

Miss Fiona Leslie,
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CROFTERS COMMISSION,
4/6 CASTLE WYND,
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17th November 2008

Dear Miss Leslie,

CONSULTATION ON PROVISIONS RELATING TO MUIRBURN DATES.

I am responding on behalf of the Crofters Commission to your letter of 25 August 2008, seeking our views on proposed changes relating to muirburn dates.

In particular, these are our responses to the 3 questions at Annex A.

1. Do you agree that in order to adapt to the possible effects of climate change on moorland, it is necessary for the Scottish Ministers to be given powers to vary the permissible dates for muirburn in the future ?

It is perhaps not necessary at present.

If in the future, it is widely accepted that birds are nesting earlier in the year, and spring growth is also earlier, then it could be considered that the Statutory Burning Season dates in the spring should be amended to a date earlier than 15th April. Such an amendment should not result in a shorter Statutory Burning Season, as a similar adjustment could be made to the autumn date, so that permissible burning could take place prior to the 1st October.

2. Do you consider there are any other amendments required to the muirburn provisions within the Hill Farming Act 1946 to adapt to climate change?

No other changes are suggested at this time.

3. Do you consider that there are other climate change related impacts that affect how you carry out muirburn.?

Please see answer to question 1 above.

If as a result of climate change, spring growth is noticeably earlier each year, then the impact of burning on new growth may require further changes to practices to be considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Uilleam Smith

