



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Fergus Ewing MSP
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural
Economy & Connectivity
Scottish Government

**Public Audit and Post-legislative
Scrutiny Committee**

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Dear Fergus,

The Scottish Government's most recent update on CAP Futures, for April 2017, contained a reference to the recommendations from the 'Independent Technical Assessment' of the CAP IT system, which was conducted and drafted by Fujitsu. The update, which is on our website, went on to state that the "wider report is commercially sensitive" but that a summary report was attached.

While members of the Committee were provided with the summary report, we were asked by Scottish Government officials not to publish it because it was commercially sensitive. The full report has not, therefore, been seen by the committee and neither it nor the summary report are publicly-available.

We appreciate that there will very occasionally be circumstances in which issues of commercial confidentiality mean that a document relevant to the public sector cannot be published. In this case, however, no explanation was initially provided as to what made the report commercially sensitive.

I do not consider this situation to be acceptable, particularly in relation to a multi-million public project that has been beset by problems and delays, and which has caused considerable difficulties for farmers, crofters and rural communities.

We note, from the *Official Report* of the Rural Economy and Connectivity (REC) Committee meeting that recently considered CAP Payments, that members were asked not to quote directly from the summary report. However, the monthly update highlighted what the Scottish Government considered to be three key points from

this document including a direct quote. Further, the Cabinet Secretary quoted directly from the executive summary when appearing before the REC Committee.

This is not a reasonable position.

We will soon consider an as yet unpublished update by the Auditor General for Scotland on CAP and it is possible that our discussion may cover issues connected to the Independent Technical Assessment. We do not wish to be inhibited in our scrutiny and we therefore intend to publish the summary report, with appropriate redactions to take account of those matters that are genuinely commercially sensitive.

I would therefore be grateful if you could resend the draft summary with the adjustments we have asked for. Please also confirm when the final version of the independent report will be completed and that this will be published in full when all issues of commercial sensitivity have been resolved.

Yours sincerely

JACKIE BAILLIE MSP
Acting Convener of the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee