



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Scottish Crofting Federation Chief Executive Donna Smith to meet Minister over Whole Farm Plan concerns**

**Thanks to the Scottish Crofting Federation's lobbying effort, Scotland's Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, Jim Fairlie, has agreed to meet SCF Chief Executive Donna Smith to discuss how the Whole Farm Plan requirements can be made proportionate for crofters.**

This Wednesday, the Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs and Islands Committee (RAIC) discussed the statutory instrument that will make the Whole Farm Plan (WFP) a legal requirement under Scottish law. We have written to MSPs to question the Minister with regard to the suitability of these measures for the crofting context – and they did. MSPs of all parties quoted from the evidence SCF has sent them.

While government officials tried to give the impression that it is only now that SCF is raising such concerns, this is **not** correct: Throughout the agricultural reform process, we have constantly flagged these issues – in the Whole Farm Plan steering group, and in many meetings with civil servants and politicians. SCF Chair Jonathan Hedges said:

"We have repeatedly warned that disproportionate whole farm plan measures will lead to crofters dropping out of the system – up until now, we have just not been listened to."

At the Committee session this Wednesday, it became obvious that SCF is the **only** organisation questioning the suitability and proportionality of a one-size-fits-all Whole Farm Plan approach for crofters and other small producers. As a result of SCF's persistence, some concessions have been made in the past months – but these are not enough. Several times during the Committee debate, Mr. Fairlie invited Donna Smith to discuss how the policy can be made proportionate for crofters.

Jonathan Hedges said: "We welcome Mr. Fairlie's invitation and are keen to discuss how we can make this work for crofters – but words must be followed by deeds. As of now, we still not have not seen any action on the assurances the Minister gave on the calf scheme last December."

Mr. Fairlie said that he will listen to crofters' concerns and we look forward to a constructive working relationship with Mr. Fairlie to resolve these. Any crofter who wants to raise concerns in relation to the Whole Farm Plan, please get in touch with SCF.

END

#### Note to Editors

The full committee debate can be accessed [here](#).