Agriculture Bill (12th February 2020)

Written evidence submitted by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (N. Ireland) (AB13)

1. The Agriculture Bill mostly legislates for England in order to establish a new agricultural system based on the principle of public money for public goods for the next generation of farmers and land managers.

2. The Bill extends a number of provisions to Northern Ireland, which are contained in a separate schedule to the Bill that will apply only to Northern Ireland. The schedule will allow for payments to continue to be made to farmers in Northern Ireland after the UK leaves the EU, as well as important simplifications and the ability to keep pace with the changes in the rest of the UK.

3. Schedule 6 (the Northern Ireland Schedule) was drafted in the absence of an Executive and Assembly in Northern Ireland to ensure the maintenance of the status quo and to take care not to prejudge or constrain the ability of an incoming DAERA Minister, Executive and Assembly to decide upon future Northern Ireland agricultural policy. The powers that are conferred on DAERA will allow:

o Modification of CAP Basic Payment Schemes

o Modification of retained EU Law relating to the financing, management and monitoring of payments to farmers

o Support for rural development

o Collection and sharing of data

o Powers relating to intervention in agricultural markets

o Setting of marketing standards and carcass classifications

o Data protection

4. Without these powers, there would be problems in terms of making payments to farmers, for instance no changes would be possible to the EU retained law that relates to the Common Agricultural Policy and the domestic regulations which implement that law, without passing primary legislation in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

5. Legislative consent has been sought for the NI Schedule and the following

parts of the Bill that extend to Northern Ireland and are within the competence of the NI Assembly.

6. Clause 17 – Duty to report to Parliament on food security

o Places a duty on the SoS to produce a report to lay before Parliament on UK food security.

o Part reserved as national security is a matter reserved to the UK Parliament and food is one of the 13 UK Critical National Infrastructure sectors.

o Part devolved as food and drink supply policy is devolved.

o Confined to analysing statistical data on food security therefore it falls to DAERA. Non-controversial.

7. Clause 31 – Fertilisers

o Required to allow the UK to continue to legislate in respect of the policies provided for in the new EU Regulation (2019/1009) on fertilising products. They would provide for a continuation of the current regime, making good a prospective loss of section 2(2) powers under the European Communities Act 1972. Non-controversial.

8. Clause 32 – Identification and Traceability of Animals

o Inserts a new section 89A into the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to enable the SoS to make secondary legislation to allow a body (AHDB) to undertake a new statutory role managing a new Livestock Information Service (LIS) for England.

o The LCM issue arises because this power is extended to the management and use of animal ID information obtained from the devolved administrations.

o Welsh Gov has concerns about expanding the ADHB's remit; data protection; and changes to means of identifying and marking animals that might potentially impact on trade.

o Veterinary Service may want an amendment that would require the SoS to seek consent from the devolved administrations before making regulations.

o The Clause also allows England to remove itself from the ambit of (EC) No 1760/2000 which relates to identification of cattle and (EC) No 21/2004 which relates to identification of sheep and goats.

o Because of the NI Protocol, DAERA will have to comply with existing and any new EU animal ID requirements, so there is potential for some future divergence between NI and GB on and after 31 December 2020 which might potentially adversely impact upon intra – UK trade.

9. Clauses 36 and 37 – Organic Products

o Part reserved and part devolved, hence the LCM.

o Concerns the SoS will not need to seek consent from the DAs when making regulations about organics matters that are devolved.

o Concerns that UKG will be able to amend retained EU Regs on organic production and labelling of organic products, however, NI will be constrained by the NI Protocol which includes the EU Organic Regulations.

o Clause 37 gives NI powers to make Regs to the extent that they would be within the legislative competence of the NI Assembly if contained within an Act of that Assembly made without the SoS's consent. Clause 37 has similar provision for SG and WG.

o The DAs are concerned about their regulating making powers because they are not aware of any Primary Legislation that would allow any of the Administrations to make Organic Regulations.

o This is being discussed by the lawyers.

10. Clause 32 – Identification and Traceability of Animals: Concerns that the SoS does not need to seek consent from the devolved administrations before making regulations in relation to a new statutory role for AHDB. This will involve managing a new Livestock Information Service (LIS) for England and will entail using animal ID information obtained from the devolved administrations. WG not happy either.

