

From: Emma Mourant <emmawright00@gmail.com>

Sent: 12 November 2022 13:18

To: Scrutiny Communications <Scrutiny@gov.je>

Subject: Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel - Rural Initiative Scheme

Good afternoon

Should £2.8 million be invested in a Rural Initiative Scheme over the next four years?

I am responding as comments on this question were requested from the public via social media.

Firstly, I am astonished that this question is even being asked of the general public. The government themselves have acknowledged that without government support there will be no agriculture sector left in Jersey in 10 years' time. A very desperate prospect where food security and the way Jersey's land is managed would be lost.

Jersey's support for the agriculture sector has been in steep decline for the last 20 years. During this period the island has "taken farming for granted" according to Deputy Kirsten Morel in his speech at the Farming Conference on 10 November 2022.

In the last 10 years, Jersey has lost 50% of farmers. The remaining farmers have absorbed many increases in costs without passing these on to consumers. This, together with unequal market competition, makes the current situation unviable for farming businesses to continue without support.

Jersey's level of support for the agriculture industry is woefully low compared to other jurisdictions. At £24 per head of population, we fall way below the UK at £96, the EU at £159 and the Isle of Man at £128.

When 1% of the government budget has been secured for the Arts at a cost of £9 million, the question should not be whether £2.8 million should be invested in a Rural Initiative Scheme but rather how can the Jersey government support the agriculture sector further before it is too late?

regards

Emma Mourant