

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment
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Rob Gibson MSP
Convenor of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
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Dear Rob

SRUC PROPOSALS FOR CHANGES TO THE NETWORK OF VETERINARY DISEASE SURVEILLANCE CENTRES

Thank you for your letter of 4 September highlighting the RACCE Committee's concerns about SRUC proposals for changes to the network of Veterinary Disease Surveillance Centres (VDSCs) and the associated private commercial business they undertake.

SRUC have listened to the stakeholders' views expressed during their consultation and as a result they are working on a revised proposal that will offer a similar level of service to the current operation at Drummondhill, including the continued operation of marine strandings and wildlife crime investigations.

Any decision that is taken on the future of the surveillance centres must ensure that Scotland has a robust and effective veterinary disease surveillance system. The Scottish Government will continue to work with SRUC to ensure this is the case and through the Strategic Management Board we will ensure that the interests of public health, farming and the veterinary profession are taken into account. This will include development of a strategic vision to provide a framework within which developments can occur in order to take account of the changing nature of rural Scotland.

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

