



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**21/9/07**

### **CROFTERS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE TIMETABLE FOR ANIMAL MOVEMENTS**

The Scottish Crofting Foundation has today written to Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead stressing the need for a clear timetable on the lifting of movement restrictions assuming there are no further cases of Foot and Mouth disease.

SCF Chairman Norman Leask said “We continue to appreciate the enormous amount of work being done by the Scottish Government and officials to deal with the crisis created by the Foot and Mouth outbreak in Surrey. It is clear that they recognise how serious the issue is in the North and West of Scotland in particular, with grass now in very short supply and the first snow having fallen this week.

We know that the Government is making every effort to trace animals which moved from Surrey earlier in the month and to map out areas of higher and lower risk accordingly, but we cannot stress enough how critical it is that crofters and farmers get a clear idea as soon as possible of how the lifting of restrictions might proceed in different areas, if there are no further cases of the disease found.

In the short-term, the impending welfare issue might be addressed through emergency feeding, the costs of which the UK government has a moral obligation to underwrite. There are serious cash-flow issues in having to hold on to animals longer than normal, not just in lost income, but in loss of

winter keep for other livestock requiring remaining animals to be fed all winter. Increasingly, the stress and uncertainty to crofters and farmers is also having impacts on human health. We are in discussions with the Scottish government on the options under various scenarios, but the key for crofters and farmers is that the timetable must be clear as soon as possible.

As producers we continue to have a part to play. With animals from Surrey as yet untraced, good biosecurity remains critical and hopefully will help ensure that relaxation of restrictions comes as quickly as possible to allow us to access our normal markets.”

END

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