

Response ID ANON-KA81-YMKZ-Z

Submitted to **Crop Production Sector Plan**
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Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name (optional):

Eleanor Kay on behalf of Scottish Land and Estates

2 What is your email address?

Email (optional):

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3 What is your interest in the Crop Production Sector Plan?

Answer:

Scottish Land & Estates (SLE) represents Scottish land owners and rural businesses. As part of their varied interests our members are actively involved in all aspects of farming and land management including crop production.

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4 Non-agricultural organic materials such as sewage sludge, digestates and compost contain valuable nutrients and sources of organic matter but they may also contain undesirable elements such as micro plastics and medicine residues. What additional actions could SEPA and the sector take to ensure these nutrient sources are used safely and efficiently?

Please provide your thoughts here:

No comment

5 What further action could be taken by SEPA and the sector to help support the 'Voluntary Initiative' in Scotland?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Greater awareness of the voluntary initiative could be achieved through the use of case studies and on farm events.

6 Irrigation water can come from surface and groundwater and from lagoons / storage. We think that water should be managed more holistically in a wider catchment. What are your views on this?

Agree

Please provide your thoughts here:

Water is a valuable resource and should be managed holistically throughout the catchment to ensure sufficient availability for all. The management of water should focus on integrated land use and improving water holding capacity of soils. This would enable crops to cope better during drought but would also increase how much soils could hold during heavier periods of rain thus reducing the amount and rate of water entering ditches, burns and rivers.

7 What Natural Flood Risk Management measures are most appropriate to the crop-production environment and how can we best work with the sector to encourage uptake?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Flood risk management needs to be considered within an integrated land management approach. Natural flood risk management measures for crops includes:

- increasing soil organic matter to increase soils water holding capacity and slow the flow of rain water
- planting trees and restoring hedgerows
- limiting the amount of bare uncropped soils
- understanding the impact of certain cultivation practices on soil runoff rate

8 How can we best support the protection and improvement of on-farm biodiversity to benefit the farming business and support the wider catchment?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Supporting stakeholders to engage in activities that help realise Scotland's Biodiversity targets is a worthwhile endeavour. Challenges exist in ensuring funding longevity and encouraging the uptake of schemes. Leaving the EU presents opportunities for better scheme design and increased local community and stakeholder engagement in the issue of increasing biodiversity. For targets to be realised a sense of ownership needs to be created in wider society, not just rural stakeholders. Whilst the goal of biodiversity targets must be fixed at a national level the routes to achieving them need flexibility at local levels.

9 Are there any other organisations that SEPA could work with to help implement this crop production sector plan?

Not sure

If yes, please provide your thoughts. :

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10 Compliance with GBR 20 which controls cultivation close to water bodies has increased significantly. We want to celebrate this success with our partners and want to review if our current approach can be further improved to increase compliance with regulation and improve the status of the water bodies. What actions do you think would be most effective at improving compliance?

Please provide your thoughts here:

The current approach has clearly worked, we would encourage SEPA to examine what the final barrier to compliance is for those farmers yet to reach it.

11 What measures do you think could be taken to help ensure nutrients are used efficiently from all nutrient sources?

Please provide your thoughts here:

SEPA should encourage the use of fertiliser planning as a means to improve resource use efficiency both for economic and environmental reasons.

12 What further action could be taken within the sector to increase the use of Integrated Pesticide Management (IPM) techniques that will minimise the environmental risk from pesticides?

Please provide your thoughts here:

The use of IPM also has some sound business benefits, by promoting this aspect of IPM its use could be increased.

13 What further knowledge is required to understand the risk of pesticides to the environment and biodiversity?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Research into pesticide risks to the environment and biodiversity is available and should be tested further on the ground. Advice on the impact of residue levels in soils should be available. Guidance on efficient application of chemicals in accordance with thresholds for pests, weeds and disease should be more widely promoted. There is a sound business case for efficient chemical applications which could also have an environmental benefit.

14 What are the best opportunities to work with the sector to understand the scale of this business risk and to explore effective management solutions?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Encouraging the use of farm scale planning and resource use efficiency measurements would enable business to understand their business risk and identify means of improvement. These can all be provided through the Farm Advisory Service.

15 Which aspects of supply-chain influencing do you think SEPA should focus on?

Please provide your thoughts here:

No comment

16 How can we best work with partners to encourage the market to further reward those producers who go beyond compliance and provide additional benefits to the environment?

Please provide your thoughts here:

No comment

17 How can SEPA be most helpful in promoting innovation and facilitating the implementation of new techniques?

Please provide your thoughts here:

- developing case studies that include financial data
- on-farm open days to see potential innovations
- clear detailed guidance produced with partners
- encourage government to tailor support schemes to encourage innovation

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18 How do you think that SEPA can be most effective in working with the crop sector to help keep soils healthy and in the field?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Build on established partnerships to encourage sustainable soil management. Including practical guidance on the benefits of healthy soil and sustainable management.

19 How can SEPA be most effective in working with partners to ensure the use of the right nutrient material, in the right amount, in the right place, at the right time?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Work with partners to hold events and develop case studies with practical advice. Encourage nutrient mapping and regular soil testing to improve input efficiency.

20 What are the best opportunities for SEPA and our partners to facilitate the recirculation of nutrients in Scotland?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Address knowledge gaps in the industry to generate demand for nutrient re-circling.

21 How can SEPA be most effective in working with partners increasing the efficiency of water use for irrigation?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Encourage the use of modelling and data analysis so farmers understand when irrigation will have the biggest positive impact to crop.

22 What are the best opportunities for SEPA and our partners to drive towards a catchment based proactive water management that increases the certainty of supply of irrigation water and that operates within the environmental limits?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Increase catchment level understanding of the issues surrounding sustainable water management. This would generate a sense of ownership over the issue and an understanding of how their actions may be having a negative impact and identify changes which could make their impact positive.

23 How can SEPA be most effective in working with partners to increase energy use efficiency in the crop sector?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Work with partners to ensure consistent messaging on what the industry can do to be more energy efficient.

24 How can SEPA and partners most effectively help the crop production sector adapt to climate change?

Please provide your thoughts here:

Help farmers to understand the consequences of climate change and how these can be minimised. Provide guidance on what farms can do to mitigate the effects of climate and how they can reduce their contribution to emissions.

25 Which of the actions and aspirations proposed in this plan do you consider to be of the highest priority?

Please provide your thoughts here:

All of the actions and aspiration are worthy targets. It should be recognised that the actions and aspirations are all quite interlinked and therefore the solutions and activity could be very similar. This will help in achieving them. Considering the market uncertainty and understandable concerns around Brexit we believe the priority should be on business resilience and resource use efficiency. Addressing these issues will have add-on benefits for the environment whilst providing stability for business to consider investment in technology and innovation.