

## AGRICULTURE AND RURAL COMMUNITIES (SCOTLAND) BILL

### Key Lines

- The Bill has flexibility and scope to deliver for agricultural production, rural communities, climate, the environment and nature restoration.
- A sustainable and profitable agricultural industry is key to Scotland's ambitions and having the powers in place to deliver the right support is crucial.
- The new payments framework incentivises low carbon approaches to improve the resilience, efficiency and profitability of the agriculture sector.
- The Bill is not the place for specific statutory targets or prescriptive outcomes.
- Much of what NFU Scotland sought to be included is in the Bill.
- The Bill contains the flexibility to support activities by land type, geographic region, enterprise.
- We have responded to two Scottish Parliament consultations and continue to engage with our members to reflect their views and concerns.

### NFU Scotland's Asks

1. The five-year Rural Support Plan must be underpinned by a multiannual ringfenced funding commitment.
2. The Bill should not contain specific targets or outcomes. An adaptive and flexible approach to future agricultural policy will be essential for success.
3. The Code of Practice on Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture must be based on a set of principles that encourage and inspire farmers and crofters to adapt and not be restrictive.
4. Possible future Continuing Professional Development requirements must be flexible and inclusive.
5. 80% of the agriculture and rural economy budget should be allocated in Tiers 1 and 2. This is essential to avoid a cliff edge for farming businesses.
6. While this Bill is not the place for details, we urge for the crucial information needed to plan and implement change to be provided as soon as possible.

## Bill Timeline

29 Sept	Agriculture and Rural Communities Bill published
14 Nov	NFUS Webinar for members
Nov-Dec	NFUS briefings held for all political parties and SG Bill team
24 Nov	Consultation responses to Rural Affairs and Finance Committee
Dec- Jan	RAI Committee evidence sessions (SG Bill team – 29 November NFUS - 13 <sup>th</sup> December, Cabinet Secretary - 21 February)
March	Stage 1 Debate (vote on the principles of the Bill)
Spring	Stages 2 and 3 (amendments can be made)
Summer	Becomes an Act (The Bill includes enabling powers and not all are required to be introduced immediately)
2024/25	Transition continues
2026	New future support system is introduced

December 2023