



June 27 2013

Scotland Rural Development Programme Consultation

Joint submission from

Fife Diet

Nourish Scotland

Scottish Crofting Federation

Soil Association Scotland

We welcome the consultation on the priorities for the new Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP). We note that this programme is about rural development not just agriculture, and that the programme seeks to deliver environmental and social goals as well as economic goals.

We call on Scottish Government to take the opportunity of the new SRDP to articulate a clear vision for future food and farming in Scotland.

While we recognise the importance of food for export, we want to see an equal emphasis on:

- a fairer Scotland – closing the inequality gap in Scots' access to good food;
- a greener Scotland – restoring and enhancing biodiversity through the way we farm, and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions from plough to plate;
- a healthier Scotland – producing food for public health, reinventing the good Scots diet in our homes, schools, hospitals and cafes;
- a wealthier Scotland – creating new good jobs in food production and in small-scale processing – from community bakeries to healthy locally-sourced meals on the school menu and to take away at the school gate
- a smarter Scotland – wasting less and using resources better throughout the food system, and building the skills to grow, cook and eat better.

The new SRDP should reconnect the farming and crofting we do in Scotland's rural areas with the food we eat – not just in rural areas but also in our towns and cities. And the new programme must be asset-based – valuing and building on our most important asset – our people, places and communities; and working with, not doing to.

We welcome the focus in the consultation document of the three key outcomes of jobs, environment and community. It is essential that the scheme-design and assessment process reflects these outcomes, and that the case officers and panels

are able to take environmental and social impacts (including public health) into account when assessing all applications, not just for example LEADER.

Specific proposals

Budget

We want to see the maximum transfer of 15% of the budget from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2. Pillar 2 delivers public rather than private goods and is a better use of public money. We also encourage the Government to apply the highest permissible level of capping to Pillar 1 payments and recycle this money into strategic Pillar 2 programmes.

Strategic approach

We want to see a strategic investment in supporting co-operation; in proactive advisory services which help farmers and crofters deliver environmental and social benefits, and in training and other support for new food producers. Innovation and knowledge transfer are key to transformative change in Scotland's food system and rural economy.

Local food and short supply chains

We call for a new strand for the SRDP which in line with Article 36 of the Rural Development Regulation focuses specifically on short supply chains, linking primary producers and citizens directly or through a short collaborative supply chain and creating the skills and infrastructure required.

This strand would encourage initiatives linking Scottish producers directly with urban communities; and support projects similar to Copenhagen's House of Food which stimulates demand for organic local food in the public kitchen through focused training and culture change activities. It would assist Scottish farmers and crofters producing food alongside enhancing biodiversity to market their produce co-operatively to Scotland's cities. Extra points within this strand would go to socially inclusive projects which engage households living in poverty and other communities at risk of marginalisation.

Climate change targets

Scotland's ambitious climate change targets can only be achieved if we reduce greenhouse gas emissions in both production and consumption of food. We call for a published target to 2020 for reducing food-related emissions, and for all SRDP food and farming applicants to undertake a carbon audit and show how their project will contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from food.

Health

Scotland has high levels of diet-related ill-health. All SRDP projects with a food production component should be awarded extra points for positive public health impact.

Access to land

The distribution of land ownership in Scotland is among the most unequal in the world. Given the growing demand for access to land from first generation farmers, the greater productivity per acre of small farms, and the greater likelihood of small farms selling into short supply chains, SRDP should include imaginative approaches to increasing the number of productive holdings and crofts, especially in Southern Scotland. The emerging 'Schumacher centre' at Falkland Estate provides a good example of this in practice. Generational renewal in Scotland must be broader than enabling succession for family members.

Organic food and farming

Scotland is out of step with European neighbours such as Denmark, France, Austria and the Czech republic where strong government support is provided to the organic supply chain. Organic farming delivers clear benefits for soil and water quality, soil carbon sequestration, biodiversity and employment (see attached DEFRA research summary). Given the contribution organic farming makes to these Scottish Government priorities, the new SRDP should be pro-organic throughout, with support to organic farmers rising from the lowest levels in the EU to at least the average, a national target for organic food in public procurement and with extra points allocated for organic food-related projects.