

On target :

Environment and Land Use

***NFU Scotland – fighting for your
interests***

Environment and Land Use issues are never far from the top of the political agenda, with the Scottish Government recently acting on issues such as climate change, flooding, wildlife and the natural environment, and rural land use. In addition, policy instruments - measures and their implementation - such as the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP 2007-2013), NVZ Action Programme and new General Binding Rules to tackle diffuse water pollution offer challenges of their own for producers. The same can also be said for issues surrounding access legislation, species management - geese, sea eagles, ravens, etc - and nature conservation designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

NFU Scotland's Environment and Land Use Committee has dealt with all of these issues, and many more, over the last twelve months and continues to scrutinise a host of regulations and their implementation to ensure that individual farm businesses and sectors of the industry do not endure disproportionate costs of compliance. Continued and intense NFU Scotland lobbying will focus on

- The review of NVZ designations in Scotland to prevent any new NVZs being proposed and seek possible reduction in areas of existing NVZs.
- Delivery of key messages and actions in relating to tackling both climate change (through Farming for a Better Climate and the development of a farm-based carbon calculator for Scotland) and diffuse water pollution (through the Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group) that will also improve the bottom line of the farm business by improving input efficiency.
- Ensuring those that take public access on farmland do so responsibly, especially in the vicinity of livestock, and that members are able to exercise their duty of care.
- Seeking continued commitment to existing local species management schemes while ensuring that provision is also put in place to adequately address real agricultural damage from species of conservation interest regardless of the location, most notably in relation to geese, eagles, ravens and deer.
- In particular, being actively driving the Scottish Government's 2010 review of national goose management policy and seeking assurances from SNH on the assurances of Natural Care funding for a variety of species/habitat management schemes.
- Ensuring that the new Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill does not result in any adverse unforeseen consequences for the agricultural industry, or individual farm businesses.
- Working with the Scottish Government to fully implement all of the recommendations of the first stage review of the Scotland Rural Development Programme – many of which NFU Scotland proposed – including improvements to the operation of Rural Priorities and new and practical Land Managers' Options.
- Continuing involvement in the Scottish Government's Rural Land Use Study and the Land Use Strategy anticipated for 2011.

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