

NEWS RELEASE
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STFA REJECTS USE OF ARTICLE 68

Following representations from its members, the Scottish Tenant Farmers Association has rejected calls for the use of Article 68. In its response to the Scottish Government's consultation STFA warns that top-slicing every single farm payment to help support one sector has the potential to cause irreparable damage to the industry. STFA acknowledges the commitment of the Scottish Government to address the issue of de-stocking and depopulation in the highlands and islands of Scotland but believes attempts to do so should not be in the form of top-ups to entitlements and should not be at the expense of other sectors.

STFA represents a broad church of farming interests, and members, even those who would benefit from the use of Article 68, are appalled at the prospect that many who would receive extra payments do not have to carry on actively farming and may, in fact, have already ceased.

Commenting on the feedback from members chairman Angus McCall said: "The volatility of today's marketplace makes all sectors potentially vulnerable to fluctuating profitability. As long as most producers continue to produce well below the cost of production, the SFP will be required to keep businesses afloat. Like it or not, farmers are dependant on each other and begging Peter to prop up Paul is only likely to cause disruption and long-term resentment. There are adjustments and economies that can be made in the Pillar 2 budget, which could be directed towards those at most risk in the fragile areas rather than targeting Single Farm Payments, which is still a lifeline and the core support for agriculture. The Scottish Government should look at making the best use of measures within the SRDP and diverting the flow of payments from inactive farmers towards struggling hill farmers before they consider the use of controversial measures such as Article 68.

"STFA favours the retention of the Scottish Beef Calf Scheme which, alongside LFASS delivers real support to livestock producers. We recognise the parlous state of hill sheep farming and intend to continue to work with other stakeholders to develop a series of measures which will help to halt the de-stocking and depopulation of hill areas."

For further information:

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