11. Clauses 36 and 37 – Organic Products: Concerns the SoS will not need to seek consent from the DAs when making regulations about organics matters that are devolved.

12. Clauses 37 – Organic Products: Concerns about how the regulation powers for NI will operate as they will only be within the legislative competence of the NI Assembly if contained within an Act of the Assembly, and currently NI does not have its own such primary legislation on organics. WG and SG are in the same position.

13. Clauses 40-42 – WTO Agreement on Agriculture are controversial with Scotland and Wales who dispute the UK Government contention that it is a reserved issue. The clause seeks to ensure that UK WTO obligations in relation to limits on agricultural support are complied with. The Clause has no practical impact in NI as current WTO limits are so large that they will not constrain future policy choices.

14. In general, there is a level of concern / lack of understanding at the moment about how the Bill will interact with the NI Protocol.

15. Examples include:

o Potential divergence between NI and GB on animal identification and traceability after 31 December 2020 which might potentially adversely impact upon intra – UK trade.

o UKG will be able to amend retained EU Regs on organic production and labelling of organic products, however, NI will be constrained by the NI Protocol which includes the EU Organic Regulations.

o DAERA will have to comply with EU regulations on marketing standards, so these powers in relation to marketing standards cannot be exercised in a way which cause Northern Ireland to come out of alignment with EU law in this area. Their presence on the Bill does not create a problem as they do not need to be commenced.

o There is the potential for some future divergence between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK after 31 December 2020, should other parts of the UK amend marketing standards, which might potentially adversely impact upon intra–UK trade.

16. DAERA was careful to ensure that the application of those provisions in the Agriculture Bill to Northern Ireland would not prejudge or constrain the ability of an incoming Minister, NI Executive and Assembly to decide what was appropriate for Northern Ireland.

17. When drafting the NI provisions an agreed set of overarching principles were followed that sought to ensure that:

o There was the continuation of a legal basis to provide the current suite of Pillar 1 agricultural support payments (and options) post EU exit;

o The Agriculture Bill did not constrain a NI Executive's ability to continue to deliver current schemes and implement options available under the Rural Development Programme and Common Market Organisation provided by existing and retained EU legislation, for so long as Ministers considered this appropriate; and

o A NI Executive had sufficient flexibility to develop and implement future agricultural policy consistent with the principles agreed by JMC (EN), which included the functioning of the UK's internal market.

18. The majority of the NI provisions are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure, meaning that decisions on their use are entirely a matter for a DAERA Minister and the NI Assembly. In summary, the delegated powers are to:

o Make regulations modifying retained EU legislation that governs the CAP basic payments scheme (affirmative);

o Provide for the continuation of the basic payment scheme beyond 2020, and to provide for the direct payments ceiling to be determined by DAERA (affirmative);

o Make regulations modifying the coupled support scheme (affirmative);

o Make regulations modifying retained direct EU legislation relating to the financing, management and monitoring of the CAP (negative, unless it modifies primary legislation, in which case affirmative);

o Make regulations modifying retained EU legislation relating to rural development (affirmative);

o Give, or agree to give, financial assistance to agricultural producers whose incomes are being, or are likely to be, adversely affected by disturbance in agricultural markets (a DAERA power which doesn't require the making of regulations);

o Modify retained direct EU legislation relating to public market intervention and private storage aid (affirmative);

o Require a person in the agri-food chain to provide information (a DAERA power which doesn't require the making of regulations);

o Make regulations requiring a person in the agri-food supply chain to provide information (affirmative);

o Make regulations for the enforcement of data collection and sharing requirements (affirmative);

o Make provision about marketing standards (affirmative);

o Add or remove an agricultural sector, or set out products that fall within each agricultural sector (affirmative when adding or removing a product, but negative when setting out products, unless it modifies primary legislation, in which case affirmative); and

o Make provision about the classification, identification and presentation of bovine, pig and sheep carcasses (affirmative).

