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17 March 2022

Dear Finlay,

Thank you for your letter on 16 December 2021 regarding the Private Storage Aid Scheme (Pigmeat) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 discussed at the Committee's meeting on 8 December 2021.

You asked for further information on the scheme regarding the following:

- **What checks are in place to ensure that carcasses are not processed and released back into the food chain via the use of butchering facilities out with Scotland;**

The Private Storage Aid scheme does not allow for full carcasses to be entered into storage, with only the detailed cuts allowed that are specified in the Regulations. The cuts are checked upon entry into storage and checked again at the end of the contracted period.

- **What is the total amount of funding available through this scheme and which budget does the funding come from;**

The total aid available through the scheme is £290,000. Funding for this scheme is allocated under the Food and Drink division budget, Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Economy (ARE).

- **What is the storage capacity of the scheme;**

The storage limit is 1000 tonnes.

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- **How will the process for releasing the stored meat back into the food chain be managed;**

When businesses are considering taking products out of storage before the contract end date they are required to get prior Scottish Government approval. At that point there would be checks done to verify the amount being released and the contract would be amended to reflect the change.

At the end of the contract period, checks are carried out to ensure consistency with either the original or amended contract. From that point, individual businesses decide the end destination for the product (further processing, export, etc.). It is also possible for businesses to decide to leave their product in storage at their own expense.

- **Whether the Covid outbreak at the pig abattoir in Brechin impacted on the Scottish Government's decision to bring forward this scheme; and**
- **How this scheme links with the previous Hardship Scheme and whether the Scottish Government has any plans to reintroduce that scheme.**

The Private Storage Aid (PSA) scheme is not directly related to the Covid-19 outbreak at the Brechin abattoir referred to. Both schemes are however intended to support the pig industry during a challenging period where a number of factors have contributed to the exceptional market conditions affecting the sector.

The PSA scheme is for the benefit of the sector as a whole, which assists the processors due to staff shortages and limited processing capacity. A similar scheme was launched by Defra for producers in England.

The Pig Producers Hardship Support Scheme was put in place to support producers impacted by a Covid outbreak and subsequent loss of the Chinese export licence at the pig abattoir in Brechin. The committee will be aware that the Scheme was already extended in February to eligible producers who supplied the plant between 1 April and 30 September 2021 and we do not currently plan to reintroduce this. There has been no equivalent scheme for producers in England.

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



**MAIRI GOUGEON**