RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

24th Meeting, 2000 (Session 1)

Tuesday 12 September 2000

The Committee will meet at 2 pm in Committee Room 1

1. **Subordinate Legislation**: The Convener to move motion S1M-1159, That the Rural Affairs Committee recommends that nothing further is to be done under [The Seed Potatoes (Scotland) Regulations 2000 SSI 2000/201](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2000/201).

   At approximately 2.45 pm.

2. **Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Amendment (Scotland) Bill**: The Committee will consider the Bill at stage 2.

3. **Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning**: The Committee will consider a report by Rhoda Grant on a recent meeting between industry representatives and the Executive.


Richard Davies
Clerk to the Committee
Meeting between Rhoda Grant MSP, Maureen Macmillan MSP and Ministers Susan Deacon MSP and John Home Robertson MSP. Also present representatives of the Scallop Industry and of the Food Standards Agency, Alasdair Morrison MSP (Chair) and John Farquhar Munro MSP

The meeting was called to discuss the current ASP closures and to look for a way forward. The Representatives of the Scallop Industry outlined the current plight of the industry and outlined their fears that many of the industries fishermen could go out of business if the ban continued.

The Food Standards Agency stressed that they were acting within the directive, although this was disputed by the Industry who had a different interpretation of the Directive. Ireland's example was discussed, the Food Standards Agency was unsure whether Ireland was acting within the terms of the directive. Industry representatives pressed the Agency and the Government to re-examine the Directive to see if it were possible for Scotland to adopt the Irish approach. One organisation stated that they would be seeking Counsel's opinion on the Directive and should their advice differ from that of the Food Standards Agency they would advise fishermen to resume fishing even if this is contrary to the Government and Agency's opinion.

Much of the discussion centred on the issue of testing with many of the representatives arguing for a tiered approach. The Agency advised they had sent such a proposal to Europe but did not expect to have a response for some months. They also advised that they were carrying out additional experiments on processes scallops to identify differences in toxin levels.

It was suggested that irrespective of this white meat could be sold because of its very low incidence of infection. However, the industry could not agree to look at this as a way forward.

John Home Robertson stated that he was committed to ensuring that the fishing industry has a stable future but that consumer health safety had to be the first priority - a view reiterated by Susan Deacon and Fishing representatives. Susan Deacon
pledged to keep on trying to find a solution to the problem and asked the Food Standards Agency to look into some of the matters raised.