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AGRICULTURAL STAKEHOLDERS AGREE BREXIT PRIORITIES

A range of stakeholders from across Scottish agriculture have met to discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by the UK's decision to leave the EU.

The meeting yesterday (20 December) at Ingliston near Edinburgh is the first of many regular discussions which will take place into 2017, and saw Scottish industry stakeholders share their mutual concerns and priorities for Brexit negotiations.

At the meeting, the broad, overarching issues of market access, future agricultural support and movement of labour were discussed – with the group in agreement that all in the Scottish agricultural industry should come together to strengthen the following message to the UK and Scottish Governments:

- Negotiators must understand the impact of various trade arrangements on the different parts of the agricultural sector, to ensure a favourable outcome for all. A bottom line is that the Scottish agricultural industry's access to European and Global markets must not be compromised, and nor should any future trade deal leave the UK exposed to imports produced at a level lower than the UK's exacting standards.
- A solution must be found which allows industry to recruit and retain both skilled and non-skilled labour from outside of the UK for permanent and seasonal posts.
- There is concern about market instability and fluctuations in the years immediately following the UK's exit from the EU, which is why the mechanism and structure of agricultural support will be so important.
- There will be an ongoing need for agricultural support. It is vital that there is a policy and budget fit to the needs of Scottish agriculture, which can be tailored to our unique farming, crofting and land management practices.

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Notes to Editors

- This statement has been issued jointly by those in attendance at the meeting on 20 December: Agricultural Industries Confederation, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, Quality Meat Scotland, Scottish Tenant Farmers Association, Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish Beef Association, National Sheep Association, Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society, Scottish Crofting Federation, Scottish Agricultural Arbiters and Valuers Association, SAC Consulting, Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers in Scotland and NFU Scotland.
- NFU Scotland facilitated the meeting.

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