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5 November 2025

Jim Fairlie MSP
Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
Scottish Government
Edinburgh
EH13DG

Sent by email: ministerforac@gov.scot

Dear Minister,

Future Farming Investment Scheme

I am writing to you regarding the Future Farm Investment Scheme (FFIS) following the notification last week of the successful and unsuccessful applicants.

As you know, NFU Scotland has supported the establishment of the FFIS and welcomed the increased budget that was announced by the Cabinet Secretary at our recent conference. It was therefore encouraging to see a number of our members being successful through the application process. However, we have heard from a number of members who are understandably disappointed not to have been successful despite having what they believed were strong and eligible applications.

This has led to questions about the scoring mechanism that was used to assess the applications and reports of a perceived inconsistency in how applications have been assessed. Indeed, the relatively low success rate of 38% from the Ministerial Priority Groups is particularly surprising, and this has added to the sense of confusion across farmers and crofters.

Whilst the volume of applications clearly demonstrates the ambition of farmers and crofters to invest and grow their business, we recognise that the demand was always likely to exceed the available funding. We do of course also recognise and welcome the approach taken by the Scottish Government to design a scheme with a focus on simplicity, swift payment terms, and a higher intervention rate – critical aspects that are both practical and appreciated. However, the initial feedback from our members suggests that whilst the design of the scheme was sound, the subsequent assessment process has not sufficiently targeted the priority groups.

What is important now is that lessons are learned from this process to inform future funding rounds. We are in the process of gathering further feedback from our members, and I would be keen to meet with you as soon as possible to better understand the assessment process and discuss how this could be improved going forward.

Yours sincerely,

A J Connon

Andrew Connon

NFU Scotland President