



NEWS RELEASE

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Scottish Crofting Federation delivering “Crofting for the Future” training programme throughout crofting counties!

Supported by 75% funding from the Scottish Government’s Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Fund (KTIF) programme, the Scottish Crofting Federation is delighted to be offering a programme of crofter-focused, crofter-led training events over the next few months. The KTIF funding, announced earlier in October, is enabling SCF to deliver 8 two-day intensive in-person training courses and 6 online workshops before the end of March 2025.

The focus of the training programme – entitled “Crofting for the Future” – is on crofter-led training events that will support crofters with navigating changes in the agricultural support systems and finding ways of adapting their practices to meet the climate and biodiversity emergencies, while retaining, or indeed improving, their financial sustainability.

The first online workshop on “What do I need to do for 2025?” was delivered on 22nd October. SCF Council member (former Board member and Chair) Donald MacKinnon led the event and was joined by Rob Black, SCF Board member, Siobhan MacDonald & Willie Budge from SAC, Sue Agnew from NatureScot and Iain Carmichael from the Scottish Government’s Agricultural Policy team.

The structure and content of the event were designed to help crofters feel that the requirements of the Whole Farm Plan are possible to achieve themselves, without the need to engage consultants. To that end, the workshop was fully interactive and the panellists, rather than delivering presentations, responded to questions put to them by the attendees both prior to and during the workshop.

Feedback so far has been very positive:- “A well-structured event with enough of the right people there to give straightforward informed answers. Nothing worse than waffle at a webinar! This one was very open and easy to be a part of and had succinct responses to issues”. “Such a useful event”. “More please so that crofters feel less isolated”. The workshop was recorded, and an edited version will be shared on SCF’s YouTube channel soon. Details and dates for the next five online workshops will also be made available as soon as possible!

Alongside this, SCF is delivering eight in-person, intensive, interactive two-day training events in different venues around the Crofting Counties. The first one is planned for Nether Lochaber on 15th and 16th November. Other venues/dates are:- Helmsdale (January 17th/18th TBC), Applecross Community Hall, (31st January & 1st February); Isle of Mull (venue & date TBC); Isle of Skye (venue & date TBC); Carloway Community Centre (28th February/1st March); Ollaberry Hall, Shetland (March 7th/8th); and Benbecula (venue & date TBC).

Based on the SCF's highly regarded Access To Crofting programme, the two-day course has been updated in the light of recent changes and is suitable for both new entrant and experienced crofters. The course aims to address issues such as:- How to prepare for changes in agricultural policy; How to make your croft more economically & environmentally sustainable; How to adapt to changing weather patterns; and What resources are available to support crofters.

Jonathan Hedges, Chair of SCF is "really pleased that our training programme will enable us to support crofters in a comprehensive way, responding to what they tell us they need to future-proof their crofting activity".

END

Notes to editors

Please contact SCF office for high resolution photo.