



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**PUBLIC AUDIT AND POST-LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND RURAL  
ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

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21 March 2017

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

As you are aware, both of our Committees have a keen interest in how the Government is addressing the significant challenges faced by the CAP Futures programme. We have coordinated our scrutiny of the Scottish Government's actions while seeking answers to our own areas of interest.

Recently, our Committees have separately requested information from the Scottish Government relating to CAP Futures. On 28 February, Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny (PAPLS) Committee clerks contacted the Scottish Government regarding the monthly update on CAP Futures programme payments, and were informed that although the update was ready, the Scottish Government's intention was to include this update alongside its separate response to the Rural Economy and Connectivity (REC) Committee. This joint response was sent to the REC Committee on 1 March, but the PAPLS Committee only received a copy on 7 March after Committee officials contacted the Scottish Government to ask when it would be received.

We are concerned that the Scottish Government deemed it appropriate to combine its responses to our Committees, despite these requests being made separately and on separate issues. From a PAPLS Committee viewpoint, our response being included as an annex to a letter to another Committee is not acceptable, particularly when the letter in question is then not copied to the Committee.

However, this situation was confused further when the REC Committee was offered a resumption of emailed weekly updates on the progress of CAP payments by Scottish Government officials; furthermore, Annex A of the Scottish Government's letter (addressed to the REC Committee) contains figures up to 20 February 2017, whereas Annex B (addressed to the PAPLS Committee) contains figures up to 8 February, meaning that by the time the monthly update to PAPLS Committee was received, the figures were almost a month out of date.

Neither of our Committees wish to add any unnecessary burden to those officials seeking to process payments efficiently. We are therefore content that, in future, the Scottish Government should provide both Committees with a joint monthly update on CAP futures payments, containing clear and consistent information, not mixed messages. Any requests for further, specific information or follow-up from either Committee should be processed separately to avoid these errors arising again.

In addition, the REC Committee would very much welcome the resumption of the short weekly updates on CAP stakeholder payments that were provided to it by the Scottish Government in the latter part of 2016 and previously to its predecessor committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Marra', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Jenny Marra MSP**  
**Convner, PAPLS Committee**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Edward Mountain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Edward Mountain MSP**  
**Convener, REC Committee**