

# COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

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

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

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

### **1. Apologies**

There are no apologies.

### **2. Chairperson's Business**

*Noted:* The Chairperson advised that he, the Deputy Chairperson and Mr Swann had met with Farmers for Action on 20 January 2014. Farmers for Action intend to forward additional information for consideration by the Committee.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2014**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2014.

### **4. Matters arising**

*Mrs Dobson declared an interest that her husband is a beef farmer.*

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 10 January 2014 from the Department regarding issues raised at the meeting on 10 December 2013. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if any engagement has taken place with DEFRA on east/west relationships in respect of Ash Dieback.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the UFU to ask how they feel the Department can address their concerns about dropping beef prices due to cheap imports from Eastern Europe.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 8 January 2014 from Roads Service regarding the contractual arrangements with farmers and contractors for snow clearance.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the weekly update from the Department in respect of Ash Dieback and agreed to move to a monthly update unless the situation dictates otherwise.

### **5. Oral Briefing: Young Farmers Club of Ulster**

The following representatives of the Young Farmers Club of Ulster joined the meeting at 1.39 p.m.

Mr Martyn Blair, President  
Mr Michael Reid, CEO  
Mr James Taylor, Coleraine YFC  
Ms Cathy Knowles, Glarryford YFC

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

*1.47 p.m. Mr Irwin joined the meeting.*

*Mr Swann declared an interest as member of the Young Farmers Club and past president.*

*2.19 p.m. Mr Byrne and Mr McAleer left the meeting.*

*2.46 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to commend the work of the Young Farmers Clubs and to encourage her to engage with them as a priority.

*2.28 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.*

*2.29 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.*

## **6. Oral Briefing DARD: 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Progress Report on Implementing Rural White Paper Action Plan**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.30 p.m.

Colette McMaster, Grade 5

Niall Heaney, Grade 7

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

*2.34 p.m. Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.*

*2.37 p.m. Mr Byrne and Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*

*2.40 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.*

*2.42 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.*

*2.44 p.m. Ms McIlveen left the meeting.*

*2.52 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on the MARA project.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on four targets from the Rural White Paper Action Plan which appear to have been excluded from the Progress Report.

## **7. SL1 Gangmasters Licensing (Exclusions) Regulations (NI) 2014**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if any equivalent legislation exists in the Republic of Ireland and what consideration has been given to illegal gangmasters working on a cross-border basis in order to evade detection or falling under this legislation.

## **8. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the South Antrim Community Network requesting to meet with the Committee. The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing on 4 February 2014.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

## **10. AOB**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to issue a Press Release to voice concern about the delay to farm payments due to the new remote sensing system. The Press Release will be agreed by written procedure.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to express concern about Question 17 in the CAP Consultation document regarding a level of qualification.

## **11. Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 28 January 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 3.12 p.m.*

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Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date

