



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 17/06/2014

CROFTERS FEAR THEY ARE BEING SACRIFICED

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has an initial "apprehensive" response from its members regarding the recent announcement of the new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP).

"Crofters are finding the implications of the Cabinet Secretary's announcement difficult to work out" said SCF Director Joyce Wilkinson. "There is a lot of 'spin' and unknown detail, so it is hard to get a grip on what will happen to us. I think that many fear that, for those keeping cattle on the rougher ground, it will be the end."

Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead announced that the rough grazing would be split into two regions with the larger one, extensive hill ground where many common grazings are found, receiving 10 euros per hectare (against high quality land receiving 220 euros per hectare).

"This is despite assurances from Scottish Government officials that the suggested splitting of the rough grazing had been modelled and rejected as not working" said Patrick Krause, SCF's Chief Executive. "Why the sudden reversal of that position is unclear."

Ms Wilkinson continued "The Scottish Government have been very clever in working out complicated ways of sharing out the CAP budget. But crofters getting a basic payment of only 10 euros is not clever. The suggestion of getting a sheep top-up through a coupled headage payment is not popular as it will bring increased paper-work, inspections and penalties."

Mr Krause concluded "There are some good suggestions too. The SCF have fought hard to retain a crofting support scheme and this is now confirmed, though we don't have the detail. New entrants will get support, which is long over-due, and islands will get an up-lift. But overall it feels like crofters' common grazings are being sacrificed to provide a larger share to the farmers on better land."

END

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