



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **CROFTING FEDERATION MEETS WITH CABINET SECRETARY TO DISCUSS URGENT CROFTING ISSUES**

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) met with Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary with remit for crofting, yesterday to discuss the big issues in crofting: what an EU divorce means for crofting and resolution of the Crofting Commission crisis.

“The impending divorce from the EU is causing a great deal of anxiety for most of Scotland”, Chair of SCF, Fiona Mandeville, said, “and no less for crofters. What will it mean for the CAP and subsequent support for crofting?”

“We had a very positive meeting with Mr Ewing yesterday to discuss this. We accept that it is impossible to know exactly how things will pan out, but were left feeling reassured that the Scottish Government’s commitment to crofting is intact. SCF is keen that all agriculture policy decisions are taken by the Scottish Government should the separation from Europe go through. This seems to us the only way to obtain proper recognition and support for crofting within a system designed by Scottish agriculture for Scottish agriculture.

Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing said, “As the First Minister has stated, we are intent on pursuing all options to maintain Scotland’s EU status. Ministers are engaging in discussions with key stakeholders – including the Scottish Crofting Federation - to emphasise that as of now we are still firmly in the EU. Trade and business should continue as normal and we are determined that Scotland will continue now and in the future to be an attractive and a stable place to do business.

“Crofting is vital to communities, the economy and the environment in Scotland’s remote and fragile rural areas, and crofters rely – above almost anyone else in Scotland – on EU funding for their incomes. I very much welcome the Scottish Crofting Federation’s support for the Scottish Government’s stance and look forward to working with them and other stakeholders to ensure that Scotland’s best interests, including those of crofters, are represented on the journey ahead.”

Ms Mandeville continued, “We also had constructive discussion on the Crofting Commission crisis. We are very supportive of a majority elected Commission and fear that the common

grazings debacle can jeopardise this. We therefore asked Mr Ewing to consider a procedural review of the Commission. At his request, we will send him a note outlining details of our recommendations forthwith.

Ms Mandeville concluded, "We are very grateful the Cabinet Secretary put aside time to meet with us when he is understandably extremely preoccupied with the European Union situation."

END

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**Notes to editors**

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