



NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTING FEDERATION SCEPTICAL OF BULL HIRE REPRIEVE

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) today welcomed the announcement by Environment Minister Roseanna Cunningham that the Government's bull hire scheme for crofters is to continue, albeit in a reduced and temporary form, and that the stud farm at Balrobert is to be improved. SCF Parliamentary Spokesman Norman Leask said, "The reprieve of this essential and valued scheme is welcome, as is the news of improvements at Balrobert, which will benefit the staff there, the animals and the users of the scheme. There is a real danger, however, that a reduction in the scheme will lead to the cost per bull becoming prohibitive and so lead to further decline."

Mr. Leask went on to praise the work of the Bull Scheme Review Group chaired by Sarah Allen. "The review group went out and listened to crofters. Their report is thorough and comprehensive. They have once and for all debunked the suggestion that the support was in breach of EU rules, and they have set out irrefutably the scale of the social, economic and environmental losses that would have ensued had the scheme been scrapped. Yet despite this the stay of execution is only temporary. The Minister has made her intentions clear. I doubt that this is the last we will hear of moves to undermine and ultimately destroy this support for cattle rearing in Scotland's most fragile and remote areas."

End.

Contact: Norman Leask 07957 936831
Patrick Krause 01599 566387
Donald Murdie 01470 511295

Notes to editors

- Pictures can be found at: <http://www.crofting.org>