

European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

26 May 2021

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

(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 predecessor's letter of 6 April 2021 on the above documents at our meeting of 26 May 2021.

We welcome the Commission's authorisation for Member States to recognise the "tested" category of Forest Reproductive Material from GB as equivalent to that of the EU and note your predecessor's earlier conclusion that this would facilitate exports from British nurseries to the EU and Northern Ireland.

It is highly regrettable, however, that the EU is still refusing to recognise GB seed potatoes and vegetable seed as equivalent. We support the Government's efforts to make progress on this issue and we look forward to a further update in due course.

We are copying this letter to Neil Parish, Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and Ian Bradshaw, Clerk of the Committee; Simon Hoare MP, Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Stephen Habberley, Clerk of the Committee; the Earl of Kinnoull, Chair of the European Affairs Committee in the House of Lords and Simon Pook, Clerk of the Committee; your Departmental EU Scrutiny team; and Les Saunders and Donald Harris in the Cabinet Office.

CHAIR