



NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTING FEDERATION DEMANDS CLARITY AND BETTER SUPPORT FOR CROFTING IN RESPONSE TO AGRICULTURE BILL PROPOSALS

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has responded to the Scottish Government's consultation on a new framework for agricultural support payments, by calling for details on how the Scottish Government is going to use its powers and by demanding support for small scale agriculture.

"Over the years, many groups, such as the Farmer Led Climate Change Groups and the Farming and Food Production Future Policy Group, put considerable time and effort into drafting detailed recommendations", said Donald MacKinnon, chair of the SCF. "We were, therefore, disappointed that more than six years after the decision to leave the EU, this consultation only raises very vague and often leading questions as to the powers that are necessary to provide agricultural support. A concrete plan of action is now required from the Scottish Government to ensure that crofters' views and concerns are taken into account in the actual design and implementation of measures in support of the suggested outcomes".

The proposals in the consultation include a new four-tiered structure for the delivery of funds, including direct payments with environmental conditions. The new Scottish Agriculture Policy would be centred around four outcomes: climate change mitigation and adaptation, nature restoration, high-quality food production and rural development.

"SCF is in favour of better support for crofters and farmers to deliver on environmental and social public goods", continued Mr MacKinnon. "But we are concerned that measures may not be designed with crofting in mind. Payments across tiers need to be accessible to all producers, to ensure that crofters can continue crofting and deliver significant public benefits. These include active land management in areas of High Nature Value, continuation of traditional practices such as the growing and breeding of heritage varieties and rare breeds, local and high-quality food production and rural development including community building and a more equitable use of Scotland's land".

Mr MacKinnon concluded: "Better support for crofting and small scale agriculture should be at the heart of the new Agricultural Policy. This means that conditions need to be proportional but also that we need to talk about how funds are distributed. For too long agricultural payments have favoured the largest businesses. Crofting is delivering on the vision of the Scottish Government. It is now up to the Government to better support crofting".

The Agriculture Bill Consultation is open for responses until Monday 5 December.

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