

# Scottish Conservatives publish manifesto for rural Scotland

The Scottish Conservatives will publish their manifesto for rural Scotland on Thursday – which the party says has been “shamefully neglected” by the SNP Government.

Shadow rural affairs secretary Rachael Hamilton will launch the manifesto at The Royal Highland Show where she will highlight her party’s commitment to delivering a “new deal for farmers.”

She says The Scottish Government have “repeatedly let Scotland’s farmers, crofters and agriculture sector down” during their 17 years in office and that only the Scottish Conservatives are on their side.

Other measures to support farmers in the rural manifesto include:

- Supporting an increase of the UK-wide farming budget by £1 billion over the course of the next Parliament
- Giving Scottish farmers the green light to use game-changing gene editing technology
- Introducing a Young Person’s Agri-Enterprise Fund to support new entrants into the sector
- Tackle rural crime with a Rural Theft Bill

The rural manifesto also pledges to deliver a 'Rural Charter' to enshrine in law the rights of rural and coastal communities when it comes to policy making.

The Scottish Conservatives would also reverse the planned closure of Visitor Information Centres across the country, while they would support rural healthcare services through a new funding formula that considers the issues they face.

Scottish Conservative shadow rural affairs secretary Rachael Hamilton MSP said: "Rural Scotland has been shamefully neglected by a central-belt focused SNP Government over the last 17 years.

"Our dedicated rural manifesto clearly shows how we are the voice of these communities who feel abandoned by ministers in Holyrood.

"That feeling is particularly strong among our farming and agricultural communities. As they descend on the Royal Highland Show, I am delighted to outline our positive vision to support them going forward.

"From delivering a £1 billion increase in UK-wide farming, to allowing them to use gene-editing technology and backing new entrants into the sector, we are on their side. That's in sharp contrast to the SNP who have repeatedly let Scotland's farmers, crofters and agriculture workers down over their 17 years in office.

"Rural Scotland has so much potential but is being failed by nationalist representatives who are completely out-of-touch with their needs.

"Whilst the Bute House Agreement has come to an end, in all but name, John Swinney's SNP Government are still working hand in glove with the extreme Greens who are a threat to rural livelihoods.

“In key seats up and down rural Scotland, if voters united behind the Scottish Conservatives on July 4<sup>th</sup>, they can beat the SNP, end their independence obsession for good and ensure the focus is on the real priorities facing these communities.”

