

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **FARMERS' RAISE NVZ CONCERNS WITH MEP**

Ian Hudghton MEP (Scottish National Party) had a round the table meeting with members of the Banffshire and North East Region National Farmers Union in Banff today. The NFU had sought an urgent meeting with the Euro-MP to voice their concerns over measures the Scottish Executive are proposing that farmers must implement in order to comply with legislation on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones.

Many rivers throughout the North East of Scotland have been designated NVZ's following European legislation designed to prevent nitrate seepage into rivers and other waterways. The NFU in the North East believes that the Scottish Executive's interpretation of the European legislation is too restrictive and that many of the proposed measures are unnecessary, and will result in crippling costs for farmers faced with their implementation.

Describing the meeting as "a constructive exchange of views", Mr Hudghton said:

"Union representatives arranged today's informal meeting so that they could voice the views of their members to me face-to-face and I was glad to have the opportunity to hear, at first hand, just what the proposed Scottish Executive regulations mean to the industry. Having listened to their arguments, I am in no doubt that the costs and disruption farmers face in implementing these proposals are the last straw for many in the industry – coming as they do hard on the heels of what has been a very fraught year.

At today's meeting I was able to confirm that I have written to the Minister for Rural Affairs, Ross Finnie MSP, calling on him to take heed of the views which have been expressed at meetings up and down the country. I will continue to press Mr Finnie to give farmers' concerns on NVZ the priority they deserve and shall be watching carefully to see whether he is prepared to fight their corner in Brussels."

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