



NEWS RELEASE

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PROPOSAL FOR EXTENSION OF AREAS FOR CROFTING WELCOMED

The proposals for the extension of areas for crofting announced today are good news, according to the Scottish Crofting Foundation.

SCF Director Hugh Donaldson said, “The possibility to create crofts in parts of the Highlands and Islands historically left out of the crofting counties is an exciting opportunity. Crofting is really important in retaining a rural land-based population and can offer tremendous benefits. The possibility announced today is basically an opt-in scheme giving land owners the powers to create new crofts. If well used, this power could have a real impact in areas where access to land is difficult and housing is beyond the reach of many local people. It is particularly being looked at in some areas as an opportunity to create forest crofts.

People farming under the Small Landholdings Act will be able to register their holdings as crofts, which is really positive and has long been looked for by small landholders.

It is important though, that crofting specific support schemes, designed to help ensure active use of croft land and provide crofter housing are available to new crofters. There would seem to be no justification for leaving them out. It will undoubtedly require an increased budget but we will be stressing the importance of these support mechanisms in response to the Government consultation.”

END

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

Notes to editors.

1. The consultation published today proposes that crofts can be created within the in the islands of Arran, Bute, Little and Great Cumbrae and areas of Moray and Highland outwith the crofting counties, in effect, in all parts of the HIE area outside the crofting counties.

2. The consultation does not at this stage propose to extend the Crofting Community Right to Buy to the areas newly designated for crofting. It does however leave open the option that this could be change if required to facilitate greater creation of crofts within the new areas.
3. Crofting benefits from a number of assistances
 - a. the Croft House Grant Scheme provides assistance towards the cost of building or renovating a house on the croft
 - b. the Crofting Counties Agricultural Grant Scheme provides assistance for investment in land use activities on crofts and small holdings in the crofting counties
 - c. the Crofting Cattle Quality Improvement Scheme provides high quality bulls on hire to crofting townships