

The Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum

***DRAFT* Statement of Intent**

Purpose of this document

1. This document is the foundation for the Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum. Its purpose is to clearly describe what the Forum will do and how it will work. In particular, it sets out:

- The commitment by the public agencies to the Forum;
- The commitment by the Rural Community to the Forum;
- What the Forum is seeking to achieve;
- How long it will last; and
- Forum management arrangements and membership.

Commitment by the Public Bodies

2. The core agency partners (comprising Argyll and the Islands Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Crofters Commission, Argyll and Bute Council, The Forestry Commission, Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, Scottish Agricultural College, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and the National Farmers Union Scotland) shall

- Fund and manage the appointment of a Argyll Area Agriculture Strategy Development Manager for an initial 18 month period to co-ordinate and facilitate the delivery of the actions identified within the Argyll Agriculture Strategy;
- SAC shall host and manage the post of Argyll Area Agriculture Strategy Development Manager and will also manage the post funding for this duration;
- SAC will provide administrative and secretarial support for the post:
- Attend at least five Forum meetings a year;
- Ensure that their respective organisations are fully aware of the Forum and the issues that arise in the course of its work; and
- Ensure that work of the Forum is open and that information on its activities is freely available.

Commitment by the Rural Community Representatives

3. Rural Community representatives on the Forum shall

- Attend at least five Forum meetings a year;
- Represent their respective organisations and ensure that they are fully aware of the Forum and the issues that arise in the course of its work;
- Promote the work of the Forum more widely across Argyll and the Islands and seek to ensure widespread participation in it;
- Ensure that work of the Forum is open and that information on its activities is freely available.

Commitment by the Forum as a whole

4. The Forum as a whole shall:

- Through the Chairman, convene at least five meetings of the Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum each year;
- Oversee and guide the work of the Argyll Area Agriculture Strategy Development Manager through five steering group meetings a year;

What the Forum is seeking to achieve

5. The Forum's vision is to see sustainable and prosperous farming and crofting enterprises benefiting communities across the Argyll Area.

Farming and crofting enterprises should:

- Be focussed on producing quality food and other products that the consumer wants and values;
- Play a major role in sustainable rural development and help to maintain the prosperity of our mainland and island communities;
- Take the lead in the active management and enhancement of our unique environment and bio-diversity;
- Engage in partnership, embracing change and capitalising on new opportunities.

Through An Agricultural Strategy for the Argyll Area the forum has detailed specific actions to address this vision. These actions fall under the following headings:

- Information, Advice and Human Capital
- Broadening Income Streams
- Adding Value to the Local Food Chain
- Infrastructure

Duration of the Forum

6. The Forum shall continue to operate for as long as the partners see a need for issues to be addressed through the Forum.

Forum management arrangements and membership

7. The Forum shall be open in its workings and meetings will be open to interested parties and published on the Forum website. It shall operate in the way set out in the attached Annex A.

**Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum
January 2007**

Annex A:

The Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum: Membership and Management Arrangements

Forum Steering Group Membership

1. The Forum Steering Group comprises one representative from each of the following:

National Farmers Union
The Crofters Commission
Scottish Natural Heritage
Argyll and the Islands Enterprise
Argyll and Bute Council
The Forestry Commission
Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Scottish Agricultural College
Farming Wildlife Advisory Group

Forum Membership

2. The Forum meetings are open to other interested parties and are often attended by:

ABC Animal Welfare
ABC Access
ABC LBAP
ABC Councillors
Farmers
Crofters
Scottish Crofting Federation
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park
Rural Business Ring
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Management

3. Nominations, voting and election of the Chair of the Forum will be the responsibility of partners.

4. The Forum will meet a minimum of five times a year at various locations across Argyll.

5. All meetings will be minuted by a Senior Administration Officer from Argyll and Bute Council. Minutes will be freely available to anyone requesting them, although confidential items may be excluded from 'public' copies of the minutes.

6. In the unlikely event that a vote is required for a decision on a course of action by the Forum, voting will be based on one member one vote.

7. Forum meetings will be open to members of the public unless a closed session is required. If necessary this shall be announced at the beginning of the meeting.

