

THE CROFTER



The journal of the Scottish Crofting Federation, the only member-led organisation dedicated to the promotion of crofting and the largest association of small-scale food producers in the UK

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Did the 2010 Act equalise availability of crofting grants?

CROFTING-SPECIFIC grants, namely CCAGS and CHGS, were expected to be extended to owner-occupier crofters by virtue of the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

The former scheme provides grants towards agricultural developments such as sheds, barns, fencing and other permanent improvements; the latter towards the building of a croft house. As one would expect, myriad regulations control the provision of each, but there is little doubt that these grants are still a major draw for those wishing to build croft houses and/or carry on agricultural activities on their crofts. Before 2010, it was the case that both types of grant assistance ceased to be available to owner-occupier crofters, and therefore this was a major reason to remain a tenant crofter.

The Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 was intended to equalise owner-occupier crofters and tenant crofters, both in terms of the regulatory framework to which they were subject, and also the financial assistance which was available to them. However, the regulations which are required in order to facilitate the extension of financial assistance to owner-occupier crofters have only been passed in respect of CCAGS, not in respect of the CHGS.

Eilidh Ross approached the Scottish Government for a comment on this matter

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Questions on Scottish Government land sale policy

FOLLOWING THE Scottish Government's decision to withdraw part of its Rosal forest estate in Sutherland from open market sale after public criticism, the SCF asked the government to examine its policies on the sale of public land, community ownership and the creation of new crofts.

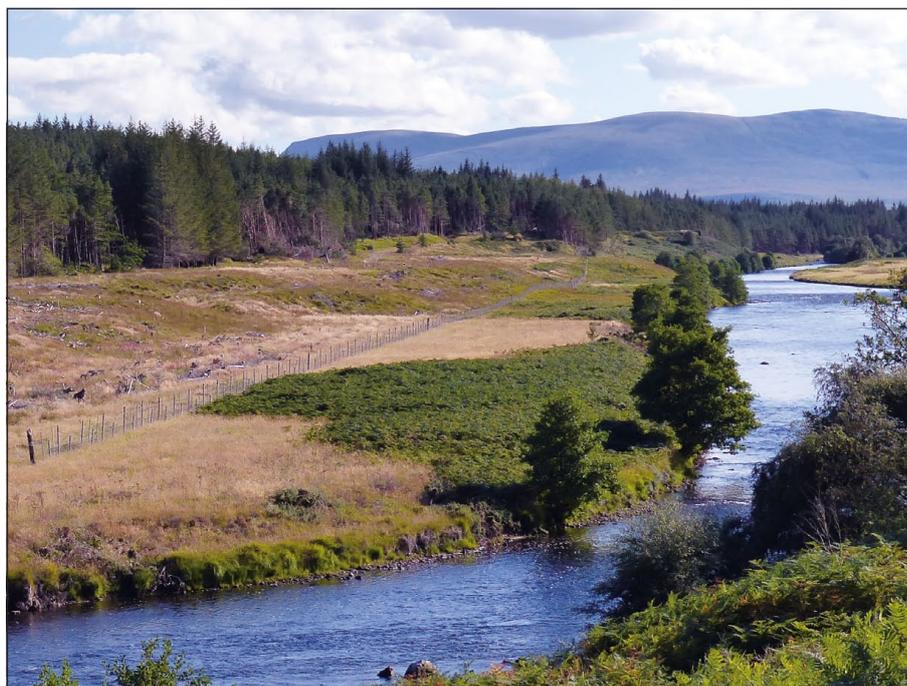
SCF chair Derek Flyn believes the Rosal case demonstrates some of the problems caused by the manner in which the Forestry Commission conducts the process of land sale. He said: "There is no surprise that local communities did not come forward

expressing an interest in the land, when, as the sales particulars were keen to point out, communities were cleared from this land and it is a deserted wilderness.

Putting this land on the market in this way is simply perpetuating a system of land ownership concentrated into few hands, a system the Scottish people want to see changed."

He continued "A great deal of effort and public money has been invested in reforming crofting. The SG has pledged its commitment to the crofting system and has legislated to

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Crofters' voice heard in parliament on goose petition

THE SCF appeared before the Scottish parliamentary petitions committee to defend its call for the government to do more about the escalating numbers of geese devastating crofters' crops.

SCF director Roddy MacDonald and chief executive Patrick Krause defended the SCF petition, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to address the problems created by increasing populations of wild geese in the crofting areas as a matter of priority; reassess its decision to stop funding

existing goose management programmes; and assign additional resources to crop protection and adaptive management programmes to ensure this threat to the future of crofting is averted.

Roddy said "The MSPs were very attentive and sympathetic to the issue and in an unusual move for this committee, apparently, referred the petition directly to the committee for rural affairs. This is a very good outcome for crofters. There is a way to go yet but we are seeing progress, in that the parliament is taking this very seriously."