervention and private storage aid and went on to propose (page 25):

[Delivering our Vision for Scottish Agriculture Proposals for a new Agriculture Bill \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

*...the new Agriculture Bill should include a power to declare when there are exceptional or unforeseen conditions adversely affecting food production or distribution, and the ability to provide financial assistance, if necessary, to the agri-food sector and related bodies whose incomes are being, or are likely to be, adversely affected by the exceptional or unforeseen conditions described in the declaration.*

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

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The consultation on the Agriculture Bill was drafted with a commitment to co-development with rural partners, as the foundational approach to the development of future support structures and delivery.

The Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board (ARIOB) was established to advise on new proposals for sustainable farming support and I co-chair the Board with the NFUS President, Martin Kennedy. Subsequently, the ARIOB helped to inform the development of the consultation and the proposals for the new Bill.

I trust this information answers your queries.

Yours sincerely,



**MAIRI GOUGEON**