

## **POLICY NOTE**

### **THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTS (RURAL PRIORITIES) (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2012**

#### **SSI 2012/307**

The above Regulations (the 2012 Amendment Regulations) are made in exercise of the powers conferred by section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972. They amend the Rural Development Contracts (Rural Priorities) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008 No.100) (the “2008 Regulations”).

The 2008 Regulations allow Scottish Ministers to pay European and national funds from the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) to beneficiaries of Rural Priorities. The instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure.

#### **Policy Objective**

The purpose of the 2012 Amendment Regulations is to implement changes made to the SRDP which were recently agreed with the European Commission. The amendments to the 2008 Regulations relate primarily to changes to option management and operating conditions such as timing of cutting silage; and the addition of a new condition that hay and silage be cut in a wildlife friendly manner. The other change removes the condition that a beneficiary may make a maximum of one claim in any one year and a maximum of 5 claims during the period of their contract for option 75 (erosion control).

#### **Background**

The European priorities for 2007-2013 are laid down in the Rural Development Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005) The SRDP including Rural Priorities is designed to deliver outcomes to achieve these priorities in Scotland.

Rural Priorities is a competitive scheme to ensure that contracts are awarded for the proposals which are best able to deliver the agreed region priorities. Businesses, land managers and community groups can apply. There is a 2-stage application process. The initial stage is the submission of a simple Statement of Intent. In the second stage, applicants can prepare a detailed Proposal plus an Outcome Plan setting out how they would contribute to one or more regional priorities. Both stages are supported by case officers who advise on eligibility, regional priorities, budgetary positions and the need for consents/approvals.

Regional Proposal Assessment Committees (RPACs) will select which proposal to recommend for approval to Scottish Ministers.

## **Consultation**

The original SRDP was submitted to the European Commission following consultation with stakeholders and agreed on 19 February 2008. These latest changes reflect modifications approved by the EC.

## **Financial effects**

The instrument uses funding which the Scottish Government and the European Commission have allocated to Rural Development Contracts under the SRDP. We foresee no increase in costs to the Scottish Government, local government or business. We have therefore not carried out a Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment.

The Scottish Government  
Agriculture, Food and Rural Communities Directorate  
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