8 February 2020

Agriculture Bill (Second sitting) - Hansard

The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chairs: Sir David Amess, † Graham Stringer

† Brock, Deidre *(Edinburgh North and Leith)* (SNP)

† Clarke, Theo *(Stafford)* (Con)

† Courts, Robert *(Witney)* (Con)

† Crosbie, Virginia *(Ynys Môn)* (Con)

† Debbonaire, Thangam *(Bristol West)* (Lab)

† Dines, Miss Sarah *(Derbyshire Dales)* (Con)

† Doogan, Dave *(Angus)* (SNP)

† Eustice, George *(Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)*

† Goodwill, Mr Robert *(Scarborough and Whitby)* (Con)

† Jones, Fay *(Brecon and Radnorshire)* (Con)

† Jones, Ruth *(Newport West)* (Lab)

† Jupp, Simon *(East Devon)* (Con)

† Kearns, Alicia *(Rutland and Melton)* (Con)

† Kruger, Danny *(Devizes)* (Con)

† McCarthy, Kerry *(Bristol East)* (Lab)

† Morris, James *(Halesowen and Rowley Regis)* (Con)

† Oppong-Asare, Abena *(Erith and Thamesmead)* (Lab)

† Whittome, Nadia *(Nottingham East)* (Lab)

† Zeichner, Daniel *(Cambridge)* (Lab)

Kenneth Fox, Kevin Maddison, *Committee Clerks*

Ivor Ferguson, President, Ulster Farmers Union

Norman Fulton, Deputy Secretary, Food and Farming Group, Departmental Board, Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland)

Nick von Westenholz, Director of EU Exit and International Trade, NFU

David Goodwin, Agriculture Chairman, National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs

Richard Self, Agriculture Manager, Co-operatives UK

Graeme Willis, Policy and Technical Expert, CPRE

Jim Egan, Technical Adviser, Kings

Jake Fiennes, General Manager (Conservation), Holkham Estate

Judicaelle Hammond, Director of Policy, Country Land and Business Association

George Dunn, CEO, Tenant Farmers Association

[Graham Stringer *in the Chair*]

The Committee deliberated in private.

Ivor Ferguson and Norman Fulton gave evidence.

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We will now hear oral evidence from the Ulster Farmers Union and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. Thank you very much for coming today. We have until 2.30 pm for this session. I would be grateful if you introduced yourselves for the record.

Norman Fulton: My name is Norman Fulton. I am deputy secretary within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Northern Ireland. I head up the food and farming group within the Department.

Ivor Ferguson: I am Ivor Ferguson, the president of the Ulster Farmers Union. We are an organisation in Northern Ireland with roughly 11,500 members spread across all sectors.

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I am sorry, but I wonder if we could ask the witnesses to speak up slightly.

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The acoustics in this room are appalling, which is nobody's fault apart from the architect's. If witnesses and members of the Committee could speak up, we would all be grateful. Thank you.

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Q39 Schedule 6 to the Bill has Northern Ireland-specific provisions, principally an ability and power to modify the legacy basic payment scheme—the common agricultural policy scheme. Will you explain what your priorities are to simplify and improve the legacy scheme? Secondly, do you have any emerging thoughts about future policy that you might make through your own Northern Ireland legislation?

Norman Fulton: Our motivation in drafting the schedule was to retain options for incoming Ministers—obviously this was done in the absence of an Executive—so we developed it to be able to preserve the ability to continue to make payments to farmers under pillar 1 and to enable us both to continue to deliver schemes under pillar 2, until such a time as Ministers wish to change those measures, and to keep pace with appropriate changes elsewhere in the UK. So it was really to provide that framework for incoming Ministers but not really to set out any particular direction in policy, which is clearly something that Ministers will need to take a lead on. There is some scope for simplification in the powers we propose, but it is really for Ministers to decide which of those powers they might want to move forward on.

In terms of the future direction of policy, we engaged with our major stakeholders from the farming, food and environmental sides, and we produced a draft outline framework for agriculture, which we published for consultation in August 2018, really around the four pillars of resilience, environmental sustainability, productivity and supply chain functionality. It is a very high-level document and it received a good response from our stakeholders. Now that we have a Minister and an Executive in place, we need to work to flesh that out and to start to chart a way forward in the longer term.

Ivor Ferguson: From the farmers' point of view, we had negotiations with our farmers and discussions on how we would like to see payments going forward. We produced a discussion document. We felt that we were quite happy for farmers to be rewarded for activity, whether that be agricultural production or environmental activity. We were quite happy with that because a large number of farmers were not fully happy with area-based payments, in that they felt that the landlord or people who owned vast areas of land received most of the benefit.

