



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 27/06/2023

CROFTING FEDERATION TAKES CROFTING TO THE HIGHLAND SHOW

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) led the representation of crofters at the Royal Highland Show with the launch of a trans-European gender-equality research project, a vibrant SCF stand and engagement with crofters, officials and other organisations.

Chair of the SCF, Donald MacKinnon, said, "The launch of the 'Grass Ceiling' project was not only an enjoyable highlight of this iconic show, but was also very informative. George Burgess, Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy introduced the project and outlined the Scottish Government's on-going commitment to this vital work with rural women, and Professor Sally Shortall, Newcastle University's Duke of Northumberland Chair of Rural Economy, gave a very interesting account of how women's involvement in rural enterprise – including farming and crofting - can be misrepresented by statistics. She emphasised the project's size – including 25 partners in 9 countries – with the UK being represented by women innovators in the crofting areas and being organised by a collaboration of SCF and Newcastle University.

"Mr MacKinnon continued, "On other policy issues at the show, we were concerned that the announcement given by Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon on the new conditions for farming support payments which will be introduced from 2025, fell short of any detail on how the mechanisms will work, what budget is available, how mechanisms will be tailored for smaller producers and how crofters, who manage huge areas of high nature value agricultural land, will be supported to deliver public goods.

"On the positive side though, we were very happy that Scottish Forestry is to introduce new measures to its Forestry Grant Scheme aimed at boosting agroforestry in Scotland. The action is a direct result of joint working with agricultural stakeholders, including the SCF, on the Trees on Farms group. These are measures we have campaigned on for a long time and it is good to see our efforts being rewarded."

Announcing the agroforestry boost, Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon said, "Not only are there benefits to climate change and biodiversity, planting trees can provide farmers and crofters with added income, shelter for livestock and some diversification to the business."

Mr MacKinnon concluded, "It was a very productive show. We had huge numbers of people visiting our stand, including crofters, officials, politicians, our partners in other rural organisations and people simply supporting the values of crofting. Many questions were raised about crofting and we would urge the Crofting Commission to be present at this show in the future – they were missed. The tide is turning and everyone knows that a more sustainable way of using our land and producing our food has to be taken; it is the time for crofting."

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Notes to editors

Please contact SCF office for high resolution photos. Further information on the GRASS Ceiling project can be found [here](#).