



On target :

Less Favoured Areas

NFU Scotland – fighting for your interests

The critical issues faced by producers in Scotland's Less Favoured Areas were pushed right to the top of the political agenda with the publication of NFU Scotland's Manifesto for the Hills in September 2008. The following consultation on LFASS 2010-2013 allowed your Union to press home its views on what was required for hill and upland farming - informed in turn by LFASS roadshows for members in every region. Continued and intense NFU Scotland lobbying then ensured

- the retention of the Scottish Beef Calf Scheme.
- a 19% increase in the 2009 LFASS payments for those in the fragile and very fragile areas.
- a re-basing of the 2010 LFASS payments on activity in 2009.
- beneficiaries of the re-basing exercise will include new entrants and so-called 'anomaly' cases that have been effectively frozen out of LFASS for 2007-2009.
- a further increase in the payment rates in the fragile and very fragile areas for the 2010 LFASS, giving a total uplift of 38% compared with 2008.
- a nominal LFASS budget increase from £61 million in 2008 to around £70 million in 2010.
- development of new non-competitive Land Managers' Options - which will be available in 2011 - targeted specifically at upland farmers and crofters.

NFU Scotland's principal concern is **to ensure that LFASS support is targeted at active units in general and the most vulnerable hill units in particular, regardless of their location in Scotland**. Therefore, in December 2009, NFU Scotland agreed proposals to further refine LFASS for 2011 and beyond, and has been actively pursuing the implementation of this proposal with both Scottish Government and the EU Commission. This policy proposal for LFASS, introducing variable minimum stocking densities to reflect appropriate activity for different grazing categories, is deliberately constructed to

- ensure LFASS clearly contributes to land being managed, not abandoned
- target limited resources to those actively farming on the most disadvantaged land
- address the anomaly of removing ewe hogs from stocking density calculations that would otherwise penalise active hill farms
- adhere to the policy objectives of both the Scottish Government and the EU Commission
- minimise disruption to the mechanics of LFASS in order to enable effective implementation

In addition, over the last eighteen months, NFU Scotland has been working with the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure that EU proposals for the re-classification of less favoured areas across Europe do not adversely impact on the interests of Scotland and its LFA producers.

Spring 2010

NFU Scotland – supporting Scotland's farmers, crofters and growers