



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON S.W.1  
TELEPHONE: 01-839 7711, EXT.

cc Question  
ASL

T Flesher Esq  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

1 March 1984

Dear Tim

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COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE MINISTERS: 27-28 FEBRUARY 1984

I attach a copy of the statement which Mr Jopling hopes to make in the House today. I would be grateful for immediate clearance.

I am copying this letter to Bernard Ingham; David Heyhoe (Leader of the House's Office); Murdo Maclean (Whip's Office, Commons); David Beamish (Whip's Office, Lords); Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office); Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and to Private Secretaries of the other Agriculture Ministers and members of the OD(E).

Yours Sincerely  
Ivor Llewelyn

IVOR LLEWELYN  
Private Secretary



With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the Council of Agriculture Ministers which took place in Brussels on 27 and 28 February. I represented the United Kingdom government with my hon Friend, the Minister of State.

Most of the time the Council was taken up in detailed discussion of the Commission's price proposals and adaptations to the Common Agricultural Policy. No decisions were taken. But there was further clarification of individual national positions on the various commodity sectors and other issues. These negotiations will be resumed at a further Council meeting next week.

The Council agreed that the existing structures Directives should be extended with effect from the beginning of the year until the end of June. Under this agreement, FEOGA will contribute in the normal way to payments made since 1 January under the Community schemes for capital grants and hill livestock compensatory payments. Aids to dairy investment are not included in the roll-forward. This means that no applications for development plans under the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Scheme which include dairy investments will be accepted from today onwards. Nor will claims be accepted under the Agriculture and Horticulture Grant Scheme on dairy expenditure incurred from today onwards.

I am pleased to tell the House that the Council agreed to the extension of the less favoured areas in the United Kingdom. This is an important decision for farmers in our marginal areas. As foreshadowed in my Answer to my Rt Hon Friend the member for West Devon and Torridge on 30 November it enables the Government to make arrangements for paying enhanced



rates of capital grant in the marginal areas<sup>and</sup> / to consider  
in the autumn review appropriate intermediate rates of hill  
livestock compensatory allowances to be applied in 1985.

The Council also agreed that the present import arrangements  
for New Zealand butter should be extended for a further month  
so that 20,750 tonnes can be imported during the first three  
months of 1984 pending a decision on the proposal which the  
Commission have made for a five-year agreement.