

Community Land Scotland Conference, Skye 2017

Crofting Legislation Workshop



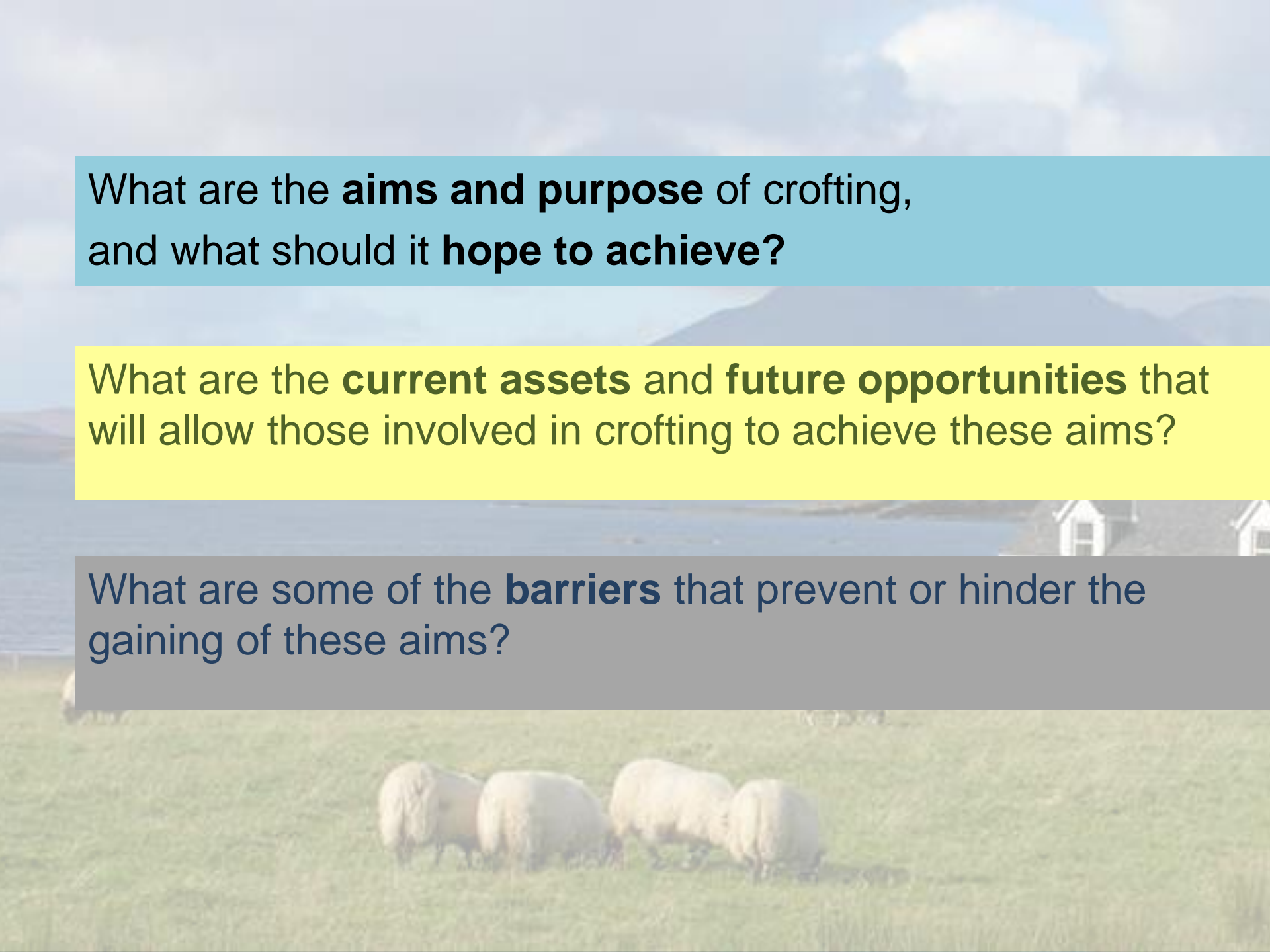
Crofting stakeholder engagement sessions

Purpose: to establish the opinions, perspectives and experiences of those involved in crofting in some capacity, the aim of which is to provide a basis upon which to build our later outputs.

Who we've spoken to: various organisations and people (crofters, NFUS, SLE, SCF, CC, landowners, local council members, young crofters)

Where we've gone: Shetland, Eilean Siar, Inverness, Lochcarron, Invermoriston





What are the **aims and purpose** of crofting, and what should it **hope to achieve**?

What are the **current assets** and **future opportunities** that will allow those involved in crofting to achieve these aims?

What are some of the **barriers** that prevent or hinder the gaining of these aims?

1) the aims and purpose..

- ❑ Stable and flourishing local **communities** that actively co-operate and engage
- ❑ Thriving and resilient rural **economies** that link to local / national / international market places and consumers
- ❑ Maintained and balanced **land and ecosystems** that encourage tourism and biodiversity
- ❑ Fair and **equitable relations** between all crofting stakeholders

... what it **should achieve**

- Increasing the number of young people and new entrants to crofting
- Local direct / indirect employment
- Producing high-quality, in demand, locally sourced livestock, crops and produce
- Sustainable habitat and species management
- Multiple, diverse and innovative land uses
- Sharing knowledge and good practice
- Secure residence
- Profitability and a fair standard of living
- Access to appropriate financial support and incentives

2) What are the **current assets** ...

