



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 19/01/2016

CROFTERS ARE NOT GETTING PAID OR INFORMED SCF SURVEY SHOWS

A survey carried out by the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) indicates a Scottish Government melt-down as around one percent of crofters have been paid their agricultural support payment.

Vice-chair of the SCF, Russell Smith, said, "The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Richard Lochhead pledged that 25% of payments would be implemented before Christmas with money hitting bank accounts before the New Year. If anyone is getting paid it certainly does not appear to be crofters. Our survey of members indicated that only about 1% had received any money by mid-January.

Mr Smith continued, "Not only are crofters not getting paid, nearly half of our respondents had not received a letter illustrating what they could expect. This is a ludicrous state of affairs; how is a person to plan for their enterprise if they are left in the dark as to what they may get paid? And there is discontent in those who did receive an 'illustration' of what their payments may be, with some taking a cut. But what is an 'illustration'? There is no indication as to what level of confidence we can have in the figures given.

In a press statement the Cabinet Secretary apportioned blame for the delays in part to the three regions and associated headage scheme asked for "by industry".

Mr Smith added. "Crofters did not ask for this; the SCF has always advocated a two region system which would have been far simpler and would have favoured crofters."

Mr Lochhead also made a statement to the Scottish Parliament in which he said, "it was always made clear to the industry that more complexity would have an impact on the timetable. NFU Scotland have confirmed they knew about that, and accepted it."

The lack of payments, compounded with the poor weather, is causing real distress to crofters. Scottish Government has to sort this mess out now.

END

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Notes to editors

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