

CROFTERS BACK CALL FOR FAIRER APPEALS SYSTEM.txt

NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 5/3/07

CROFTERS BACK CALL FOR FAIRER APPEALS SYSTEM

Proposals put forward by NFUS for a shake-up of the subsidy appeals system received support from the Scottish Crofting Foundation today.

SCF Director Hugh Donaldson said "We fully support the NFUS call for an overhaul of the penalties and appeals system. Like them, we also frequently find members having support withheld for simple clerical errors, made in entirely good faith. In some cases, losses are substantial, having a huge impact on the income of the household. Penalties are often disproportionate to the 'crime' - forgetting to put a tick in the correct box or mistakenly turning animals out in a field one day early.

The process by which a crofter or farmer can attempt to appeal a SEERAD decision would seem to be weighted against him at the start, with an external panel including an official from the Department. We agree completely with the NFUS that a panel should be truly independent of SEERAD and that the Minister should be bound to accept their findings. SEERAD should not be judge and jury in appeals against their decisions."

END

Contact:

Hugh Donaldson, SCF Director  
Becky Shaw, SCF Land Use Programme Manager

Tel .

01967 431813

01408 633131

Notes to editors

Picture can be found at:

<http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/contact.shtml>