

## Written evidence submitted by Angus Growers (FSA0032)

Dear Sir,

Following the Future of Scottish Agriculture post-Brexit inquiry evidence session of the 23rd of April, I am writing to submit supplementary evidence to your investigation.

On behalf of the 18 farmers in the East of Scotland who trade as Angus Growers, a cooperative established under the EU Fruit and Vegetable Aid Scheme, and who grow almost half of Scotland's soft fruit production by value and employ over 4,000 seasonal workers, I would like to stress the absolute necessity of a seasonal workforce.

Innovation and technology has driven the development of the Scottish soft fruit industry, an area where members of Angus Growers have an outstanding reputation. Were satisfactory automation available, in particular in the picking of soft fruit, it would undoubtedly be adopted by Angus Growers which invest very heavily in technology. This is particularly so in the face of continuing increase in labour costs, which far outstrip any increase in prices achieved –these have remained more or less stable over the past 15 years.

The standard of care of seasonal workers is high and we recognise the value and dedication of our workforce. Workers who return after the first year become much more valuable in the second and subsequent years so it is in the best interest of our Growers to look after our workers and make Scotland's fruit farms an attractive place to work.

Consequently, without being able to attract seasonal labour, investment will decline. We are already seeing significant signs of this happening in respect of the threat of lack of workforce post-Brexit. Not only a decline of investment within the industry, but within the local area as well, particularly in the depressed and less favoured areas within Tayside where foreign workers and the investment made in the soft fruit industry are of great value to the local community.

We hope that the Committee will consider this and make seasonal agricultural labour in Scotland a priority so that we may continue to grow and harvest our fruit to the benefit of all involved.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Perrott

Chairman of the Board, Angus Growers

May 2019