



NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTING FEDERATION WELCOMES NEXT STEP IN SCOTTISH AGRICULTURAL POLICY BUT CONCERNS AROUND KEY OMISSIONS REMAIN

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) welcomes the publication of Scottish Government's Agricultural Reform Routemap and list of draft measures for enhanced conditionality, yet urges for more consideration for the concerns and needs of crofters and other small-scale producers.

"In our response to the Agriculture Bill SCF emphasised the need for details," explained Donald MacKinnon, chair of the SCF. "The published documents give an insight into the direction of agricultural reform and of timelines. This is a positive step and will provide crofters with a better understanding of potential changes to agricultural payments. Some of the proposals for enhanced conditions could better support crofters, for example, on regenerative grazing, support to retain traditional cattle, and for small-scale tree planting. Yet, important issues that have been raised by SCF have still been overlooked by the Government".

Scottish Government's Routemap describes how different support schemes such as the basic payment scheme, voluntary coupled support and less favoured area support will be continued or reformed from 2025. The Routemap also provides a timeline for the publication of more specifics on what will be required to access support in the future. Some first examples of potential requirements to access future support are outlined in a list of draft measures.

"Rural development as an outcome, and horticulture as a land-based activity, receive no mention," continued Mr MacKinnon. "Key concerns about proportionality of conditions and requirements to conduct a Whole Farm Plan, and the workability of schemes for the common grazings, remain unaddressed".

Mr MacKinnon concluded: "More transparency creates opportunities for crofters to give feedback to SCF and Government on how proposals could work in practice and what issues crofters may encounter. SCF is working closely with members to scrutinise the proposals, to ensure that a new Scottish Agricultural Policy will better support crofting. Crofting has significant potential to deliver for climate, nature and rural communities so clarity is urgently needed on payment mechanisms and rates at which crofters will be rewarded if they deliver on Scottish Government's policy objectives".

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