

Proposals for parties' manifestos

What SCF wants to see in manifestos for the 2021 election



Agricultural support

Short term

- Basic payment budget to be maintained with effective ‘greening’
- LFASS to be maintained in full and rebased
- SUSSS – number of hoggs claimed to be capped, budget to be maintained. Implement cattle equivalent or reinstate calf scheme

Longer term

- Addressing climate change as the driver for agricultural support
- New system to be built on full participation of stakeholders
- New system to be considerate of small units – many small units equals a lot of land - lower size of eligible holdings, make applications simpler for small units etc; include common grazings in schemes
- New system to build in respect for biodiversity, carbon capture and population retention as well as production
- Move to replace LFASS with a system targeted on the most naturally and geographically constrained areas

CAGS

- Implement proposed changes
- Budget to be increased as it is over-subscribed each year

Pests and predators

- Increase budget to reduce geese numbers, manage white-tailed eagles and legislate to reduce deer numbers
- Improve policing of dangerous dogs

Technical Support

- Improve Farm Advisory Service or similar to drive technical efficiency improvements to support “more from less”; focus more advice on small units and continued professional development

Post-Brexit trade

- Keep a sheep price support scheme available in case it is needed
- Streamline processes to ease exports of red meat and breeding animals
- Maintain standards and do not allow lower standards on agricultural imports which would undercut home production
- Fund initiatives to build up the home market – fund setting up more local abattoirs, development of local produce, promote croft produce, short supply chains, local markets, compulsory bee health protection (BeeBase)
- Initiatives to ensure we have the skilled workers to support our industry

Crofting Legislation and Regulation

- National Development Plan consultation, amended and key points implemented
- Crofting Commission to be adequately resourced
 - (i) to deliver on bringing absentee and derelict crofts into use
 - (ii) to administer quickly and effectively
- Crofting law reform - bill to be brought forward early in Parliament session
- Create new crofts – make the legal and administrative process simple

Land reform

- Accelerate land reform agenda – more people owning, using our land
- Promote local democracy - communities owning or controlling land where they live
- Create new crofts – make publicly owned land available to create new crofts; negotiate private land for new crofts, e.g. estates, church-owned land

Housing

- Many planning issues need to be addressed, e.g. building developments on good croft land, planners not giving permission for developments on poor land that could help solve the housing problems, valuation of community croft projects
- Croft House Grant Scheme - increase budget as this is a proven cost effective method of increasing the stock of housing in rural areas; re-introduce a loan scheme to support the grant
- Protect housing in rural areas from second-home / holiday let market
- Provide more affordable housing for local people

Infrastructure

- Upgrade roads (trunk, main and byways), ferries, bridges, all vital for business to thrive – councils to be funded appropriately
- Animal transport standards on ferries and roads to be proportionate not place undue burdens on remote areas
- Get broadband roll-out completed and speeds up to at least acceptable

Tourism

- Mount a publicity campaign on “Responsible Access”
- Increase infrastructure (eg off road car parks, waste disposal points) to cater for increased tourism
- Upgrade busy roads in key tourist hotspots (e.g. A82, NC500)
- Improve planning of designated tourist accommodation