

## **Written Evidence – National Farmers’ Union Scotland (SCT0028)**

1. NFU Scotland (NFUS) represents over 8,500 farm and croft businesses across Scotland – from the Borders to the Northern Isles.
2. NFUS engaged strongly with the Daylight Saving Bill in 2010-12 and opposed the proposal at the time. NFUS has reviewed its policy position since that time and currently it remains the view of NFUS that insufficient justification has been given to make a change to the current arrangements.
3. During engagement on the previous Members Bill proposal, NFUS outlined that making changes to daylight saving in the UK would have more pronounced implications for Scotland – particularly northern parts – than elsewhere in the country. Scotland shows greater extremes in the extent of its daylight hours than is the case in England – with long summer days, and shorter winter days.
4. NFUS remains sceptical about some of the arguments that have been offered in support of changing current arrangements and is nervous of the potential impacts.
5. NFUS is well aware of the contention that child safety would be improved by creating more daylight hours after school ends, even if this meant reducing them before school. However, it is the understanding of NFUS that the story is more complex and indeed few benefits would be felt in the North of Scotland because many children would still be leaving school and heading home in darkness, even with an hour’s change. Indeed, there is an argument that it could have negative consequences in the North of Scotland because the dangers posed by longer periods of dark mornings would outweigh any benefits of daylight evenings.

6. Within the agricultural context, there is little disputing the fact that the effect on agriculture of changing the clocks by an hour has reduced over the years. The modern farm is well lit and increasingly mechanised meaning that the dangers posed by carrying out field operations or handling livestock in darker winter mornings are not as great as they once were.
7. The proposal to move to Central European Time of course does not increase the number of daylight hours in each day but it changes the time of day when the daylight hours are available. Despite the modernisation of farm practices, it remains the case that carrying out farm work during hours of darkness remains inherently more dangerous than doing it during daylight. As with all farm work, there is often little option to delay certain tasks. For example, gathering livestock in the morning to go to the market for opening cannot always be delayed to await sunrise. A change would also mean more time on the roads for farm and other heavy vehicles in hours of darkness.
8. The additional, wider consideration in farming and rural communities is a social one. As outlined above, there are certain tasks on the farm (such as the checking or handling of livestock) where this work is dictated by daylight. If the working day begins an hour later, it will finish an hour later in to the evening. This affects the families of farmers and their workers who won't return home until later at night.
9. NFUS believes that these issues present a challenge to the proposal if quality of work and social life for Scotland's agricultural workers are to be considered.

10. The country last experimented with a change in the clocks in 1968-71, but the information generated then and its relevance in 2019 would be questionable. NFUS believes that in order to inform any proposal to change daylight saving, a full, independent analysis of the impact must be conducted. Clearly it is vital for any impact analysis to closely examine the consequences for agriculture and rural communities in Scotland where the impact of winter and summer on daylight hours is most extreme.
  
11. The impact of any change to daylight saving time will not be uniform across the UK, so NFUS would strongly encourage the Scotland Office and Scottish Government to analyse and articulate the particular Scottish impacts of such a change.

**18 October 2019**