



NEWS RELEASE

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There are opportunities for crofting agriculture and rural development post-Brexit says Federation

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has sent a post-Brexit agriculture and rural development policy position outlining a vision for crofting to key government ministers and politicians emphasising the opportunity for change.

“This paper sets out the current SCF position for agriculture post-Brexit,” said Russell Smith, Chair of the SCF. “We cannot be definitive on a final position as the destination for the UK is still far from clear. Nor does this paper discuss how these aims are to be achieved as that is part of the negotiation process.

“What Scottish agriculture and rural development will look like post-Brexit is on everyone’s minds”, continued Smith, “but we believe that it is vital to maintain agriculture in the remote and less favoured areas of the Highlands & Islands because of the public goods it provides, including preservation of the landscape, environmental protection, economic activity, population retention and quality food production.

“There is a promised transition period where some support will continue under terms of the European Common Agriculture Policy potentially until 2022. So there will be a change to UK agriculture and rural development policy. How much of that will be devolved to the nations that comprise the UK is being contested, but there will be some sort of Scottish policy needed and this is the time to be forming clear objectives of what we want.

“Leaving the CAP provides the opportunity to have an agricultural and rural development programme tailored to Scotland, encouraging more small-scale land use, delivering high quality, high animal welfare, High Nature Value food, with provenance we are proud of. We can move to a system of using public money to deliver public goods through a shift in balance from untargeted income-support payments to a targeted rural development programme, giving fairer pricing for high quality produce, fairer payment to producers and better use of public money. Such a system would allow us to build in support for common grazings from the start so that more use could be made of this important resource.

“Agriculture is at the heart of crofting and crofting is vital to Scottish rural development” Smith concluded. “This paper covers our current thoughts and we continue to gather our members’ views. We are constantly meeting with the decision-makers, representing crofters’ interests.”
END

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Notes to editors

- The policy paper “*SCF Post-Brexit Position*” can be found [here](#)