

## Access Code

Please be aware of the following aspects of the outdoor access code when in crofting regions:

- Please stick to any footpaths or tracks provided.
- Use a gate or stile where one has been provided. Leave gates as you find them – even if they are open.
- Do not climb over walls or hedges unless there is no alternative.
- When exercising access rights over croft ground keep a sensible distance from any animals, particularly where there are calves or lambs present, and avoid driving the animals over the land.

## Dogs

- Please keep your dog at heel when in a public space to avoid concerning others.
- Never take your dog into a field with young animals.
- If you are in a field with cattle or sheep you must keep your dog on a short leash at all times.
- Always clean up after your dog.

The full Outdoor Access Code is available via [www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot)

**SCOTTISH OUTDOOR  
ACCESS CODE**  
[www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot)



## The Crofting Commission

### About Us

The Crofting Commission is a Non-Departmental Public Body which operates on a day-to-day basis independently of the government, but for which Scottish Ministers are ultimately responsible.

### Our Vision

That crofts and crofting communities continue to enhance the social, cultural, economic and environmental fabric of the crofting areas.

### Our Purpose

To regulate the crofting system fairly and reasonably to protect it for future generations.

### Crofting Commission

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## Crofting in the Highlands & Islands

Securing the future of crofting



# What is Crofting?

Crofting is a system of landholding which is unique to Scotland and is an integral part of life in the Highlands & Islands. Crofting can deliver a wealth of benefits to crofters and the crofting communities in the Highlands and Islands and other designated parts of Scotland.

A croft is a relatively small agricultural land holding which is normally held in tenancy and which may or may not have buildings or a house associated with it. There are around 20,000 crofts across the crofting counties. Crofts range in size from less than 1/2 hectare to more than 50 hectares but an average croft is nearer 5 hectares.

Crofting is subject to specific legislation that gives rights to crofters, such as the right to assign your croft to somebody else. It also puts responsibilities on crofters, which include:

- A duty to be resident on, or within 32 kilometres of, their croft.
- A duty not to neglect their croft.
- A duty to cultivate and maintain their croft or to put it to another purposeful use.

The Crofting Commission is responsible for overseeing the rights and responsibilities of crofters and croft land.



## Why is Crofting Important?

**Culture** – Generations of crofters had to work closely together to complete many vital crofting activities and this has resulted in a strong culture of community and common purpose which is evident to this day.

**Community** – Crofting plays an important role in many aspects of life in the Highlands and Islands. A croft provides a base for crofters and their families to reside on, utilising the land for agriculture and other enterprises. Crofting is usually done in combination with other means of employment.

**Rural economy** – Crofting encourages economic activity in remote and rural areas.

**Environment** – The crofting system of diverse small-scale agriculture and low intensity grazing contributes significantly to the environment, landscape, ecology and biodiversity of the Crofting Counties.

## How can I Support and Experience Crofting?

**Walk through a crofting township** and feel connected to the traditional way of life in the Highland and Islands of Scotland.

**Eat local croft produce** and taste eggs, vegetables, lamb, beef and pork from passionate local producers. Visit local farm shops and markets.

**Support croft businesses and local economies** by purchasing local crafts, using village shops and eating in local establishments.

**Stay on a croft** and enjoy the region's hospitality in croft B&Bs, campsites and other holiday accommodation.

**Purchase Scottish produce** even when not in crofting regions and support Scottish meat, vegetables and dairy. By choosing this over international products you will also reduce your carbon footprint.

**Leave the place better than you found it** by picking up a piece of litter in each place you visit and ensuring your party follow the outdoor access code.

