

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Cùisean Dùthchail, Biadh agus an Àrainneachd  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment

Ridseard Lochhead BPA  
Richard Lochhead MSP

F/T: 0300 244 4000  
E: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Ms Sigrid Robinson  
Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP



Ar faidhle/Our ref: 2015/0003036

18<sup>th</sup> February 2015

*Sigrid*

Thank you for your letter of 13 January 2015 regarding Petition of PE1542, a resubmission of an earlier petition PE1263 concerning human rights for dairy farmers and the Ring Fencing arrangements in the Southern Isles.

I can confirm that following the Committee's consideration of PE1263 in 2011, the Scottish Government commissioned Scottish Agricultural College (SAC Consulting) to undertake a review of the Scottish Milk Quota Ring Fence provisions.

As part of this review, SAC consulted with stakeholders and worked closely with producers, processors, quota traders and stakeholders in the industry. The main recommendations of that review were to retain the milk quota ring fences around Orkney and the Southern Isles until 2015 and for the Scottish Government to contact stakeholders and First Milk to obtain an update on the situation on the proposed creamery at Campbeltown.

As the Public Petitions Committee will be aware, the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee (RACCE) recently reviewed the entire Scottish dairy sector who are currently facing challenges against the backdrop of the cash-flow difficulties being experienced by First Milk.

While I await the RACCE recommendations, I have instructed my officials to build on measures set out in Ambition 2025 (Scottish Government Dairy Review recommendations), with our Scottish Dairy Plan, namely to; a) support dairy farmers to access specialist advice via the Dairy Hub as an effective one stop shop for advice to name a few strands. b) provide capital support for First Milk's revised investment plans in Campbeltown and c) develop a strong Scottish dairy brand at home and especially the export market.

The Scottish Dairy Plan will be released next month following receipt of the RACCE recommendations.

**RICHARD LOCHHEAD**