



STÒRAS UIBHIST

Buying your Croft Tenancy

Stòras Uibhist would like to explain the right of the crofter to buy his/her tenancy; the exclusions from that right; and the responsibilities that remain after purchase.

Facts:

The Right to Buy

Since 1976 tenants have been able to buy their crofts. In-by land can be bought for 15 x annual rent. The landlord may allow the inclusion of hill apportionments to be purchased. Technically, an owner is not a crofter but the 'landlord of a croft'. As long as the crofter lives on the croft as the owner, the Commission does not expect the croft to be re-let to a new tenant.

Exclusions from the Right to Buy

Sporting, fishing, and mineral rights, remain with the estate. Shares in common grazing cannot be bought, **and** rent still requires to be paid to estate (owner) for grazing shares.

Effects of Exercising the Right to Buy

Unless the purchased croft is 'decrofted', it remains subject to crofting legislation (absentee crofters,etc) Purchasing your croft is not a sensible option for an absentee for the simple reason that the Crofters Commission have the power to force an absentee owner to let the croft to a new croft tenant. A purchased tenancy can be re-let to third party who may then qualify for assistance, but that third party will also have the "right to buy".

A crofter who purchases his/her croft may be ineligible for crofting grants (housing and land improvement grants).

Responsibilities that remain

Responsibility remains for maintenance/improvement of grazings even if the tenancy has been bought. Likewise, responsibility remains for the maintenance of common fences and drains although this may be ineligible for grant assistance.

Crofting Tenants

Crofters have security of tenure, whether the land is owned privately or by the community. Croft rent cannot be increased without Land Court approval. Crofting tenants are the recipients of grant assistance that is not time limited or means tested.

Remaining a Tenant of Stòras Uibhist

There are not only clear advantages to remaining tenants of Stòras Uibhist for the individual crofter but there are clear advantages for the whole crofting community. Crofting is a collaborative and community activity. Crofting tenants of Stòras Uibhist will enjoy the protection and support of one of the biggest crofting landlords in the crofting counties (900 crofts). The company has placed crofting support and development at the heart of its development plans for the Estate and through working with crofters it aims to find local and innovative solutions in the following areas: drainage, crofter diversification, land use, produce marketing, transport. Through being allied with Stòras Uibhist crofters will be able to benefit from the economies of scale that the company can put in place as well as having the support of a landowner that believes in crofting.

If you have purchased your croft tenancy but now feel that this has not provided the benefits that you had hoped for, you may be able to return to the previous position.