

Mairi Gougeon
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
Scottish Government
Edinburgh
By email

7 December 2023

Dear Mairi,

I am writing to thank you for your letter dated 30 November 2023, in which you acknowledged the positive contribution of Scotland's food and drink industry.

As you point out, food and drink businesses continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of unprecedented challenges. We see a collective effort to not just survive but thrive and the continued success of Scottish ingredients and products is a testament to this dedication shown every day along the supply chain.

As we approach the festive season, with premium food and drink firmly in the spotlight, it is a perfect time to reflect on the critical role played by our farmers, fishers, crofters, processors, manufacturers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, and hospitality providers. Their relentless and collective effort, which often remains hidden, ensures we can all enjoy food and drink from Scotland, wherever we are. We want to join you and thank all those who work tirelessly to uphold Scotland's reputation as a place where the best food and drink comes naturally.

In my view, Scotland has a winning recipe for success: relentless enthusiasm and passion for great food and drink across an industry filled with people who care deeply, combined with an enabling approach from Government and partners to see the industry realise the opportunities that exist across Scotland, the UK and abroad. We are on an exciting journey towards a more sustainable, innovative, and resilient sector. Together, we can achieve responsible growth that balances economic advancement with our environmental and social goals.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to navigate the challenges ahead. Together, we can continue to build Scotland's reputation at home and abroad and become the best country in the world to own, run or work for a food and drink business.

Thank you once again for your support and recognition. We extend our best wishes for the festive season and look forward to a happy and prosperous new year.

Yours sincerely,



Iain Baxter
Chief Executive