Our farmers will be quite happy to have money directed to people who are engaged in activity, be it production or environmental.

Having said that, we would not want to see area-based payments disappear completely. We would like to keep that in the form of a resilience or volatility payment, bearing in mind that we have a land border with the Republic of Ireland where they will still receive land-based payments. We could not be disadvantaged in any way with our farming colleagues in southern Ireland.

From that point of view, we would like to see some form of a resilience or volatility payment. If we look at the recent farm income figures for Northern Ireland, the profitability figure has fallen from well over £300 million down to £290 million. That is a similar figure to what comes in in farm support to Northern Ireland. It is a stark reminder of how dependent some sectors are on basic payments.

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Q You mentioned that the rationale for an area payment might be resilience or as a risk-management tool, but it is ultimately a subsidy on land tenure or land ownership, so is it the best tool to deal with those issues? Or is it a straightforward market intervention—crisis payments when there is a slump in the market or a severe weather event, when you could intervene using the other crisis powers that are in the other part of the schedule?

Ivor Ferguson: If there were vast changes in the market for whatever reason, we would certainly need more support. This resilience payment would be much less than the payment today—perhaps 30%, 40% or at the most 50%. We have not put a figure on that yet; it is something we would have to discuss with our farmers fairly quickly now.

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Q Good afternoon, Mr Stringer. In the written evidence supplied, Mr Fulton, you raise a number of issues around divergence, both now and in future. Could you say a bit more about those issues? Could Mr Ferguson also comment on divergence?

Norman Fulton: This is certainly an issue of concern to us. We have to be mindful of the fact that we now have the Ireland/Northern Ireland protocol under the withdrawal agreement, which means we will need to align with the European systems, whereas those in the rest of the UK could diverge. Therefore, we would be concerned that, within what will be the single UK market, there could be different approaches to marketing standards, for example. Obviously, that is something that we will all need to be mindful of. I suppose it will be managed through common frameworks across the UK. A lot of work needs to go into thinking through how we will operate across the UK, to ensure that the UK market is not distorted in any way and there is a level playing field for all players in that market.

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Q That is extremely diplomatic but I am not sure how that works. You are in either one system or another, are you not? Where is the halfway house?

Norman Fulton: Well, we are very clearly in one system, so we do not have the scope to change under the protocol. In the schedule, you will see that on marketing standards, for example, we have taken the ability to set standards, but that was drafted in advance of the withdrawal agreement, so it would not be enabled. At some point in the future, if we ever left the protocol, it could be brought into play. For now, our future is pretty much mapped out when it comes to marketing standards, but that is not the case elsewhere in the UK. Although we know what our standards will be, they may change elsewhere. That will create the issue of how we ensure that there is a level playing field within the UK/GB, which remains our biggest market.

Ivor Ferguson: As Norman just said, it is our most important market. At least 50% of what we farmers in Northern Ireland produce goes to the mainland GB market, and in some sectors it is 70% or 80%. If we were to diverge and the standards were to lower in the GB market, lower standards means lower cost of production, and we would be tied to the cost of production within the EU system in Northern Ireland, so it would be very difficult for us to compete in that market. From that point of view, it would be a disaster for us if the standards changed or diverged a great deal away from where we are today.

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Q When you say disastrous, what do you mean?

Ivor Ferguson: Take the beef sector in Northern Ireland. All the products that we produce, or 95% of them, are produced to Red Tractor quality-assured standards. A lot of them go to the major retailers in the UK, which support us well with the Red Tractor standards. For beef production in Northern Ireland, the returns to farmers are down in the last 12 months by £36 million, so there is no profit in the job at the present time. We could not accept a lower price for product, so a lot of our farmers at the moment are finding it very difficult to stay in business. If there were a lowering of the price in the marketplace, that would be a disaster for us.

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Q I repeat my declaration of interest: I was an employee of the National Farmers Union, and indeed of the Ulster Farmers Union when I was working in its office in Brussels a few years ago. I want to pick up on the points that were raised about divergence. On the point you just made about maintaining an area-based payment in case of volatility, what would be the consequence of different agricultural payment schemes operating throughout the UK?

