Written submission from Bargany Farms

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the consultation on the Bill.

General Points

- Overall the draft Land Reform Bill could have a positive impact on rural Scotland.
- It should be recognised that communities are not confined to villages / towns, but are rural / agricultural as well. The Bill should not erode one community’s sustainability to favour another.

Specific Points

- Scottish Land Commission. Whilst the professionals proposed as suitable for Commissioners would be able to assist with the process of developing the functions of the Commission, there appears to be a lack of expertise in the practicalities of making a living in rural areas. Perhaps a farmer or contractor would be a suitable candidate.
- Right to buy land to further sustainable development. The definition of what constitutes a community needs clarification. Given that the best agricultural land is often at the edge of towns or villages, there could be conflict between, say, a village community which would like land to build houses, and an agricultural community which depends on that area of land for growing winter feed grains and fodder.
- Entry in the valuation roll for shootings and deer forests. Is it clear that shoots incur expense to the local authorities that require rates? Why rate a shoot, and not other rural pursuits such as watersports, organised walks, horse riding etc? Farms were encouraged to diversify into such activities to improve rural diversity and sustainability.