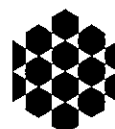


From the Office of the Minister



Department of

**Enterprise, Trade  
and Investment**

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**Our Ref: DETI COR 548/2013**

[REDACTED]  
Horticulture Forum for Northern Ireland  
[REDACTED]

20 November 2013

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013 regarding the horticulture industry and the agri-food loan scheme. I am also responding on behalf of the Minister for Finance and Personnel.

The Agri-Food Loan Scheme has been developed to enable local producers and processors in industries with an integrated supply chain to capitalise upon the significant opportunity presented by the increased demand for UK sourced meat from major retailers. The aim is to help local food producers to access the finance they need to invest in the farm buildings necessary to increase supply of the primary produce for processing.

The Scheme will be delivered jointly by the banks and Invest NI, with applicants required to submit only one application for finance through the usual bank channels. Finance will be provided by the Northern Ireland Executive in the form of a loan, which will be provided on commercial terms.

The first phase of the scheme relates to broiler producers and subsequent phases of the scheme are being developed for other agri-food sectors in discussions between the banks and relevant industry representatives, with a challenging timetable to bring forward schemes, where feasible, for pig meat, eggs, red meat and dairy by March 2014. As the particular conditions of the scheme are being adapted for each phase, our understanding of the potential applicability and extension of the scheme to further agri-food sectors will have been greatly enhanced by the end of this process. At that stage we will be much better placed to gauge the feasibility or otherwise of adapting or extending the existing scheme to meet the specific needs of the local horticulture industry.

My officials responsible for the development of the Agri-Food Loan Scheme are available to meet with you, and other industry representatives, to discuss the loan scheme and also to enhance our understanding of specific issues affecting horticulture firms in accessing finance for investment. Please contact Mr Shane Murphy on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] to arrange a suitable time.

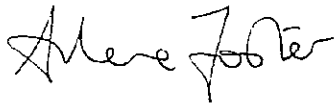


INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Bronze

You have highlighted the tremendous growth potential which exists in the horticulture industry and I sincerely believe that everyone playing their part will be essential to the success of "*Going for Growth*" and achieving our ambition to grow the local agri-food sector.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arlene Foster'.

**ARLENE FOSTER MLA**

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment