



NEWS RELEASE

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SCOTTISH CROFTING FOUNDATION PRAISES 'THOROUGH AND RADICAL' REPORT FROM SHUCKSMITH COMMITTEE

The Scottish Crofting Foundation (SCF) has given a warm welcome to the report of the Committee of Inquiry on Crofting launched in Stornoway today (Monday). The Inquiry, chaired by Professor Mark Shucksmith, was commissioned following the failure of the Crofting Reform Bill in 2006. SCF Chairman Neil MacLeod said, "We have waited a long time for this and it has been well worth the wait. Professor Shucksmith and his Committee are to be congratulated on producing such a thorough and radical report at this crucial time. The report echoes many of the policy initiatives pursued by SCF over the last few years, such as on Less Favoured Area support, crofter housing, assistance for younger new entrants, strengthening and simplifying regulation and democratising the regulatory process. An Inquiry such as this only takes place perhaps once in a generation, so we are very pleased to see that the Committee has fully recognised the social, economic and environmental importance of crofting, and we look forward to legislation being brought forward to enact their proposals."

Amongst its recommendations, the report calls for crofting to be regulated by locally elected boards; for a fair allocation of Less Favoured Area support; retention of the support schemes unique to crofting; a new and enhanced Croft House Grant and Loan Scheme; measures to ensure active use of crofts; assistance for new entrants to obtain crofts and access entitlements to support schemes.

SCF Chief Executive Patrick Krause said, "This report is a vindication of SCF's call for an Inquiry, and is a faithful reflection of the views of the many crofters who turned out to the public meetings held up and down the country. Almost unanimously, these crofters spoke out in favour of the values of crofting as a system that places community interest ahead of personal gain. As we said in our *Charter for Crofting*, 'It's about the people – making sure they can live here.' That has been the Inquiry's approach too, and we are especially impressed with its emphasis on opportunities for young people."

END

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Notes to editors

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