



SCOTTISH CROFTING FOUNDATION NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTERS RELUCTANTLY ACCEPT WELFARE SCHEME

The Scottish Crofting Foundation (SCF) has accepted with regret the necessity of a Scottish Government welfare disposal scheme for lambs of under 25 kilos which would normally be sold in the European market. SCF Director Donald MacDonald said, "The resumption of meat exports has come too late for the majority of this trade and there is no alternative to a welfare scheme. We deeply regret that these healthy, good quality lambs, which are normally in great demand in southern Europe, will not enter the food chain, despite our arguments that a market could and should be found. We still have concerns regarding the position of cast ewes in the crofting areas. Trade in these animals is at a standstill and there may well be a need for a welfare scheme in this sector also. We are greatly relieved that movement restrictions will be lifted from next week which will allow domestic markets to operate normally, and we appreciate the efforts of the Cabinet Secretary and the Chief Vet to mitigate, as far as they are able, the effects of the Surrey Foot and Mouth outbreak in Scotland. However, the industry in the Highlands and Islands has again been brought to its knees. It is totally absurd that exports, for example from Shetland, a thousand miles from the outbreak, have been banned, while there has been no such ban affecting France, Belgium and Ireland which are a lot closer to the infected area. We will need to have discussions with the Government to try to ensure we are never put in this position again."

SCF has reminded its members that, although movement restrictions will be removed next week, the 21 day standstill and 30 day residency rules will remain in force for those involved in the export trade.

Ends.

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Pictures available on www.crofting.org