Patrick Krause, also on the panel answered the questions:

**"Why have upland farming at all?"**

The uplands, which have most of the UK’s Mountain, Moorland, Heath (MMH) are very significant in the national ecosystem. About 43% of Scotland is MMH. Most croft land is found in the uplands and contributes to the survival of around 33,000 family members, around 30% of Highland households and up to 60% of island households.

MMH areas have around 40% of the UK’s soil carbon, provide 70% of our drinking water and are essential for biodiversity and conservation, providing a refuge for many species that used to occur in the UK. Such a valuable High Nature Value resource is kept in good condition by careful land management including grazing.

**"What are we trying to achieve?"**

Survival. Crofting has sustained vibrant communities in some of the remotest areas on the edge of Europe for generations. Survival is a great driver for care of the land, for example setting soumings in order to not over-graze. The UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UKNEA) said “Blanket bogs and oceanic mountain habitats (croftland) provide a home to some of the UK’s rarest species ... a unique mixture of temperate alpine and arctic species.” Maintenance of this “requires low intensity management related to traditional farming”.

**"Is what we are doing on the right path? If not, what is stopping us?"**

Money, money and money.

1. **Government policy:** driven by economic growth so land is seen as a resource to be exploited, for example by mega-scale wind-farm projects, commercial mono-crop forestry or mechanised peat extraction.
2. **Common Agriculture Policy (CAP):** Manipulation by subsidy, for example headage payments leading to over-grazing. Conversely the Single farm Payment then led to under-grazing, land abandonment and inertia. The UKNEA says “Agri-environment schemes (P2 in the CAP) are critical to maintain and enhance biodiversity and the ecosystem”. P2 in Scotland has the lowest budget in Europe.
3. **NFUS:** manipulation of subsidy under the NFUS lobby, for example perverse use of the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme.

**"How do we get there?"**

We need a shift in ‘mind-set’. The next generation need access to land, to homes, to jobs. And they need support in appropriate, ‘place-based’ education and training. SCF provide crofting skills training and mentoring but mainstream agricultural education needs to move away from the industrial model; we need the ‘College of Enlightened Agriculture’, where agroecology is practiced.