



NEWS RELEASE

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What keeps crofters awake at night... Crofting Federation finds out

The Scottish Crofting Federation recently surveyed its members and found no big surprises in their responses: number one worry is that they need to earn a living.

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) asked its members what their greatest concern for the future of crofting is. The biggest single worry was economic viability; around 37% quoted this or Brexit or future support arrangements. Russell Smith, Chair of SCF, commented, "This is not a surprise as no-one is going to keep crofting if they can't earn a living from it. There are two issues here: Brexit could lead to reduced exports and increased imports with lower standards for beef and lamb, and also leaving the Common Agricultural Policy will mean new support systems for agriculture, probably with a reduced overall total.

"The recent report on the future of Scottish agriculture by the Agricultural Champions suggested that capping payments for big claimants would make more money available for small and medium sized businesses and that is a step in the right direction," Mr Smith continued, "but there are a lot of details to be agreed for any new system. Currently there is no certainty about where we will end up so people are understandably worried."

The second major worry highlighted in the survey was getting young people into crofting and the availability of crofts. Russell Smith again, "This is fundamental to the future of crofting and we are working with the Crofting Commission and others to address the problem. Older crofters thinking of retiring could keep their house and pass on the croft to a younger person who is prepared to make a go of it. Initiatives to tackle absenteeism and neglect can make more crofts available, bring new entrants in and so improve not only crofting but also the surrounding communities in our more remote and vulnerable areas. Other less frequently mentioned concerns were around crofting law, red tape and the selling off of crofts."

SCF Chief Executive Patrick Krause said, "It is good to have direct feedback from our members. There is nothing here we are not aware of and, as the only organisation dedicated to standing up for crofters, we will keep campaigning on behalf of our members. That is what we do".

END

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Notes to editors

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