

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2013
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

Apologies: Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve Clerical Officer

1.33 p.m. *The meeting commenced in Open Session*

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013.

1.35 p.m. *Mr Milne joined the meeting.*

4. Matters arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 25 November 2013 from the PSNI regarding the severe weather contingency plan.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 5 December 2013 from the Department regarding issues raised at the Committee meeting on 19 November 2013.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 4 December 2013 from the Food Standards Agency which provides an update on the horsemeat/food contamination incidences.

Noted: The Committee noted the weekly update from the Department on Ash Dieback.

5. January Monitoring Round Proposals: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.36 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary
Roger Downey, Accountant
Lynda Lowe, Deputy Principal

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

1.36 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

1.50 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

6. Tree Disease and Plant Health: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.55 p.m.

Malcolm Beatty, Chief Executive, Forest Service
Stuart Morwood, Director of Woodland Development
Alistair McCracken, Principal Officer, AFBI
Jim Crummie, Agricultural Inspector

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

1.56 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.
2.01 p.m. Mr Irwin re-joined the meeting.
2.05 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.
2.30 p.m. Ms McIlveen left the meeting.
2.36 p.m. Mr Swann re-joined the meeting.

2.37 p.m. The meeting suspended.
2.41 p.m. The meeting resumed.

The following Members were present; Mr Frew, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne, Mr McAleer and Mr Swann.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to express concern on the lack of progress on legislation on pre-notification of intra EU Imports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to express concern in respect of the lack of consultation Forest Service has had with stakeholders regarding an alternative strategy for dealing with an outbreak of tree disease in the wider environment.

7. SL1 – The Common Agricultural Policy Single Payment and Support Schemes (Cross Compliance) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014

Agreed: The Committee considered the SL1 – The Common Agricultural Policy Single Payments and Support Schemes (Cross Compliance) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014. The Committee agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy.

2.45 p.m. Ms McIlveen re-joined the meeting.
2.45 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

8. SL1 – The Seed (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2013

Agreed: The Committee considered the SL1 – The Seed (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 and agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy.

9. Farm Safety Event

The Committee considered the arrangements for the Farm Safety Event on 14 January 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that invitations to the Farm Safety Event on 14 January 2014 should issue via the Farm Safety Partnership to its membership.

2.47 p.m. Mrs Dobson re-joined the meeting.

2.49 p.m. Mr McMullan re-joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to extend invitations to NILGA, local councils and the Cluster Networking Group.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Committee Members would distribute a number of invitations themselves.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the estimated costs associated with the event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that any further unexpected expenditure for the event could be authorised by the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson during the recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the platform pieces for Farming Life and Farm Week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Press Release for the Farm Safety Event.

10. Meeting with the EFRA Committee

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Press Release for the meeting with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson with the EFRA Committee.

11. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 6 December 2013 from the Ulster Farmers' Union in respect of its concerns about the rising importation of Eastern European beef. The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and the Minister for Finance and Personnel to ask to be copied into their response to the Ulster Farmers Union.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 2 December 2013 from the Cluster Networking Group requesting to meet with the Committee. The Committee agreed to schedule a meeting with the Cluster Networking Group for 28 January 2014.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 November 2013 from Friends of Exploris regarding its report which offers an alternative to the closure of the aquarium.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

13. AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Justice to express its disappointment in respect of the launch of the Rural Crime Initiative which took place at Parliament Buildings, to which the Committee was not invited or notified of.

14. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 14 January 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 2.58 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date