SCOTTISH CROFTING FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

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FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT ALLOWS FOR PROGRESS TO BE MADE

The announcement today of funding levels for the new Scottish Rural Development Programme means that progress can now be made in finalising important rural development measures.

SCF Chairman Norman Leask said, "We are supportive of a steady approach to voluntary modulation, at least until we can see how the new programme works out. The rate of modulation is obviously closely connected with the accessibility of schemes and support among crofters for modulation will depend on how easy it is for small units to access the measures available through the new Programme. Many environmentally well-managed areas have struggled to access agri-environment support in recent years and although lower than expected levels of modulation are likely to be welcomed in crofting areas, we are also aware of the need to ensure that there is adequate funding to protect good environmentally-sound land management. We commend the Cabinet Secretary's approach of reviewing the programme mid-term to ensure that these objectives are being met.

"We are glad to see a continuing commitment to funding Less Favoured Area support - the need to target this funding well to ensure it is effective in island, hill and remote mainland areas has already been recognised and we will be pursing this with the new Executive.

A young entrants scheme is particularly welcome and along with other rural organisations, we look forward to discussions with the Executive on the detail of this scheme."

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Notes to editors
Picture available at www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/contacts.html