



NEWS RELEASE

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SCF SUMMARISES MEMBERS' VIEWS ON SHUCKSMITH

Following an extensive series of meetings, The Scottish Crofting Foundation has sent a summary of its members' views on the Shucksmith Report to the Minister for crofting Michael Russell MSP.

SCF Chair Neil MacLeod said "it is projected that the Minister will make his response to the Shucksmith Final Report at the beginning of October so we have consulted with our membership widely in order to get views to the minister to help him to give an informed response. The most important thing is that there has to be fair pay for work done. It is said again and again that no matter what regulations are in place a crofter can not croft unless there is a fair return. A crofter's first responsibility is to provide a livelihood for the family. We all want to see new entrants into crofting but they, like existing crofters, need to pay their bills."

Mr MacLeod continued "The report is a very comprehensive and valuable reference document and there are many good recommendations that will be able to form the basis of crofting reform. But there are some recommendations in the report that will not be acceptable, such as a 'real burden' on croft houses and the abolition of the crofters commission. We have told the minister that these can not work and he is listening. We have also passed on the members' opposition to the proposed 'localisation' of regulation and development. It is a very complicated way of addressing the real problems and we feel that the existing structure of Area Assessors, that the SCF were instrumental in saving from disbanding, can do a great job if supported appropriately, feeding into an elected, accountable crofting commission."

"There have been rumours deliberately spread that it is a case of 'accept all or nothing' and 'there will be no consultation prior to legislation'. These are of course absolutely untrue. There are hard negotiations ahead to achieve a future for crofting and I strongly urge crofters to stand together on this.

END

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Notes to editors

The Summary of SCF members' response to the CoIoC recommendations can be found at: <http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/news>

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