

## **POLICY NOTE**

### **THE CROFTING COUNTIES AGRICULTURAL GRANTS (SCOTLAND) VARIATION SCHEME 2015**

**SSI 2015/105**

The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 42(1), (1A), (2) and (3) and 46(4) of the Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993 and section 2(2) of, and paragraph 1A of Schedule 2 to, the European Communities Act 1972 and all other powers enabling them to do so. The instrument is subject to negative procedure.

#### **Purpose of the Scheme**

The purpose of the Crofting Counties Agricultural Grants Scheme is to provide financial assistance to crofters and certain occupiers of croft land in the Crofting Counties and Areas Designated for Crofting to assist the improvement of crofting agriculture, as part of the general policy of compensating crofters for disadvantages of climate, scale, terrain and remoteness and to preserve an agricultural base in crofting areas.

#### **Policy Objectives**

This instrument is designed to enable continuance of the Crofting Counties Agricultural Grants (Scotland) Scheme 2006 which, under the new provisions of the new Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, will also be co-financed under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The Scheme provides crofters with financial assistance towards the infrastructure of crofts to aid agricultural provision.

The changes being made will allow the scheme to:

- Offer grant assistance to be provided at the intervention rates which will be applicable under the new Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020;
- Introduce assistance with the costs of establishing common grazings committees to better manage that commonly held resource; and
- Update the references in the Scheme to the relevant EU instruments.

#### **Consultation**

In accordance with section 42(1) of the Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993, the Scottish Government has consulted with the Crofting Commission in relation to this instrument.

As there is no change to the purpose of the Crofting Counties Agricultural Grants Scheme, and the level of support is increased in most instances, it is anticipated that this instrument varying the Scheme should receive the support of the crofting community.

The Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, whose elements include the Crofting Counties Agricultural Grants Scheme, was publicly consulted upon in May-July 2013 and December 2013-February 2014.

As a result of that consultation it was determined that a separate capital scheme for crofters should be continued and that assistance with the establishment of common grazings committees was desirable.

The documents, responses and the analysis of both rounds of the consultation on the Scotland Rural Development Programme are published on the Scottish Government website.  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/SRDP/DevelopmentofSRDP20142020>

### **Impact Assessments**

An equality impact assessment has been completed on the policy of offering the proposed grants to crofters and is attached. There are no equality impact issues, particularly as similar grants are also being offered to agriculturalists of a similar scale to crofters under the Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

### **Financial Effects**

A full Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) has been completed and is attached. The impact of this policy on business is not expected to have any appreciable impact.

Directorate for Agriculture Food and Rural Communities  
4 March 2015