



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Use: Immediate**

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### **Confirmation of unused crofts problem – and solution – says Federation**

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has welcomed the results of the Crofting Commission investigation into unused crofts and reiterates the call to resource the Commission sufficiently for it to tackle the emergency.

"This is a necessary survey undertaken to establish a base-line," said SCF's chair, Donald MacKinnon, "and well done the Commission development team for doing it. I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the situation is an emergency – if we want crofting to continue we have to get unused crofts made available for incoming folk to work."

Mr Mackinnon went on, "The survey results published today show that the main reasons for crofts not being used are absenteeism; crofts retained as a financial asset; hesitancy to assign/sublet crofts to someone outwith the family and resident crofters having no desire to work their crofts. I think most people will not find these surprising, but given that this is a regulated system of land tenure it is surprising that it has been allowed to continue. Respondents acknowledged this with 'enforcement of duties' being by far top of the remedial action recommended. It was felt this should be supported with awareness-raising and community pressure.

"But the regulator can only do what resources allow", concluded Mr MacKinnon. "If we are to see the impending catastrophe averted, the regulator has to be given the means to tackle it. Crofters have been saying this for many years – remember the 'Committee of Inquiry on Crofting' in 2008? This was the biggest inquiry into crofting for 50 years and it said exactly what this survey is confirming. For a regulated system to work it has to be regulated by a sufficiently resourced regulator".

END