



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 08/09/2021

Promised actions for crofting missing from Programme for Government says Crofting Federation

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has expressed bitter disappointment that the long awaited crofting reform bill has not been included in the Programme for Government (PFG) published yesterday.

"Given that the Government stopped the progress of the crofting law reform bill in the last term of government," said Donald MacKinnon, chair of the SCF, "and the SNP pledged that they will 'reform the law and develop crofting to create more active crofts', it is galling that the bill, or indeed any crofting-specific actions, are not included in the programme. It shows a disregard for the crofting system at a time that this type of land tenure is needed most.

"They say in the PFG 'In supporting our rural and island economies, we will ensure young people have more opportunities'; crofting could give young people huge opportunities and there are many wanting to croft but cannot get in due to the lack of effective regulation. The crofting system has been allowed to degenerate to an extent that it is now in crisis. The PFG also says, 'To ensure a sustainable future for agriculture we must have new people coming through'; are these empty words?"

Mr MacKinnon continued, "There are things in the PFG that we are pleased to see. We welcome the commitment to reform agriculture, though having only one crofter on the 21 strong oversight board says something about this government's jaundiced view of crofting. We support the proposals for a new land reform bill and controlling deer numbers will be good for common grazings. We are also pleased to see that a Good Food Nation Bill will pass through parliament and that there is more interest in local food provision. We welcome the formation of a commission for land-based education, providing that it includes crofting."

Mr MacKinnon concluded, "There are other measures that could indirectly effect crofting, for good or bad. But overall the PFG is weak on a new vision for rural Scotland and leaves crofting wanting. Whilst promoting measures to address climate change and environmental degradation, and claims to want to help young people and remote communities, the lack of direct action to tackle the crofting crisis is lamentable."

END

Notes to editors

Please contact SCF office for high resolution photos.