

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment  
Richard Lochhead MSP

F/T: 0300 244 4000  
E: [scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)



Rob Gibson MSP  
Convener  
Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP



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9<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Dear Rob,

### **AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS MEDIATION etc.**

Following my appearance before your Committee on 23 September we agreed that the Scottish Government would let you have updates on developments every two weeks. I am sorry that this first update is slightly over that deadline but we have delayed writing to the Committee so that we could report on a discussion held in Parliament on 7 October.

Scottish Government officials met Claudia Beamish MSP and Iain Gray MSP, along with Eddie Henderson on behalf of the tenant group and the tenant group's senior counsel Sir Crispin Agnew. The meeting had been arranged to discuss ways to progress mediation for a number of tenants and whether there was anything the Scottish Government could do to support the tenant farmer (who was also at the meeting) who is due to leave his farm on 28 November.

A number of issues were considered during a constructive meeting and it was agreed that there would be further (urgent) discussions between senior counsel on the principles of liability in the relevant cases.

Alongside these discussions, Government officials undertook to attempt to facilitate and take part in mediation involving tenants and landlords. This process had been discussed in principle prior to the meeting with John Sturrock who has been extensively involved in preparatory work on mediation and has maintained contact with the parties concerned. Scottish Government officials have subsequently been in contact with Eddie Henderson and agents on behalf of the landlords.

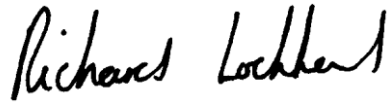
Scottish Government officials also undertook to continue and report back on their efforts to locate possible sources of alternative properties for the tenant in question.



The urgency of the situation was acknowledged by all of those at the meeting and officials agreed to keep in regular contact with Mr Henderson to review progress and to ensure that the STFA was kept fully informed.

I will provide a further update at the end of recess.

Yours sincerely,



**RICHARD LOCHEAD**