

Alister Jack DL MP
Member of Parliament for Dumfries and Galloway



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Monday 23rd October 2017

Dear Michael,

Thank you for the support you have shown to Scotland and to Scottish farmers since your appointment as Environment Secretary. There is always uncertainty during times of significant change, as the Brexit process undoubtedly is, but the support you have expressed for Scottish farmers and the extensive engagement you and your team have undertaken has been hugely welcome.

In particular, the manifesto commitment to guarantee the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament in 2022 - a commitment that was not made by any other party at the general election, including the SNP - has provided much needed reassurance. Indeed it provides greater certainty to farmers across the UK than anywhere else in the EU, where there are no guarantees for funding for farm support beyond 2020.

It is in this context that my Scottish Conservative colleagues and I wish to raise with you the convergence uplift. As you are aware, the UK qualified for additional funds for farmers - the convergence uplift - from the EU thanks to the nature of the farming industry in Scotland. Yet in 2013, the UK government decided to distribute this additional money throughout the four nations of the UK, rather than target it in Scotland. As a result, there have long been concerns that Scottish farmers have not seen the benefit of funding which is due to Scotland's particular needs.

On this vital issue, we have not seen any constructive suggestions from the Scottish Government, only grandstanding. While it may have boosted SNP morale, it has not resulted in a single Scottish farmer receiving a penny more in support. Put simply, the Scottish Government's approach has not worked.

Instead, we as Scottish Conservative MPs want to work with you on finding a solution. We therefore ask that you appoint an independent figure to consider the issue of the convergence uplift and assess how the UK government can ensure Scottish farmers receive a fair settlement.



We also ask that this review report back speedily and with specific recommendations to you as Secretary of State.

We believe this constructive approach will add credibility to future funding allocations between the UK nations and deliver a fairer outcome for Scotland.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Alister Jack MP
Member of Parliament for Dumfries and Galloway