



News Release

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

TENANT FARMING FORUM ANNOUNCES NEW CHAIR

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 announced that its new independent chairman will be Professor Phil Thomas.

Professor Thomas is a well-known figure in Scottish agriculture and was Chief Executive and Principal of SAC during 1990 to 1999. He currently holds a number of public and industry body appointments and is director of a consultancy and research firm. He will take up the TFF chairmanship this autumn.

The retiring chairman of the influential forum, made up of organisations representing both landowners and tenants, is Jeff Maxwell. Commenting on the appointment, Mr Maxwell said:

"I am delighted that Professor Phil Thomas has been appointed to be the independent chairman of the TFF following my retirement in October. He will bring characteristic good sense to the role and ensure that debate is constructive in furthering the TFF's purpose to help build a prosperous tenant farming sector in Scotland.

"He comes with considerable experience of Scotland's agriculture and land use sector and is fully aware of the challenges and opportunities that the rural communities of Scotland face in securing their future.

"I wish Professor Thomas and the Forum well in the coming months as they continue to develop with the Scottish Government the important changes in Agricultural Holdings legislation. These are required to give greater access to land while at the same time securing the mutual and separate interests of both tenants and landlords."

Professor Thomas added:

"The TFF plays an important role in promoting a vibrant tenanted farming sector in Scotland. It makes a crucially important contribution to facilitating common understanding and promoting the common interests for tenants and landowners. I am very honoured to be appointed to the TFF and very much look forward to being involved in its work." Ends

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- 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