



## NEWS RELEASE

**Use: Immediate**

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### **CROFTERS DEMAND FAIR PAY FOR WORK DONE**

The Scottish Crofting Foundation (SCF) has asked the Scottish Government for assurances that recommendations in the 'Shucksmith Report' that call for increased support to crofters will be honoured.

SCF Chairman Neil MacLeod said "We have been holding meetings all over the crofting counties to discuss the Shucksmith report with crofters. Whilst there are mixed views about some of the recommendations to introduce tighter regulations there is a consensus on the fact that no matter how crofting is regulated, it cannot continue if there is no financial return. It is not hard maths. All crofters want is fair pay for work done, and if a crofter is losing money year on year at some point they will have to say "enough" and pack it in."

The Committee of Inquiry on Crofting Final Report, otherwise known as the 'Shucksmith Report' after the chair of the committee Prof. Mark Shucksmith, was commissioned following the failure of the 2006 Crofting Reform Bill with the remit to make radical recommendations for action to re-invigorate crofting. Whilst the report recommends a tightening up of crofting regulation it also puts forward a strong argument for the need to support crofting as a benefit to Scotland. In particular the report calls for proper targeting of Less Favoured Area Support, easier access to agri-environment schemes, and enhanced support for croft housing.

Mr. MacLeod continued, "People want the landscape of the Highlands and Islands to be managed and it is recognised that the crofting areas are very important to the tourist industry, but somehow there is an expectation that the landscape can be managed for free. Well, crofters can not continue to pick up the tab. Shucksmith is clear that crofting is good for Scotland so there has to be fair payment, such as adequate reward for environmental work carried out by crofters and by directing the Less Favoured Area Support to the Less Favoured Areas".

END

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#### **Notes to editors**

Pictures can be found at: <http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/home>