

Summary of the Crofting Induction Course

Session 1. Times past - times present.

How did crofting evolve? What is crofting? Where is it today? How to acquire a croft. An introduction to crofting law and regulations. The purpose and work of Crofters Commission. SEERAD and Forestry Authority.

Session 2. Support mechanisms

Grants schemes – CBGLS, CCAGS, SFGS, LFASS, GAEC, etc. Mutual support - Machinery Rings and Machinery Groups.

Session 3. Land & environment

From seashore to a high place – soils, wet, wind and weather. The benefits of shelter & drainage. Forage area - use of inbye/common grazings. The Grazings Committee, Clerk/Constable. Duties of grazings shareholders. Health & safety. Practical training. Waste management & SEPA. Use of artificial inputs. Going organic.

Session 4. Crofting Livestock

Entitlement to premia, Single Farm Payments (SFP), Land Management Contracts (LMCMS). IACS and record keeping. Livestock quality schemes.

Session 5. Wildlife, habitats & landscape

Relevance of crofting to the protection of habitats and the natural environment. Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Natura 2000. Designations - SSSI's, SAC's, etc. Consequences of human activity. SNH. Relationship of the environment to tourism and the economy of the Highlands & Islands.

Session 6. Finance & marketing

Local Enterprise Company; HC Economic Development Service. Banks & Credit Unions. Alternative economy. Business plans; cash flow; P & L forecasting. Diversification and some alternative uses of land and resources.

Session 7. Animal health & welfare

Buying, selling and transporting of animals. H&I Veterinary Services Scheme. Breeding regimes of sheep & cattle. Common ailments in sheep, cattle and other crofting livestock. Notifiable diseases and disease prevention.

Session 8. European dimension

The affect of EU membership on crofting agriculture. CAP, Agenda 2000. The outlook for similar small producers/farmers throughout the European Union.

Session 9. Community.

What is a community? Individual responsibility and your place within a community. Empowerment and capacity building and how communities can achieve goals. Community buy-outs of land - Why? When? How?

Session 10. And finally... Presentation of certificates

...together with a talk by your local Crofters Commission representative. This will be followed by 'Market Place', where students can shop around and visit stands manned by representatives from relevant organisations that can offer help, advice, services and representation. An informal get

together in a social setting will follow in which some of your session leaders and experienced local crofters will be present. Finally, an evaluation of the course.