



News Release

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Contact : Bob Carruth
Telephone : 0131 472 4006
Email : bob.carruth@nfus.org.uk

TFF WELCOMES HOLDINGS CONSULTATION

Issued on behalf of the Tenant Farming Forum

Scotland's Tenant Farming Forum (TFF), which aims to promote a healthy tenanted farm sector in Scotland, has given its welcome to the publication of the Scottish Government consultation on the Agricultural Holdings (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill.

The consultation invites comments on proposals to extend the definition of 'near relative' to include grandchildren and to prohibit lease terms that provide for 'upward only' or 'landlord only initiated' rent reviews. It also seeks to clarify that alterations to rents arising from tax changes would not constitute a 'variation of rent' that would prevent either landlord or tenant from seeking a determination of rent for a period of three years.

The proposals contained in the Draft Bill were part of an original package of recommendations from the TFF to Scottish Government on improving the amount of land available for let in Scotland. Many of the TFF's recommendations were incorporated into the recent Public Services Reform (Scotland) 2011 act but measures related to succession and rents were deemed to require a separate Bill.

The chairman of the influential Forum, made up of organisations representing both landowners and tenants, is Professor Phil Thomas. Commenting on the consultation, he said:

"The TFF welcomes the proposals in this consultation. Taken in combination with the changes made by the Public Services Reform (Agricultural Holdings) (Scotland) Order 2011, we will see the original package of recommendations from the TFF to Scottish Government being considered.

"If adopted, all these changes could help to create a better environment for encouraging the letting of more land and will show that a united agreement by TFF members can deliver change.

"A great deal of hard work by Forum members is now resulting in actual and potential changes to the rules governing the letting of land which I hope will give confidence to all those considering the letting of land." ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- A copy of the Scottish Government consultation on proposals to change the Agricultural Holdings Act can be found at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/18095404/0>
- The primary purpose of the Tenant Farming Forum is to help to promote a healthy farm tenanted sector in Scotland. It aims to fulfil this purpose by:
 1. Providing a discussion forum among those representing groups/organisations with a direct involvement in the sector, and who are committed to consensus building through fair and equitable discussion and representation;
 2. Contributing to an understanding of the significance, and the practical implications of implementing current legislation, (for example, at this time, the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 2003), and any future proposed legislation governing the sector;
 3. Identifying specifically, and raising awareness of issues that may inhibit or act as impediments to achieving effective relationships within the sector;
 4. Formulating views and opinions as to how effective relationships and ‘best practice’ can be developed and secured;
 5. Consulting and liaising with government departments, agencies and other bodies about matters that may directly affect relationships within the sector; and
 6. Having a vision as to how the future well being of the sector can be assured in the context of proposed changes in European and UK agricultural and environmental policies, and their implications for the rural economy; and continually reviewing the implications for the sector of new initiatives, for example, such as contract farming, and rural planning developments.
- The Tenant Farming Forum is made up of the following organisations: Scottish Tenant Farmers Association (STFA), Scottish Estates Business Group (SEBG), Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA), Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), and NFU Scotland (NFUS).
- Observers on the group are the Scottish Government, the Law Society and the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs (SAYFC).
- Details on the TFF can be found at its website: www.tenantfarmingforum.org.uk