

NEWS RELEASE  
Scottish Tenant Farmers Association  
Culmally Farm  
Golspie  
Sutherland  
[stfa@tfascotland.org.uk](mailto:stfa@tfascotland.org.uk)

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## TENANTS CALL FOR REFORM IN RENT REVIEWS

The publication of CKD Galbraith's annual review has once again invoked the wrath of Scotland's tenant farmers. At a press briefing in Edinburgh on Monday, Galbraith's Chris Addison Scott claimed that his firm had achieved rent increases of 30% and above from tenant farmers and most of these increased had been agreed amicably.

The Scottish Tenant Farmers Association has strong evidence to the contrary and the pressure some tenants are under to accept hefty increases rather than run the risk of a costly land court case. It has become plain over the last couple of years that certain land agents are prepared to play upon this fear in their quest to force rents ever upwards regardless of the viability of the tenant's farming operation.

Speaking today STFA's Angus McCall said: "Rent reviews are not just about hiking up rents, they should also be used as an opportunity to look at the operation of the farm as a whole and to discuss future plans. Rent review notices are served at least a year in advance of the term date so there should be ample time to discuss rent and there is no excuse for the last minute pressure characteristic of these rent reviews. STFA is well aware how little negotiation often takes place with some land agents preferring to force rent rises than negotiate a fair settlement as part of good estate management practice as defined in the TFF Guide to Good Relations to which RICS is a party.

"The flaws in the rent review process are becoming increasingly obvious and the time has now come for government intervention and STFA is seeking an early meeting with Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead. The system is not working and it is imperative that a means be found as soon as possible to resolve these disputes fairly, quickly and cost effectively. It is beyond comprehension that a simple disagreement over rent has the potential to escalate to a land court case costing well in excess of £20,000. What other small business could stand this pressure, especially with the prospect of it happening every 3 years?

Measures must be put in place to ensure that rent reviews are conducted properly and if negotiations founder, all avenues are explored before a dispute is referred to the Scottish Land Court. If legislation is required to achieve this, it should be put in place at the first opportunity. The behaviour of a minority of land agents has demonstrated that greater regulation is needed rather than moving towards freedom of contract."

Note to editors.

Individual tenants are unwilling and often unable to speak publicly for obvious reasons but more information can be obtained from:

Angus McCall:           01408 633275  
                                  07767 756840