

# European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

12 October 2022

Rt Hon. Lord Benyon  
Minister for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
2 Marsham Street, Seacole Building  
London SW1P 4DF

## **Import of seed potatoes into the EU and Northern Ireland from GB**

**(a) COM(20) 852: Proposal for a Decision amending Council Decision 2008/971/EC as regards the equivalence of forest reproductive material produced in the UK to such material produced in the Union (41765)**

**(b) 5004/21: Proposal for a Decision amending Council Decisions 2003/17/EC and 2005/834/EC as regards the equivalence of field inspections and the equivalence of checks on practices for the maintenance of varieties of agricultural plant species carried out in the UK (41769)**

We considered your letter of 7 September 2022 on the above documents at our meeting of 12 October 2022.

The continued difficulties in securing equivalence for seed potatoes are highly regrettable. We note that the issue was raised at the first meeting of the Trade Specialised Committee on SPS Measures last September. As these Committees are required to meet at least annually unless the Parties agree otherwise, can you confirm a date for the next meeting and that you will pursue this issue in that context? If the meeting has already taken place, please confirm that the issue was raised and the outcome of the discussion.

Second, the Government has clearly been making efforts to secure the Commission's risk assessment under Article 77 of the TCA. Have you received such a risk assessment?

We welcome the Government's efforts to overcome the difficulties and look forward to a further update within one month, addressing the queries above and informing us of any substantive progress.

We are copying this letter to Sir Robert Goodwill, Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and Ben Williams, Clerk of the Committee;

Simon Hoare MP, Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Stephen Habberley, Clerk of the Committee; Pete Wishart MP, Chair of the Scottish Affairs Committee and Leoni Kurt, Clerk of the Committee; Rt Hon. Stephen Crabb MP, Chair of the Welsh Affairs Committee and Dr Adam Evans, Clerk of the Committee; the Earl of Kinnoull, Chair of the European Affairs Committee in the House of Lords and Nick Boorer, Clerk of the Committee; your Departmental EU Scrutiny team; and Les Saunders, EU Document Scrutiny Manager, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

## **CHAIR**