

NEWS RELEASE

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WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE BIGGER PICTURE SAY CROFTING LEADERS

Scottish Crofting Foundation Vice-Chairman Hugh Donaldson has called on crofters to “bear in mind the bigger picture” over the approaching crofting reforms.

He said “the ‘Shucksmith report’ that is causing such a stir is only a report. After the debacle of the last crofting reform bill we asked for a full inquiry and we got it. The report lays out some recommendations to achieve what participants in the Inquiry stated they wanted for crofting. However, there is a long way to go down the road to reform and crofters must stand together to ensure that they get what is best for the greater good of crofting. The SCF is gathering the views of its members and will lobby for them to be taken into account in forming legislation. Remember we asked Shucksmith for a ‘vision statement’ and he has given us one based on what he heard in the Inquiry. We need to go back to that and to defend “a future for crofting - in the hands of crofters - delivering wider benefits for their communities”. Where there is concern over that we should work through those concerns and not spend time on the knee jerk reaction of the NIMBY` s and self interested few”.

Some of the recommendations in the Committee of Inquiry on Crofting Final Report have caused anxiety in crofting communities, particularly those that relate to croft land use and residency ‘burdens’.

Norman Leask, SCF parliamentary spokesman added “there are many recommendations that we must not lose sight of – such as paying fairly for the delivery of public goods, retargeting less favoured area support and increasing croft house grants. It is all well and good to say that croft land must be used but there has to be a realistic return on the labour put in - no return and land eventually falls into disuse. It is not rocket science. Shucksmith has put forward some very good ideas that need to be discussed further and we, the crofters, need to make sure that we get workable legislation that will ensure the health of crofting.

END

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Pictures can be found at: <http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/home>