Scottish Crofting Foundation

from past, to present, for future

NEWS RELEASE

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ISLAND LFASS PAYMENTS WELCOMED BUT MORE TARGETING NEEDED

The Scottish Crofting Foundation has welcomed the Scottish Executive's decision to offer island crofters and farmers additional funding through the Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme.

After a long campaign led by the SCF, the Executive have announced that they will offer farmers and crofters on islands an extra ten per cent to their annual funding through the scheme. This increase will be paid for by a slight reduction in payments to those in better areas of the country.

While welcoming the decision, the crofters' body has warned it will continue the campaign to highlight the fundamental unfairness of the current Less Favoured Area Support Scheme.

SCF Chairman Norman Leask said: "The small increase in funding to island areas is welcome and we've long been looking for this scheme to be targeted at the most disadvantaged areas. This is a step in the right direction but there is still a long way to go to make this scheme effective in properly supporting agricultural activity in the islands, mountains and upland areas. Currently the highest levels of support under this scheme are still received by those on the most productive land, while we are seeing falling livestock numbers in the harder and more peripheral areas. This Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme is fundamental in addressing this loss of extensive agricultural activity, but in its current format is not fit for purpose. The measure requires root and branch reform if this measure is going to support viable agricultural activity in marginal areas in the future."

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Notes to editors

Picture can be found at: http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/contact.shtml