

Release

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INDUSTRY UNITES TO SOLVE LIVESTOCK PROBLEMS

The Scottish agricultural industry has joined forces to address the various livestock problems caused by Foot and Mouth disease.

NFU Scotland and other industry bodies* have joined forces to write a letter to Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment, outlining what is required of Defra and the UK Government on the key issues affecting the industry. Currently, there is the need for a livestock welfare scheme for animals with no market and extremely limited grazing, as well as a need for temporarily relaxed driver hours for the haulage sector.

The letter highlights the grave concerns of the industry over the impact that Foot and Mouth and associated restrictions have had on Scotland's livestock industry and the rural communities it supports.

Jim McLaren, NFU Scotland President, said:

“The UK Government has an obligation to do all it can to alleviate the plight of the Scottish livestock industry.

“Animals are currently in a situation where they have no market and no feed and so a welfare scheme is of high priority. In addition, haulage is becoming increasingly difficult because the Department for Transport is refusing to grant a temporary relaxation of driver hours to cope with the backlog.

“Defra must be made to understand the dire consequences that the Scottish industry could be facing if they fail to act. Currently they are demonstrating a complete lack of knowledge or concern over the Scottish farming industry and this cannot be allowed to continue.

“We have the full support of the Scottish Government but it is those in power in Westminster who must act to repair some of the animal welfare, financial and emotional damage that this disease has been allowed to cause.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

*The industry bodies that have joined forced to write to Richard Lochhead MSP are:

- Scottish Blackface Sheep Breeders' Society
 - Scottish Beef Cattle Association
 - National Sheep Association
 - Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers
 - Scottish Rural Property & Business Association
 - NFU Scotland
 - Scottish Crofting Foundation
 - British Veterinary Association Scotland
 - Scottish Estates Business Group
 - North Country Cheviot Sheep Society
 - Quality Meat Scotland
 - Scottish Federation of Meat Traders' Association
 - National Beef Association Scotland
 - Institute of Auctioneers & Appraisers in Scotland
 - Road Haulage Association
 - RSABI
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- A full copy of the letter is attached. If you have not received one, please contact Anna Davies on anna.davies@nfus.org.uk
 - Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment will be available for interview with other key representatives from Scotland's livestock industry at 1515 hrs this afternoon after a stakeholders' meeting in Parliament (Committee Room 3).
The items for discussion include: relaxations in the movement ban, welfare scheme for light lambs, relaxation in drivers' hours and the potential for resuming Scottish meat exports to Europe.
Media are invited to attend.
Please contact Chris Holme 07810 507009 or Elaine Mitchell 07881 500657

Ends