

# APPENDIX

Paper No. 3 - 10/106/CP

**SAC Report**

**Operational Needs Assessment**

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## **1. Introduction**

This is an Operational Needs Assessment for Claire Anderson and Nicola Byrne at Laggan 1 (MLC: 441/0108). The holding is registered with the Integrated Administration and Control System and is a registered croft within the Cairngorms National Park; it extends to 23.16 ha.

They have 10 pedigree breeding horses and a flock of 33 sheep and 13 hogs. Two Aberdeen Angus cattle are also kept on the croft to manage the land for environmental benefit. The introduction of these native breed cattle is part of a larger Rural Development Contract designed to halt the loss of biodiversity and enhance habitats for UK BAP species and Cairngorms Habitats and Species which are on the CNP Priority list. The Rural Priorities management on the farm includes:

- Woodland Creation – Native Woodland Planting
- Water Margins – Enhanced Biodiversity
- Open Grazed or Wet Grassland for Wildlife
- Management of Species Rich Grassland
- Management of Habitat Mosaics
- Area and access management- creation and upgrading of paths

At present Nicola and Claire live together on the croft, however at 24 years old Claire needs her own space. They both have full time Jobs and work on the croft during the evenings, weekends and in their holidays. It is proposed that a new house will be built for Nicola allowing Claire to have independence and also allow both to continue living and working on the croft in their spare time.

## **2. Area and Soil Type**

The croft is located on the North East side of Kingussie, it is split in two by the A9 and borders the River Spey to the South. The soil type near the river has an alluvial component, whereas further north it consists of humus iron podzols; some peaty gleys and humic gleys.

The Macaulay Land capability maps describe the croft as capable of producing a narrow range of crops(4<sub>2</sub>). Land in this classification is primarily grassland with some limited potential for other crops. Grass yields can be high but difficulties of conservation or utilisation may be severe, especially in areas of poor climate or on very wet soils. Some forage cropping is possible and, when the extra risks involved can be accepted, an occasional cereal crop.

### 3. Labour Requirement

Using SAC's standard labour requirements the croft will generate the following hours of work per annum:

Activity	hours/annum
10 Horses	1500.00
33 Ewes or Rams	132.00
13 Ewe hogs	33.80
2 Cattle	18.00
18 Laying hens	5.40
Grass:	
16.83 ha of Grassland	67.32
5.80 ha of Rough Grazing	8.25
Maintenance / Management (10%)	176.47
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>1941.24</u></b>

One labour unit is 1900 hours

There is a requirement of 1.02 Labour Units to carry out the operations necessary to support the stock on the croft at present. This is a modest estimate of the Labour Requirement as they also manage the land for environmental benefit and take the horses to shows which involves extra work washing and handling foals on a regular basis.

### 4. Access

Building a house in the North part of the croft will significantly reduce the number of times the A9 has to be crossed, particularly at peak times in the winter when feeding is required and also at lambing and foaling time.

## **5. Animal Welfare and Security**

Lambing and foaling is carried out under close supervision in fields near the farm house so that animals can be checked regularly. At present, this means lambing/foaling south of the A9 and moving the animals across the busy road once they have lambed/foaled to reach the better pasture. A new house in the North section of the croft would allow the lambing/foaling to be shifted cutting out the dangerous A9 crossing. Sick animals would also no longer have to cross the road as they could be monitored in the sheds above the road.

The A9 is an easy access point for thieves and the horses are very valuable, a new house above the A9 will act as a deterrent improving the security on croft.

## **6. Conclusion**

With a labour requirement of 1.02 Units the croft can support the equivalent of just over one full time worker. Nicola and Claire both have full time jobs and it is for this reason that 0.51 Labour Units each merits a second house on the site. Neither Nicola nor Claire could run the croft on their own and both need to live there in order to check livestock and for the ease of travel when working in the evenings. The new house would be best located to the North of the A9 to improve the security, animal welfare and functionality of the croft.