



NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTING FOUNDATION WELCOMES POSITIVE ASSESSORS' MEETING BUT FEARS FOR FUTURE OF BULL SCHEME

The Scottish Crofting Foundation (SCF) today congratulated the Crofters Commission on the revitalisation of the Panel of Assessors which had its annual seminar this week in Inverness. SCF Vice-chairman Neil MacLeod, also a long-standing Commission Assessor, said, "The Panel of Assessors should be the eyes and ears of the Crofters Commission on the ground. Unfortunately in recent years the Commission failed to make use of this resource and it became dormant. It was therefore very heartening to see a revitalised Panel of Assessors gathered together. As well as familiar faces and old friends, the new panel has a good percentage of young people and of women, representing the future of crofting."

Included on the agenda of the seminar was the future of crofters' support schemes, including the Bull Hire Scheme which is so important for the maintenance of cattle in remote areas, where they perform an invaluable role in maintaining high nature value agricultural systems. "Clearly the Bull Scheme remains under threat from Edinburgh-based civil servants who have no understanding of the social, economic and environmental importance of cattle in the crofting areas," said Mr. MacLeod. "The Assessors' seminar was unanimous in its view that this scheme must continue. The majority of crofters have no viable alternative, and the ending of the scheme would spell the end for cattle in many of the most remote and environmentally sensitive areas. "

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Picture can be found at: http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/contact_headoffice

