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Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries
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Dear Mr Alderton

STRAW AND STUBBLE BURNING

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 24 November to Dominic Morris at No 10.

My Secretary of State is content with the substance of the proposed oral statement by Mr Gummer, but would be grateful if it could be made clear that he would be speaking for England and Wales only. Straw and stubble burning is much less common in Scotland, and is not a big problem. No byelaws to control it have been found necessary. As my Secretary of State made clear in his letter of 6 November, he has no present plans to use the enabling powers in the Environment Bill to introduce any ban in Scotland, and would not do so until a case had been demonstrated.

My Secretary of State does not wish to make a statement but the Department would respond to queries on these lines.

No major adjustments to the draft statement would be required; we would not wish specific reference made to Scotland but it would be helpful if in any supporting briefing for him Mr Gummer is reminded of our position.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

*Yours sincerely
JD Gallagher*

J D GALLAGHER
Private Secretary