



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

October 2018.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Organic Farming Campaign

Thank you for contacting me about organic farming.

Agriculture is a vital part of Scotland's economy, especially for rural communities in Dumfries and Galloway and across the country. Agriculture contributes £2.9 billion to the Scottish economy every year, and forms the bedrock of our world-class food and drink industry. Organic farming is a key part of this sector, and it is important that it is properly supported after Brexit.

I am pleased that the UK Government is committed to ensuring that our post-Brexit agricultural support system protects the environment, which is so particularly important to the organic farming sector. The UK Government's new Agriculture Bill sets out how farmers and land managers will in future be paid for promoting public goods like better air and water quality, improved soil health, and stronger animal welfare standards.

Agriculture is a devolved matter here in Scotland, and so responsibility for promoting organic farming rests with the Scottish Government. Unfortunately, the SNP-led Scottish Government have decided to exclude Scotland from most of the UK Government's Agriculture Bill, meaning that Scotland would be the only part of the United Kingdom where its main provisions would not apply.

I am even more disappointed that the SNP have failed to bring forward their own alternative plan for Scottish agriculture. This has left Scottish organic farmers, the wider agriculture sector, and rural communities across Scotland in the dark as to what Scotland's agricultural support system is going to look like after Brexit. I believe this decision is deeply irresponsible and exposes the Scottish Government's neglect of rural Scotland.

My Scottish Conservative colleagues have called on the Scottish Government to end this uncertainty, and I couldn't agree more. Organic farmers in Scotland, and the wider Scottish agriculture sector, deserve clarity as soon as possible as to whether the Scottish Government is going to give them the support they need after Brexit.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Alister Jack DL MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.