



NEWS RELEASE

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Additional £10 million a step in the right direction says Crofting Federation

Following a meeting with Scottish Government over the controversial allocation of convergence funding, Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has indicated that a further £10 million to be allocated to fragile areas is a small step in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go.

"It is appreciated that Mr Ewing has listened to us and is making the gesture of an additional £10 million this year for the fragile areas", said SCF's chair, Yvonne White following a meeting between SCF officials and the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy, Fergus Ewing. "His announcement last week on how the European convergence-uplift, which is intended to increase support to those on very low payments, was to be allocated was greeted with anger by crofters, as much went to those already on higher payment levels. This is contrary to the principles which led to convergence being introduced in the first place, and SCF made the point loud and clear. Mr Ewing acknowledged the anger felt and has recognised that his intention to ensure "the money goes to where it was originally intended" did not go far enough. Consequently he has come up with a way to partially redress this.

"We acknowledge that Scottish Government has taken a step to distribute this rebate in a fairer way. However, it must not be forgotten that the original intention of a convergence uplift was to work towards the equalisation of per-hectare payments for agricultural support. Giving any of this money to those on high payments does not fulfil the intention. So we would still like to see more going to Regions 2 and 3 in the next tranche."

Ms White went on to say, "We had a productive meeting with Mr Ewing and his officials, covering both the allocation of this tranche of the funding and also looking at future agricultural support to the marginal and fragile areas, whether we are out of the CAP or not.

"We know that there is still considerable resentment in some of our crofting communities about the way in which the uplift has been misused and we will continue to press Scottish Government to ensure that crofters get what they are due in future."

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Notes to editors

Please contact SCF office for high resolution photos