

light both of the Committee of Inquiry on Crofting report and experience of the operation of the 2003 Act in the round.

27. The pre-emptive Community Right to Buy provisions set out in Part 2 of the 2003 Act will, of course, continue to apply as normal in the newly designated areas.

Financial support to crofting

28. The Ministerial announcement on 1 October made clear that designating new areas will not mean extending the application of crofting-specific grant support to these areas. Financial support to crofting is one of the issues being considered by the Committee of Inquiry on Crofting, which is due to report early in 2008. Ministers will consider financial support to any newly designated areas later in 2008 in that context. New crofts in the designated areas will, however, still be eligible for support and assistance under the Scotland Rural Development Programme on the same basis as other landholdings elsewhere in Scotland.

Committee of Inquiry on Crofting

29. The Committee of Inquiry on Crofting has been tasked with identifying a vision for the future of crofting, contributing to sustaining and enhancing the population, improving economic vitality, safeguarding landscape and biodiversity, and sustaining cultural diversity through proactively engaging with crofting communities and others with an interest in sustainable rural development in the crofting counties and other areas of Scotland where crofting may have a role to play. It should be noted that proposals for designation of new areas may be affected by the Committee's recommendations for the future of crofting tenure. Further information on the Committee can be found at <http://www.croftinginquiry.org//>

Questions to be posed.

1. Do you agree that new areas should be designated for Crofting. Yes,
absolutely.

2. Do you agree the new areas should align with those of Highland and Islands Enterprise? Yes, but go beyond that to also include most or all of rural Scotland.
Many, many areas have landscapes/small holdings/farms that would be suitable for Croft designation/land-use practice. Especially regarding crofting forestry initiatives and woodland management agreements.

If not, Why?

3. Is there another area which has a stronger claim? Possibly not a stronger case but, yes, many areas are suitable for croft land revitalisation for example, Inverclyde, Kyle, Carrick, Galloway, Clydesdale, Lothian, Borders, Fife, Angus, Banff, Buchan, Atholl, Strathearn, Strathmore, Breadalbane, Lennox, Mar, Garioch etc, etc, and all areas in between. All these areas were, and still are to an extent, places of strong agricultural/diverse practice and so historically would qualify a strong claim for re-establishing better land practice.

If so, Why?

4. Do you agree that Crofting Community Right to Buy should not be extended to the new areas? Yes. As long as the "community" is genuinely rooted in that locale and culture, as opposed to a shallow "community of interest." And that the land is held in perpetuity for the overall benefit of the whole community.

5. Any other comments? In my opinion, Scotland is desperately needing her land used, but used properly. Vast areas are nothing more than "wet deserts" and are a disgraceful insult to our future generations. If we are to have a vibrant healthy society, we therefore need a society that respects her resources, and two of Scotland's most under-used resources are her land and her people. All the evidence is there to prove that people will be much more happier and healthier if they are close to the land. Therefore saving millions in the long-term. Given that 80% of Scotland's population live in the central belt, it is blatantly obvious that room is needed to house, school, and employ etc our people. Helping to rebuild strong, viable and sustainable communities for the challenges that face us all.

6. What is your background? (please tick)

Crofter

Small landholder

Agricultural tenant

Landowner

Other