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From Jim Paice MP  
Minister of State for Agriculture and Food

Thank you for your letter of 24 November to the Secretary of State about the growing of industrial hemp. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

We appreciate that there are agricultural benefits arising from the cultivation of hemp. We wish to see hemp cultivation expand in the UK, capturing the environmental and sustainability benefits the crop can provide and keeping the UK at the forefront of the development of new, high-value end uses for the crop. Richard Macdonald, in his capacity as Chairman of the Task Force on Farming Regulation, has already drawn my attention to the fact that the inclusion of industrial hemp cultivation in the licensing system implemented under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and the costs this entails, may be providing a disincentive to the expansion of the hemp sector. He has made a number of recommendations to me and I am in touch with the Home Office at Ministerial level.

JIM PAICE MP