



NEWS RELEASE

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SCF CALL ON THE NEXT SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO MAKE CROFTING THE MODEL FOR ALL OF RURAL SCOTLAND

In the run-up to Scottish elections, crofters are challenging the next Scottish Government to produce, within a year of taking office, an Action Plan that will secure and greatly strengthen crofting's future.

In their 'Crofting Policy Resolution' the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) have called on the party or parties that will form the next administration to publish an Action Plan for Crofting that will set out policies by which they will meet two critical objectives:

1. The majority of Scotland's existing 17,000 crofts being used by active crofters to produce food and public goods by 2020
2. The creation of 10,000 new crofts by 2020, with a longer term objective of increasing the area of land under crofting tenure so that one-quarter of land in Scotland is in crofting tenure by 2030.

SCF Chief Executive Patrick Krause said: "It is widely held that the last two attempts to reform crofting legislation were shambolic, mainly because the government has not had a clear vision of crofting – or of Scottish land use.

"Now that we have a new Crofting Act and we see the germ of a Scottish land use strategy, it is essential that the next government formulates a plan for the development of crofting as the most appropriate model of land tenure for Scotland to achieve a food system that is environmentally sustainable, socially beneficial and a source of healthy, tasty food for the long term. There is now a raft of evidence which shows that it is crofting, as small-scale regulated units, that has what it takes to meet these needs.

"Studies show that areas in crofting tenure have retained a higher population density than other rural areas in Scotland and that some of the most inspiring examples of community development in the UK are happening in the crofting counties. It is clear, too, from the direction of European and Global sustainable land use policies that the provision of public

goods such as carbon sequestration and bio-diversity, in which crofting excels, have to take a much higher place in the production of food and management of our land.”

International bodies such as La Via Campesina have heralded crofting as an ideal model of land use having many benefits including the retention of population; the production of local, high quality food; the stewardship of high nature value land; the capture and management of carbon and the provision of a highly skilled rural workforce.

Mr Krause concluded “It is time to have a realistic vision for crofting and regulated land use. Crofting is much more than just food production, it is about people and their place, and their role in sustaining the environment and Scottish culture. Crofting communities have had to be responsible and resilient because rural policies have consistently worked against them. It is time to reward their resilience and responsibilities.

We call on our political leaders to get our crofts working by providing realistic payment for provision of public goods and rewarding this unique regulated land tenure; and we call on them to create new crofts that replicate existing crofts – this is a proven model. It is time for government to wake up to what is happening in the world and end the ‘short-termism’ that blights Scottish governance and policy-making. We need long-term strategies that are designed to secure the future of rural Scotland for generations to come. We need a realistic Action Plan for Crofting”.

END

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Notes to editors

- The SCF Crofting Policy Resolution for the 2011 Parliamentary Election can be found at: http://www.crofting.org/uploads/consultations/SCF_Crofting_Policy_Resolution_-_election_2011.pdf