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Smith invites McCartney for "mince"

Press release by SNP MEP Alyn Smith

SNP MEP **Alyn Smith** has today (Monday) invited Paul McCartney out to dinner in Brussels, for a plate of Scots mince, in advance of his speech at the European Parliament tomorrow. Mr Smith, a member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, extending the invitation to Mr McCartney in advance of his contribution in a hearing in the Brussels Parliament sponsored by Parliament Vice President Edward MacMillan-Scott, a former Tory MEP. Mr Smith also invited born again vegetarian Mr MacMillan Scott for a plate as well.

McCartney, along with Dr Rajendra K. Pachauri, will be taking part in a hearing entitled 'Global Warming and Food Policy: Less Meat = Less Heat' on Thursday 3 December which will be opened by Parliament President Jerzy Buzek. The meeting seeks to highlight the role of agriculture, and livestock sector in particular, in climate change but has a clearly one sided panel.

Speaking from Brussels, Smith said:

"I saw the invite to this hearing and just thought: "Mince!" It seems only right I extend traditional Scots hospitality to the former Beatle and former Tory and take them out for a proper dinner. They look a bit peaky and the winter is coming on after all.

"While I am all in favour of discussing all the angles of an argument, this self-interested propaganda is certainly no substitute for rational discussion. I'll be the first to agree that some people could do with a more balanced diet, and could do with eating a few less crisps and sweeties as well, but meat is an integral, and vital, part of a well balanced diet and it is foolish to pretend otherwise. To try and link agriculture with climate change in this simplistic and emotive way is to blur the issue, not clarify it.

"Such a one-sided and simplistic discussion does not contribute to policy-making, and as such I would like to invite Paul McCartney and pals to come and share a plate of good old-fashioned Scots mince with me and have a proper discussion. There are dozens of top quality restaurants in Brussels sell Scottish produce, I would be delighted to show them off.

"To merely focus on one issue in the fight against climate change is irresponsible and likely to be counterproductive. Scotland's livestock production methods are highly sustainable and we should always be aware that further pressure on the industry may well result in us exporting our emissions elsewhere, rather than making any wholesale world-wide reduction.

"While Scotland's agriculture sector must also play its part in combating climate change, there are ways to do this that are not only more conducive to reducing emissions but will also make our farm businesses more resilient to the impact of climate change."

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