



## NEWS RELEASE

**Use: Immediate**

**Date: 03/12/2019**

### **Crofting Federation looks for answers from leaders**

Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has sent the leaders of the Scottish parties a list of questions that are important to its membership, in advance of the forthcoming election.

“With so much apparent chaos and uncertainty now and in the foreseeable future,” said Yvonne White, chair of SCF, “it is imperative that Scottish party leaders give a clear indication as to their intentions concerning agriculture in our country and, more specifically, in the Highlands and Islands. Our questions to the leaders focus on crofters’ main concerns. For example, we ask for the parties’ aspirations for a trade deal with the EU after the transition period ends. What would they envisage appropriate export and import tariff levels on beef and lamb to be?”

“We also ask about environmental and animal welfare standards – something in which crofters take great pride and which gives Scotland a great marketing opportunity. Will we maintain our high standards and will imports have to comply with these?”

Ms White went on to say, “Our current veterinary profession and abattoir facilities rely on skilled personnel from Europe. What provision is being made to ensure that these professions are not adversely affected by leaving the EU?”

“We ask what their plans are for a Scottish agricultural support policy, what the levels will be, how they will defend this against competing sectors and how they will protect crofting against the claims of the large-scale agri-businesses. We want to know how they intend to show that the production of grass-fed, outdoor-reared meat from the hills and islands is a healthy and environmentally valid way of using ground that can’t produce arable crops to provide food?”

“Our crofting communities are a very significant constituency” concluded Ms White. “Now is the time for the Scottish parties to lay out their stalls and demonstrate their understanding of, and aspirations for, crofting and Scottish agriculture.”  
END

#### Contact:

Yvonne White, SCF chair	07545 459 929
Donald MacKinnon, SCF vice-chair	07767 360 142
Russell Smith, chair of SCF agriculture group	07899 896 001
Patrick Krause, SCF chief executive	07739 941 199
SCF office	01599 530 005

#### **Notes to editors**

The full list of questions to Scottish party leaders:

#### ***Should your party win seats in the UK Parliament in the coming election:***

1. What are your aspirations for a trade deal with the EU after the transition period ends, including appropriate export and import tariff levels on beef and lamb?
2. Could a “no deal” and World Trade Organisation rules be acceptable?
3. Should our animal welfare, health and environmental standards be maintained, lowered, or raised after we leave the EU and should imports be subject to the same standards?

4. How will you ensure that there is the skilled workforce needed to keep the veterinary profession and abattoirs running after we leave the EU?
5. Will the agricultural policy framework for the UK be decided by the UK government or agreed between the devolved administrations with the UK government acting as the English representative?
6. What basic architecture do you envisage for a Scottish agriculture and rural development support policy, e.g. what proportions do you envisage going to agriculture / rural development, and what proportions going to basic income-support payments / targeted payments for agreed outcomes?
7. Should the current level of agricultural support payments set under the Common Agricultural Policy be maintained, raised or lowered?
8. How will you defend these levels against counter claims for the tax pound from the NHS, police etc?
9. What will you do to show that the production of grass fed, outdoor reared meat from the hills and islands is a healthy and environmentally valid way of using ground that can't produce arable crops to provide food?
10. How will you protect the needs of the more marginal and fragile hill land against the claims of the big industrial farms on the better land?