

Recession for Scotland 'in the balance', say experts

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The prospect of Scotland officially entering recession, in direct contrast to the fast-growing UK economy, hangs in the balance, experts have warned.

In a report assessing the state of the economy, the Fraser of Allander Institute produced analysis which shows Scotland's economy continues to perform poorly.

The economy shrank in the final three months of 2016, it said, and another quarter's fall would mean the country had entered a technical recession for the first time since the global downturn.

Experts said the economy north of the border "remains in a precarious position".

Their forecast was for growth to be at 1.2 per cent for 2017, 1.4 per cent 2018, and 1.6 per cent in 2019. All of these are behind UK indicators.

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

"Scotland's economy continues to badly under-perform thanks to this SNP government.

"As this report states, whether or not Scotland officially enters recession hangs in the balance.

"And that's while the rest of the UK powers ahead, so the SNP can't possibly blame Brexit.

"This is on the Scottish Government's shoulders, and it has to explain what it is going to do to kick-start the economy it is in charge of.

"Make no mistake, Scotland has great potential.

"But that potential has been utterly neglected by an SNP government which has its priorities focused elsewhere."

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"The continuing under-performance of Scotland's economy will adversely impact

the levels of spending the Scottish Government will have going forward.

“Holyrood’s new powers means that Scotland’s economic performance matters more than ever before.

“Even small variations in relative performance will translate into hundreds of millions of pounds in tax revenues within a short period of time.”

The full Fraser of Allander report will be published tomorrow morning.

Earlier this year, it was confirmed that Scotland was half-way to recession after three months of economic decline:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/scotland-halfway-towards-recession-under-the-snp/>

News story: Surprise report published

MAIB’s report on the investigation of the grounding and evacuation of the domestic passenger vessel Surprise at Western Rocks, Isles of Scilly on 15 May 2016 is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, the subsequent actions taken and recommendations made:

PDF, 4.92MB, 42 pages

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[Press release: Environment Secretary explores the future of farming at the Royal Norfolk Show](#)

Farmers across East Anglia could produce, sell and export more than ever before following the UK's exit from the EU with the help of cutting edge technology and innovation, the Environment Secretary said today.

On a visit to the Royal Norfolk Show on 28 June 2017, Environment Secretary Michael Gove met with researchers and businesses at the 'Innovation Hub' to find out more about the latest research and emerging agricultural technologies.

From a 'FitBit for cows' that provides real time information on the health of a herd, to a demonstration of how 'agrimetrics' data can support farmers and boost food production, pioneering agricultural technology (agri-tech) on display at the show could provide new opportunities for East Anglia's farmers.

Speaking at the show, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Emerging technologies will play a vital role in boosting productivity and growth, unlocking the full potential of our farming industry as we adapt to a rapidly changing world and maintain our leading role on the global stage outside the European Union.

The East of England is a real hotbed of agricultural innovation and the enthusiasm and passion of the region's farmers, who exported a

record £1.6bn of food and drink last year, is truly inspirational.

Agri-tech contributes £14.4bn to the UK economy every year, underpinning the UK's food and drink industry, our largest manufacturing sector. The government has already invested £160 million through the [Agri-Tech Strategy](#) to help develop innovative solutions from the laboratory through to the farm.

Dr Belinda Clarke, Director of [Agri-Tech East](#), an independent membership organisation supporting the development of the agri-tech cluster, said:

Innovation is most effective when it is focussed on solving clearly defined problems. By bringing progressive farmers, who are willing to pilot new approaches, together with those who have potential solutions, Agri-Tech East is facilitating a step-change in agri-food production that is productive, profitable and sustainable.

The Innovation Hub is a good showcase for the agri-tech cluster, showing how collaboration can accelerate innovation based on sound science.

The Environment Secretary also visited the show's food hall, meeting with food producers from across the east of England, and visited the 'Broads Village' which showcases the importance of the National Park to industry, culture and landscapes.

[News story: GC team take a lead role in EU workshop](#)

[Malcom Burns](#), Principal Scientist and Special Advisor to the Government Chemist, helped develop, organise, co-chair and deliver a DNA extraction workshop with the EU Reference Laboratory (EURL) for GMOs in feed and food. This workshop was organised by the European Commission and held at the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra (Italy) in June 2017. The three day event was attended by over 30 experts representing 19 EU member states and other countries as far afield as Mexico, Ecuador and Brazil.

The workshop consisted of a number of seminars and interactive discussion sessions on different approaches and quality control criteria for DNA extracted from food and feed samples. The workshop was designed to bring together the knowledge and collective expertise and experiences of scientists working in the topical area of extracting DNA from challenging matrices.

As well as co-chairing sessions, Malcolm chaired the interactive session on the second day of the workshop. Each of the participants was asked to present

their experiences in relation to DNA extraction, promoting further valuable discussions, comments, suggestions and solutions from the group.

Feedback from the workshop as a whole was very positive, and included how useful the participants found the interactive session which was led by Malcolm using an innovative new format. The workshop will result in a summary document being produced detailing issues commonly encountered when extracting DNA from food and feed samples, as well as associated potential solutions for these issues.

The three-day event provided a forum to discuss and agree best measurement practice in the area of DNA extraction from food and feed, and an EU Guidance Document is in preparation to capture the key principles in this area as a direct result of the workshop.

For more information about the work the Government Chemist does, contact us:

Press release: Five Eye countries join Britain's call to remove terror content online

The Home Secretary has today, Tuesday 27 June, secured the support of the 'Five Eyes' members in urging communication service providers to do more in removing terrorist and violent extremist content online.

In a two day trip 26 to 27 June to Ottawa, Canada as part of a Five Country Ministerial, she joined her counter-parts from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US to take a united stand against international threats.

Ministers from the five countries put their name to a joint letter, [tackling terrorist use of the internet](#) (PDF, 72.7KB, 1 page) welcoming an announcement from Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and Google to begin forming a new global industry body but stressing that it is critical progress is made quickly.

The letter makes clear there should be no safe space for terrorists and extremists to communicate online their unlawful goals. Hateful content used to recruit and radicalise people should be removed faster as much of it is still freely accessible.

The cross country support for the letter comes after the Home Secretary held a roundtable in March with major internet providers to encourage them to prevent the dissemination of high quality propaganda. Now, these companies are working on an industry wide form that will share information, provide technical solutions and give support to small companies.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

The issue of terrorism transcends borders and a truly global effort is needed to end the spread of hateful propaganda. The commitment from my fellow Five Eyes members to a shared approach to Communication Service Providers and their backing of the new industry forum is a vital step forward.

In our darkest hours, the international community has stood together. The ties between our countries give us a strong foundation to end the spread of the poisonous propaganda used to recruit and radicalise people across the world. Today's letter is a statement that our countries will never let terrorists win.