

Access to land stopping young people entering farming

New research has found enthusiasm among Scotland's young people to pursuing a career in farming. However, access to land is a critical barrier to entering the sector.

A survey conducted by Nourish Scotland on the demand for farmland received over 1,000 responses from aspiring farmers. 92% of these people said that organic/agroecological methods are a priority for them.

The research was undertaken as part of a feasibility study for a new organisation, the Scottish Farm Land Trust. Jonathan Agnew is a young farmer, who helped set up this organisation. He explains, "The aim of the Scottish Farm Land Trust is to acquire farmland and rent it out with affordable and secure tenancies to support new entrants and ecological agriculture." He adds, "we want to make it easier for people and support a more dynamic farming sector in Scotland."

The Scottish Farm Land Trust has been inspired by the success of this model in Europe, and around the world. On Wednesday 27th September Gail Ross MSP will be hosting an event at Holyrood, which will hear from speakers from successful European land trusts as well as local farmers on why this issue is so important.

Two thirds of the survey respondents looking for farmland are under 40 years old. Contributing to rural development and looking after the environment were stated as key motivations to pursuing a career in farming.

Bella Crowe, Nourish Scotland, who conducted the research said: "This survey shows that if we are serious about Scotland becoming a good food nation and a world leader in green farming, we have to do a lot more to support the people trying to set up small-scale, agroecological farms."

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