Norman Fulton: Again, this is something that all Administrations need to be very mindful of in the choices they make. Agriculture is a devolved matter, so each of the Administrations can set their own policy direction and agenda. Under the protocol, which we will now be operating under, certain restrictions will apply in the case of Northern Ireland. We will have an overall envelope for state aid cover, but within that a percentage will have to be green box. That will put certain restrictions on the choices we make in future policy. That does not necessarily apply elsewhere in the UK. Scotland, Wales and England will all be able to set their own policy choices.

Again, we need to be careful that we do not start to open up distortions in competition, which could arise from all this. Although these matters are devolved, GB/UK is our domestic market, and we need to make sure we do not end up trying to undercut each other by using our support mechanisms to facilitate that. There is a great deal of responsibility on all the Administrations on this matter.

Ivor Ferguson: I fully agree with Norman. If we take Northern Ireland at the moment, we would like to think that we will have the same level of support. We will certainly need the same level of support. The fact that it is paid in a different way should not distort our market all that much, if there is the same level of money that comes in. We have to be mindful that our farming colleagues in southern Ireland will have a basic payment too, so we need a level playing field. We have to be very mindful of that going forward.

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Q This question may be just for Mr Fulton, but both of you may care to comment. Agriculture is devolved, as you said, but the World Trade Organisation requirements for the agreement on agriculture are deemed to have been reserved. Will you comment further on whether schedule 6 gives DAERA the powers you need to meet the flexible requirements for Northern Ireland's specific needs? Do you have anything to add to your comments in answer to the question from Fay Jones on how that regional variance will play out?

Norman Fulton: The schedule is primarily about rolling forward what we have, with options for simplification and options to keep pace with potential changes that may have happened elsewhere. It is not really about setting our future policy direction, which is something that we now need to take forward ourselves in the Northern Ireland Assembly, now that Ministers are back and we have an Executive.

On the WTO issue, yes, that is a reserved matter, but there is nothing in the Bill that we feel will constrain our ability to set our policy agenda. For example, there are no restrictions on green box support in WTO rules, and none at this time on blue box support—for example, headage payments. Hopefully, the UK's share of the amber box coming out of EU will be well in excess of what any region, or the UK as a whole, could ever hope to spend on agriculture, so we do not see that as a practical restriction on our room to manoeuvre in any way.

Your final point was around distortion in the UK?

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Q You started to comment in response to Fay's question about regional variations. Is there anything you want to add to that?

Norman Fulton: It is something we all need to recognise. For example, if a region were to decide to go back to something we had in the past, a slaughter premium, you could easily see how that could attract animals for slaughter into that area. You would be starting to distort the movement and processing of livestock. A region probably would not want to do that because you would end up spending your regional support to support farmers located outside your region. Those are the types of things that could happen in theory, but I hope in practice they will not.

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Q You mentioned the word "hope" twice there. I am also hopeful, but we are here to deal with legislation. Do you think anything else needs to be added to the legislation to reduce the reliance on hope? Is the hope about negotiating aims, or is there something that should be in the Bill that currently is not?

Norman Fulton: That is a very difficult question, because at the end of the day agriculture policy is devolved, so all the Administrations have the flexibility to deploy the budget that is at their disposal. I do not think there is a lot more you can do in the Bill to address that. It is more in the area of the common frameworks that govern how the regions co-operate across this area.

Ivor Ferguson: I will just add that we are mindful of regional variations across our areas. The future trade policy to be worked out will have an effect on that. If we diverge a lot, product coming from Northern Ireland into the GB market and vice versa will have added costs with the border inspection posts, or whatever you want to call them. There will be added costs. That is something that, if a trade deal did not go for us, or if there was a large-scale divergence, that would add a lot to our costs and we would need extra funding. We are very aware of that.

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Q I seem to recall that in Northern Ireland, unlike in England, BPS payments have a maximum cut-off. That means that, although I assume you have to have cross-compliance on your entire holding, there is a maximum payment you can get. Might switching to more agri-environmental schemes result in some farms not delivering the public goods that they could deliver, because you would be limited in the amount you could give them? Do you think that, at that point, it would be worthwhile getting rid of the cap and allowing farms to participate fully on the all the land they have?

Norman Fulton: There is an overall cap on the current area-based system, but very few holdings hit that limit at this point in time. Again, those are the sorts of things we will need to consider in relation to the architecture we put in place. Certainly, if you were talking about large areas of land that needed to be brought back into good management and good condition, you would want that to be encouraged and incentivised, and any disincentive that might arise from a cap would have to be considered very carefully. At this point in time, there is no cap on agri-environment—well, there are caps on the amount that individual farmers can get. I know it is an issue that some farmers want to do more, and that is something we will have to consider in our next iteration of agri-environment.

