



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Young crofters struggle to get started due to land prices and lack of finance**

The Scottish Crofting Federation Young Crofters say that the lack of access to land and finance affect them too, in the wake of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) report 'Future for Young Farmers'.

"Lack of access to land and finance are seriously handicapping the future of crofting", Donald MacKinnon, a young crofter and director of the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF), said. "It is very good that RBS have carried out such a large survey and produced a report highlighting how difficult it is for young farmers to get hold of land or finance. It is the same in crofting with young folk who wish to croft being kept out by existing unworked crofts being sat on, potential land for new crofts not being identified and borrowing money on croft land being almost impossible."

The report from the Royal Bank of Scotland - Harvesting the Future for Young Farmers identified three key challenges:

- Dead Man's Shoes Syndrome, where younger generations are struggling to prise the farm from their fathers' hands.
- The growing size of farms means those which do come on the market are financially inaccessible.
- Access to funding and support to help develop the business.

Mr MacKinnon continued, "We can identify with the claim that most Scottish farms are too big and so completely out of the price range of new entrants. Dividing some of the larger farms into smaller units, creating small farms and crofts, is a sure route to getting more people on to the land. The availability of finance, not only financial support in the form of grants and schemes, but also business loans, is crucial. Crofters have always had great difficulty in getting loans, mainly due to the crofts being under their own legislation that seems to put banks off. Perhaps RBS can help with this?"

Mr MacKinnon concluded, "The head of agriculture at the Royal Bank of Scotland, Ian Burrow, is calling for a summit involving industry, governments and the banking sector. The SCF Young

Crofters would very much like to be involved with this. Crofting has an essential role in Scottish agriculture and young crofters and young farmers are the future.”

END

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**Notes to editors**

- Pictures can be found at: <http://www.crofting.org>