- ❑ Skilled, hard-working people with intimate and historic knowledge of the land and a passion for crofting
- ❑ Young persons and new entrants to crofting
- ❑ Resilient land, environment and wildlife
- ❑ Unique produce and brands
- ❑ Tourism
- ❑ Collective action in stock clubs, common grazings, and grazing committees
- ❑ Support from grants and subsidies

... the **future opportunities**

- Incentivise and remove barriers to young persons entering crofting
- Further diversify land uses and outputs
- Encourage and support co-operation between crofters (e.g. common grazings, sheep stock clubs, dissemination of knowledge and skills, resolution of local disputes)
- Expand use of renewable energies and environmentally beneficial processes (e.g. wind, carbon capture)
- Simplify and clarify current legislation and devolve power
- Make CC more open and responsive (devolved?)

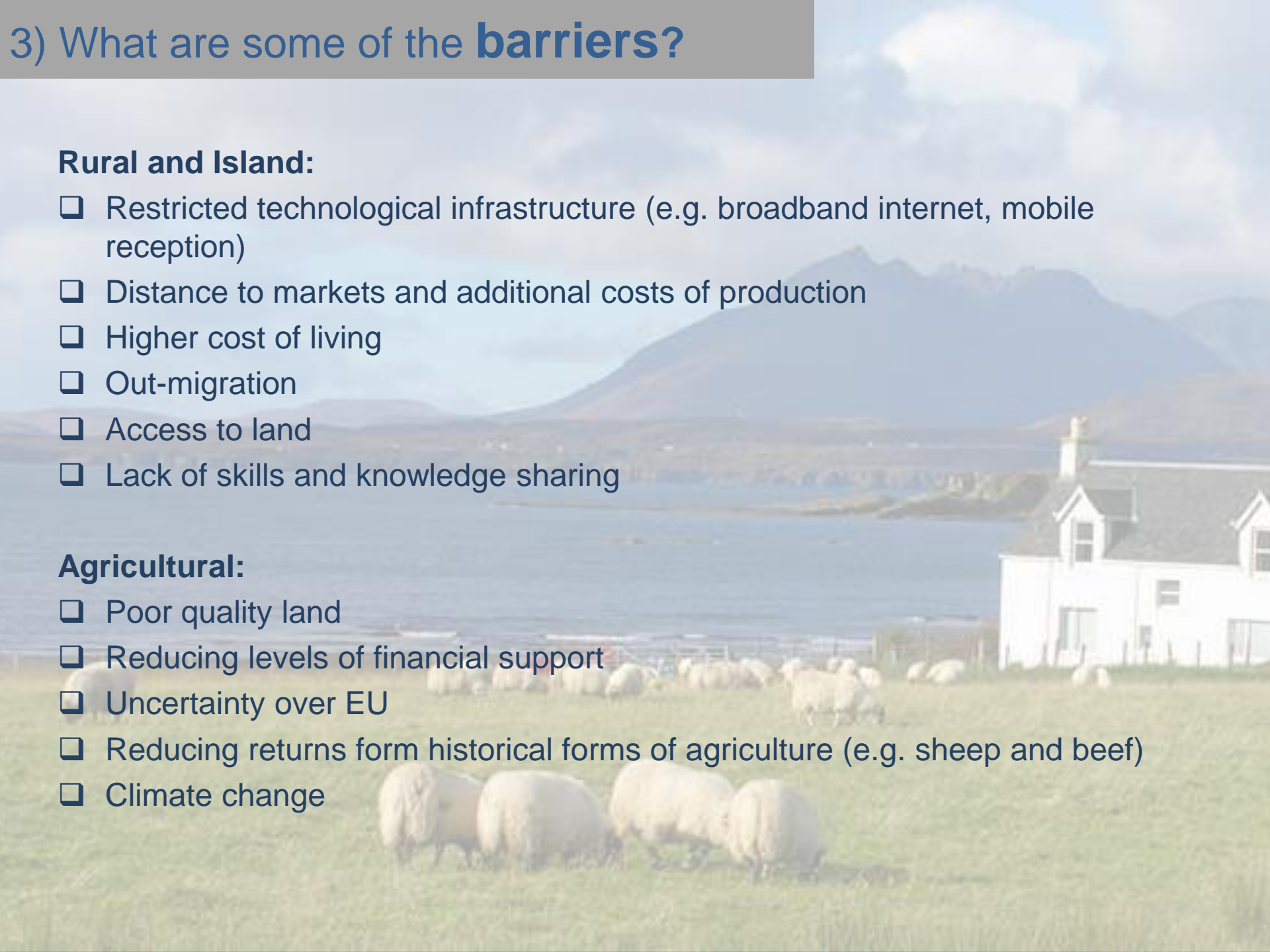
3) What are some of the **barriers**?

Rural and Island:

- Restricted technological infrastructure (e.g. broadband internet, mobile reception)
- Distance to markets and additional costs of production
- Higher cost of living
- Out-migration
- Access to land
- Lack of skills and knowledge sharing

Agricultural:

- Poor quality land
- Reducing levels of financial support
- Uncertainty over EU
- Reducing returns from historical forms of agriculture (e.g. sheep and beef)
- Climate change



3) What are some of the **barriers**?

Cultural:

- Lack of young persons entering crofting
- Regional variations in definition of 'crofting'
- Absenteeism and land management
- 'Us' versus 'them' attitudes towards crofting
- Clashes and disputes between personalities
- Romanticism of crofting 'way of life'
- Inheritance of land
- No clear SG policy or narrative on crofting

Legal:

- Piecemeal nature of legislation is overly complex and restrictive
- Lack of security of tenure
- Definitions of 'owner-occupier' are unhelpful, lacks clarity
- SUMP benefits lawyers not crofters
- New / young crofters being blocked by lack of support from banks and succession / inheritance laws
- CC too bureaucratic, distant and opaque



Thank you

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