



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Crofting Federation welcomes Commission initiatives**

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has congratulated the Crofting Commission on the recently announced initiatives of a new Assessors Panel and research into crofting support.

“The Crofting Commission’s role in matters relating to crofting will be greatly enhanced by the appointment of a new Assessors Panel,” said Russell Smith, chair of the SCF. “The SCF has always been a great supporter of having assessors and fought hard to keep them when the demise of the network was being proposed by Scottish Government a decade or so ago. The solution instigated by the Commission of having fewer assessors but giving them a clearer mandate, a closer relationship with the commissioners and support to do their job, is to be commended.

“I would also like to thank the assessors for having put themselves forward for this voluntary role. It is really appreciated that people are willing to give their time and experience to helping crofting to work well as a regulated form of land tenure.”

The Crofting Commission is the regulator of crofting and also has the remit to promote the interests of crofting and keep matters relating to crofting under review.

Mr Smith continued, “Support mechanisms to crofting are essential. Crofting provides many public goods such as landscape and habitat management, provides a basis on which to thrive in remote areas and thereby contributes to the resilience of rural communities. However, crofting needs payment for public goods as, by definition, the market does not provide this. We have highlighted the lack of support to crofting and, with the Crofting Commission, produced a detailed proposal for a crofting component of the Scottish Rural Development Programme in 2014. Unfortunately this was not taken up by Scottish Government.

“We are also very pleased to see the Commission take on the research expertise of Gwyn Jones, someone we have worked with and who is recognised as a very thorough and capable consultant. We anticipate that the research findings will be very revealing of the lack of support coming to crofting. If Scottish Government really do want the continuation of this unique and valuable system they will have to act on the findings.”

Mr Smith concluded, "These initiatives pave the way for the Crofting Commission to take a more active role in crofting development, with the potential for new crofting law to return this as a specific part of the remit of the commission, as is appropriate. SCF is looking forward to working with the assessors and with Gwyn, to fulfil our mutual commitment to a positive future for crofting."

END

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**Notes to editors**

- A picture can be found at: <http://www.crofting.org>