



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 07/10/2019

Crofting Federation advocates “fair use of convergence uplift”

Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) suggests a more just and principled use of the ‘convergence uplift’ £160M received from Europe.

“Having righted the wrong concerning the CAP convergence uplift, whereby the £160 million has finally been allocated to Scotland as it should have been”, said SCF chair, Yvonne White, “It is now imperative that the use of this payment aligns with the principle under which it was devised in the first place.

“The EU Multi-Annual Financial Framework set out the aim of redistributing CAP payments more equitably across the EU, that all countries receiving less than 90% of the EU average would receive a funding uplift. The UK only qualified for an uplift because of Scotland’s low average and Scotland has a low average due to very low per-hectare payments to crofters and hill farmers on the poorer ground. It is therefore logical and just that the uplift must be directed to those who enabled Scotland to qualify for it.”

Ms White went on to say, “There have been reports in the media of suggestions that the money should be allocated across all Scottish producers, including those above the 90% of EU average payment. This surely emulates the unfairness which the UK government has practiced on Scotland and which we all fought so hard to redress. We have won that battle, and it would be shameful were Scottish Government to do the almost exactly the same thing now that the money has crossed the border.

SCF, the crofters’ representative, agrees that the money should be used for increasing Basic Payments and should be allocated to currently active producers, but that is where we depart from suggestions on distribution published last week. We believe that to follow the fundamental principle of convergence means that the uplift must be allocated to the areas falling below the 90% EU average threshold only.

“There is work to be done on the funding mechanisms” concluded Ms White, “and we will be pleased to contribute to that. But at this point it is critical that the basic principle on which the payment has been made is adhered to. We urge Scottish Government to make fair use of the convergence uplift.”

END

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Notes to editors

Please contact SCF office for high resolution photos