



COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**THURSDAY 12 MARCH 2020
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Clare Bailey MLA
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA
Mr John Blair MLA
Mr Pat Catney MLA
Mr Harry Harvey MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA

Apologies: Mr Maurice Bradley MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Marianne McGuiggan, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.06 a.m.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he would be attending the meeting of the Inter-parliamentary Forum on Brexit on 19 March 2020 in the House of Lords.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2020.

4. SR 2020/22: The Common Agricultural Policy (Direct Payments to Farmers) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.08 a.m.

Mark McLean Principal Agricultural Economist, CAP Reform, Brexit and Trade Policy Branch

Carol O'Boyle, Principal, Future Partnerships Branch

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

The Committee considered SR 2020/22: The Common Agricultural Policy (Direct Payments to Farmers) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which will make minor technical amendments to the Northern Ireland domestic legislation to enable 2020 Direct Payments to continue to be made to farmers following EU Exit Day.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2020/22: The Common Agricultural Policy (Direct Payments to Farmers) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and recommends that it be approved by the Assembly.

Noted: The Committee noted that the Third Report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules, which raised no issues in respect of SR 2020/22: The Common Agricultural Policy (Direct Payments to Farmers) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to agenda items 6, 7 and 8 next.

5. Written Briefing from DAERA: Consultation on the UK Global Tariff

The Committee noted the written briefing form the Department on the UK Global Tariff.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the Department's briefing paper onto the Committee webpage and reference it in the report on the UK Agriculture Bill.

6. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- I. An invitation from AFBI to its annual Outlook Conference. Members are advised to RSVP directly as per the instructions on the invitation.
- II. An invitation from the Environmental Policy Forum to participate in a workshop on future governance arrangements as set out in the Environment Bill. Members are advised to RSVP directly as per the instructions on the invitation.
- III. An invitation from Broadway Initiative to participate in roundtable discussion in respect of the local delivery of net zero and environmental enhancement to take place in Birmingham.
- IV. The Agri Search Annual Report 2018-19.
- V. Correspondence from the Department advising that an update on NIFAIS will be provided to the Committee post Easter.

The Committee considered the correspondence from Re-Gen Waste Limited inviting the Committee to visit its facilities in Newry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a visit to Re-Gen Waste at a future date and after it has finalised its strategic priorities.

The Committee considered correspondence from SONI offering to brief the Committee on its role and remit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider an oral briefing at a future date and after it has finalized its strategic priorities.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Scottish Parliament advising that the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties will take place in Glasgow in November 2020 and the potential for cross committee engagement through joint committee meetings with other legislatures and COP26.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to express an interest in a joint meeting to consider best practice and associated parliamentary scrutiny in Climate Change legislation.

7. Forward Work Programme

The clerk briefed the Committee on the draft Forward Work Programme.

Noted: The Committee noted the departmental budget briefing from the Department is scheduled for 23 April 2020.

Noted: The Committee noted that it is now anticipated that the LCM on the Environment Bill will be laid in the Business Office on 18 April, meaning the Committee will sign off on its report on 23 April 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

8. Oral Briefing from the Livestock and Meat Commission

The following representatives from the Livestock and Meat Commission joined the meeting at 10.20 a.m.

Gerard McGivern, Chairman
Ian Stevenson, Chief Executive

The representatives briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Catney left the meeting at 10.47 a.m.

Mr Catney rejoined the meeting at 10.59 a.m.

Mr Blair left the meeting at 11.31 a.m.

Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 11.36 a.m.

Mr Harvey left the meeting at 11.44 a.m.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

9. AOB

There was no other business.

10. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs will take place on Thursday 19 March 2020 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 30.

The meeting moved in to Closed Session at 11.44 a.m.

11. UK Government Agriculture Bill Consideration of Evidence and Key Issues

The Committee considered the paper from the clerk on evidence gathered on the UK Government Agriculture Bill and the key issues arising out it.

Mr Havey rejoined the meeting at 11.46 a.m.

Ms Bailey left the meeting at 12.14 p.m.

Ms Bailey rejoined the meeting at 12.18 p.m.

Mr Blair left the meeting at 12.27 p.m.

Mr Blair rejoined the meeting at 12.20 p.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a number of amendments to the clerk's paper, which will be considered and signed off at the next meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a draft copy of the report to the Department on 18 March 2020 for checking of information purposes only.

12.50 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

Declan McAleer

Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

19 March 2020

Date