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Q I suppose most farmers favour a cap as long as it is just over the amount they get paid. You also have a scheme where young farmers under the age of 40 who farm less than 90 hectares get a 25% additional payment. How effective is that? Has that just resulted in farmers passing on their farms early? Are farms tailoring their businesses to meet the rules, or do you see genuine benefits in having a young farmer payment?

Norman Fulton: It is a bit of a mixed picture. Certainly, it has encouraged conversations around the farm table that would not otherwise have happened. We actually put in place in addition—it was an optional addition to that measure—a requirement for the young farmer to have a level 2 qualification in agriculture, so it was a way of bringing young farmers into the whole area of technology transfer. Some, who had perhaps gone out and got jobs in other professions or trades, were coming back to the farm but did not really have the agricultural training in place, so this got them on to the stepladder. Quite a proportion then decided they would go on and take on further training and qualifications, so it was very positive from that perspective as well. The motivations on that one were good, but I think we could improve on it by looking at the restrictions and issues facing young farmers, and at how we can tailor a package to help generational renewal on farms.

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Q Is that your experience as well, Mr Ferguson, from a farmer's perspective?

Ivor Ferguson: Yes indeed. Coming back to the discussion document we produced after some consultation with our farmers, our idea was that when we moved away from the basic payment to a payment for productivity and environmental measures, it would mean that some of the farmers who wanted to do extra environmental schemes on their farms would be able to avail themselves of a grant to do that, so it would encourage environmental measures as well as production measures. That is something we are very happy about.

On the young farmers scheme, as Norman said, some young farmers certainly benefited from the scheme and it does encourage young farmers. However, going a bit further, we would like to see a succession plan put in place for older farmers to pass on to the next generation, and we would like to see some incentives, like they have in southern Ireland, such as tax incentives and that sort of thing. That would make the transition from the older generation to the next generation a lot easier, and it would be more encouraging for our young farmers.

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Q With regard to the regulatory and policy divergences between the four nations of the UK, I am lucky enough to have been on the Agriculture Bill Committee twice in the last two or three years, and I think I am right in saying that we heard from all the NFUs in the previous iteration of this Bill Committee. I recall all the NFUs being at pains to say that they currently operate different schemes and policies between themselves, as you would expect from organisations in devolved Administrations. There were discussions around common frameworks and how they would work once Brexit occurs; those organisations currently operate in Europe under common frameworks. However, the details of the future frameworks must be agreed, not imposed—I think that that was said right across the board by all the different NFUs. Is that something that you recognise and agree with?

Norman Fulton: Yes. I think the frameworks will be important. Up to now, we have operated within a regulatory framework, the CAP, which gave us a degree of flexibility, although it was ultimately constrained. Going forward, we will no longer have that regulatory framework. It then comes back to the politics of devolution and the fact that agriculture is fully devolved. I think all the devolved Administrations will jealously preserve that flexibility, but they will also need to recognise that we will operate within a single market, and that there will therefore have to be ground rules—

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Q When you say single market, do you mean the internal market of the UK?

Norman Fulton: Of the UK, yes, which is obviously of utmost importance for everyone.

Ivor Ferguson: I agree. For us in the Ulster Farmers' Union, we would certainly have to have some ground rules. We meet our colleagues in the NFUs in England, Scotland and Wales on a regular basis, and we certainly discuss all those matters. We fully agree that we will have to have some ground rules, but we do keep in touch with farmers in the other regions.

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Q The impression I got was that the relationship between the four NFUs is very good, and that you speak regularly about these sorts of thing.

Ivor Ferguson: Yes.

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I am afraid that this will have to be the last question.

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Q I will be very quick. What are your thoughts on the food security reports? The current Bill talks about them being produced every five years. Do you have any thoughts on the frequency?

Ivor Ferguson: We certainly would not be happy at all with a review every five years. We would certainly want to see this reviewed at least once a year. Especially in the transition, as we move forward, we would think that five years would be far too long a period, and that it will have to be reviewed a lot sooner than that—at least annually.

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