

Review of Seed regulation fees for 2017

August 2017

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Overview

This report presents the written response to The Consultation on Fees for Seed Testing, Seed Certification and Associated Seed Functions in Scotland. The consultation ran from 17 February to 12 May 2017.

Background

The fees for seed testing, seed certification and associated seed functions are reviewed annually, to ensure that if any changes are required, they are implemented as far as possible that year and not allowed to accumulate over a number of years, resulting in large increases.

A recent review performed by the Scottish Government policy team working alongside SASA highlighted that the fees for seed certification, seed testing and other functions were not making full cost recovery.

Scottish Government's standard approach to setting charges for public services is full cost recovery, in doing so it avoids unnecessary public expenditure. Charging also provides an incentive to use goods and services economically, efficiently and effectively.

Consultation

In line with Scottish Government's Better Regulation practises, a 12 week public consultation period was undertaken during which time, Scottish Government met with National Farmers Union of Scotland (NFUS), Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC) Scotland and the Scottish Seed Trade Association (SSTA). Over 130 letters/e-mails were sent out to businesses/individuals registered with the Scottish Government and a copy of the consultation documents were placed on the Scottish Government and the SASA websites.

Response to the Consultation

The National Farmers Union of Scotland (NFUS) were the only respondent to the consultation, (copy of letter from NFUS is attached) and were of the opinion that 'Compared with the overall cost of providing the services being consulted on, the proposed total charge is relatively modest', however, with the fall in cereal incomes and other pressures on arable farming, did not believe that fees should be increased.

In addition with Scottish Government's guidance on Better Regulations, and in preparation of the final Better Regulations Impact Assessment (BRIA), policy contacted 11 individuals/companies at random and interviewed them in order to establish what these proposed changes will mean to their business. All stakeholders saw the proposed increase as a fair way of Scottish Government covering its costs and were in favour of an inflationary rise in costs.

Outcome

With a need to insure full cost recovery for services provided by them, Scottish Government increased seed certification, seed testing and associated fees by 1.8% on 1 July 2017.



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