

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 1 (13) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

10 JULY 2013

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twentieth North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in Armagh on 10 July 2013. The meeting was attended by Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA. Minister Coveney chaired the meeting.
2. Ministers discussed recent developments in International Trade.

COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)

3. The Council noted the most recent developments in regard to the negotiations on CAP reform including political agreement between the European Council and the European Parliament on the Multiannual Financial Framework and political agreement between the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on CAP reform. Ministers also noted the continued close contacts between officials on CAP issues.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

4. The Council agreed that officials investigate the possibility of an “All-Island” approach to the issue of wild animals in travelling circuses, and that their findings be reported to a future NSMC Agriculture meeting.
5. Ministers also welcomed the update on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health & Welfare Strategy Action Plan including;
 - the continued work by officials and industry representatives to establish control programmes for BVD and Johne’s Diseases;
 - the publication of the proposed EU Animal Health Regulation and in particular the framework provided therein regarding the movement within the EU of kept terrestrial animals, and as to the extent that both jurisdictions achieve an equivalent animal disease status under EU rules, the future opportunity that this will provide to achieve the objective of free movement of animals on the island of Ireland;
 - that legislation is being brought forward in line with the All-Island approach to deal with African Horse Sickness in the event of an outbreak of this epizootic disease;
 - that work has started to scope the possibility of a joint contingency plan in relation to rendering capacity on the island of Ireland; and
 - that work has started to establish disease surveillance priorities.

COOPERATION ON PLANT HEALTH

6. The Council noted the progress report provided by the Plant Health and Pesticides Steering Group on the implementation of the work programme, including :
 - co-operation on the proposed new EU Plant health legislative regime;
 - planned co-ordinated introduction of pre-notification legislation for certain tree species;
 - extensive laboratory capacity provided by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute to the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine;
 - ongoing cross border cooperation with regard to *P. ramorum*; and
 - co-operation on National Action Plans for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD)
7. Ministers also welcomed the continued significant ongoing cross-border co-operation in dealing with the *Chalara fraxinea* (Ash Dieback) outbreak and noted the All Ireland *Chalara* Control strategy and the updated Pest Risk Analysis for *Chalara fraxinea* for the UK and Ireland.

HORSE REGISTRATION

8. The Council noted that officials will meet to explore the possibility of having an all island horse passport centralised database and to enhance the security of the equine identification system.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

9. Ministers welcomed the progress of the INTERREG IVA funding for strategic cross-border rural development projects, and noted the completion of the PEACE III-funded Rural Enablers project which met all of its targets in addressing issues of division within rural communities.
10. The Council welcomed the progress made by the Department of the Environment Community and Local Government and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and their respective Rural Networks in organising a conference in October to specifically encourage and promote the benefits of active Local Action Groups' member participation.
11. The Council noted the intention to create a distinct theme to support all-island cooperation within each jurisdiction's new Rural Development Programmes.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

12. Ministers agreed the terms of reference for the all island study to examine the issue of airborne pollution from residential smoky coal combustion and the economic and social implications of potential policy options.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. The Council agreed to hold its next Agriculture meeting in November 2013.

**Joint Secretariat
10 July 2013**

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