



**NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Crofting Federation welcomes new government for Scotland**

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has welcomed Mairi Gougeon, in her new role as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, with a 'To Do list'.

Donald MacKinnon, chair of the SCF said, "We are pleased to see a strong cabinet appointed to lead Scotland, and welcome Mairi Gougeon as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands. We are, of course, sad to see Fergus Ewing go as a strong rapport builds up with time and he had a good feel for crofting. But we are confident that Ms Gougeon has the experience and capacity to get to know crofting and our islands and to take them into consideration in forming policy. We need to see all policy 'croft-proofed' and 'island-proofed' before it is enacted."

Mr MacKinnon went on to say, "There is much to be done. We have an immediate threat in the form of unbridled access to our markets for Australia's, and possibly New Zealand's, meat. This would be catastrophic for crofting and hill production. And what will our post-CAP agricultural support system look like? There has been advisory group after advisory group commissioned to offer recommendations on direction of travel but we have yet to see a plan for where we are going with this. Time is running out.

"SCF put many proposals to the parties before the election for what we would like to see the in-coming government commit to," Mr MacKinnon continued, "and they still stand. High up with agricultural support comes the reform of crofting legislation and the National Development Plan for Crofting – both of which this government has pledged they will do in this term of office. It is essential that we get on with these three things.

"There are other important things included in our list," Mr MacKinnon added, "and we will meet with the Cabinet Secretary as soon as possible to discuss them."

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