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European Union Committee

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24 October 2019

George Eustice MP
Minister of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Block
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear George,

EM 9645/18: Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (and ADD 1)

9646/18: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT Accompanying the document Proposals for a - Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council - Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 - Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products, (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and (EU) No 229/2013 laying

down specific measures for agriculture in favour of the smaller Aegean islands (and ADD I-2)

9634/I/18: Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (and ADD I)

9556/I/18 REV 1: Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products, (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union and (EU) No 229/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in favour of the smaller Aegean islands

Thank you for your letter on the above Proposals, dated 3 October, which was considered by our Energy and Environment Sub-Committee at its meeting on 23 October.

Thank you for the update on the latest developments on CAP reform, and for your thoughts on what the change in presidency might mean going forward. Please keep us informed of any substantive reforms proposed.

We are grateful for the update on the scrutiny by the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. As scrutiny will continue from where it left off, please provide updates on any developments going forward.

Regarding attendance at EU meetings, we note your stance that the UK will have left the EU, will not implement the next CAP, and that therefore the CAP does not represent a "significant national interest" for the UK. The Committee regrets this decision, most immediately because of how uncertain the Brexit process currently appears. Will the UK resume attendance at these meetings if the UK's departure is delayed beyond 31 October? We feel the decision is even more ill-considered because it is clearly in the UK's interest to remain as informed as possible about the developments and possible changes to the CAP as these will still have significant implications for the UK, even outside of the EU. How do you plan to ensure that the Government stays informed of any potential changes to the CAP? Can you assure us that the information will not be of a lesser quality as a result of non-attendance?

Finally, we have several questions relating to CAP continuity in the context of Brexit. Until new legislation is agreed, UK farmers will not be able to apply for Countryside Stewardship Scheme funding (or its UK equivalent) beginning in 2021 when the application round opens in spring 2020. How do you intend to ensure that UK farmers do not lose access to this important source of funding and become disadvantaged compared to their EU counterparts? In addition, the Government has committed to providing the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of this Parliament.¹ Please clarify what the arrangements will be if this Parliament ends in late 2019 or early 2020.

¹ That commitment was made when this Parliament was expected to last until 2022.

We are pleased to note that a voting arrangement has been made with Finland to ensure that the UK's non-participation in meetings does not obstruct EU business.

We have decided to retain the Proposal under scrutiny. We look forward to a reply to this letter within 10 days.

I am copying this letter to Sir William Cash MP, the Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee, Jessica Mulley, Clerk of the European Scrutiny Committee; Les Saunders, DExEU, and John Leach and Phillipa Edmunds, Scrutiny Coordinators, DEFRA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Kinnoull', with a horizontal line underneath.

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee