

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2013
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 Ian Milne 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 Dagmar Walgraeve Clerical Officer

1.32 p.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session

1. Apologies

There are no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he had met with the RSPB to hear about their "Give Wildlife Friendly Farming a Future".

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Regional Development Committee advising that it was holding its meeting at Loughry College on 4 December 2013. The notes of the meeting were tabled for information.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013.

4. Matters arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 28 November 2013 on the Nitrates Action Programme.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department dated 28 November 2013 on issues raised at the meeting on 12 November 2013.

Noted: The Committee noted the holding correspondence from the PSNI dated 17 November 2013 regarding the severe weather contingency plan.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from NI Water dated 21 November 2013 regarding winter preparations.

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

Noted: The Committee noted the tabled correspondence from the Department on Lough Neagh.

1.35 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.

5. Update on the Outcome of Bovine Viral Disease Consultation: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.35 p.m.

Kate Davey, Assistant Secretary
Colin Hart, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer
Carol McKibbin, Principal Officer
John Thompson, Chairperson Animal Health and Welfare NI

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

1.36 p.m. Ms McIlveen joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

1.41 p.m. Mr Byrne joined the meeting.

1.43 p.m. Mr Irwin joined the meeting.

Mrs Dobson declared an interest that her husband was a herdkeeper.

Mr Irwin declared an interest that he was a herdkeeper.

2.10 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

2.15 p.m. Mr Swann re-joined the meeting.

2.19 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

6. Update on RDP 2014-2020 Consultation and RDP Programme Development: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.35 p.m.

Colette McMaster, Assistant Secretary

Lorraine Lynas, Principal Officer

Brian Ervine, Principal Officer

Gareth Evans, Principal Officer

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

3.00 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

3.05 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

3.10 p.m. Mr Byrne re-joined the meeting.

3.15 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

3.27 p.m. Mrs Dobson and Mr Irwin re-joined the meeting.

3.30 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee to request that the Committee is informed immediately any decision is made on the transfer rates from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2.

7. SL1 – The Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances Regulations (NI) 2013

Agreed: The Committee noted the SL1 – The Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances Regulations (NI) 2013 and agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy.

8. TB Biosecurity Study Report: Written Brief DARD

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update from the Department on the actions it will take in-light of the TB Biosecurity Study Report and how it will be used with the eradication plan.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to re-examine the Bovine TB report and the series of recommendations contained within it at a meeting in the New Year.

9. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 November 2013 from the ETI Committee regarding briefings it received in respect of Exploris Aquarium.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 21 November 2013 from the Department in respect of the Belfast Lough Cockle Fishery.

Agreed: The Committee noted the copied correspondence from NIFPO to the Department regarding the whitefish quota; the Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that they keep the Committee informed of any further developments in this case.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Regional and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee, ROI requesting an informal meeting. The Committee agreed to schedule an informal meeting in late February 2014.

Agreed: The Committee noted the copied correspondence from Simple Power to the ETI Committee in respect of small scale wind generation. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for information.

Noted: The Committee noted the DARD Investment Strategy Report for November 2013.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from Farmers for Action regarding a request to meet with the Chair and Deputy Chair regarding the Committee response to their proposal for a “Non-optional Blueprint for NI”. The Committee agreed that the Chair and Deputy would meet with Farmers for Action and NIAPA as requested.

10. Forward Work Programme

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the list of organisations to call to give oral evidence to the Committee in respect of the forthcoming Reservoirs Bill. The Committee also agreed to seek oral evidence from the Armagh Angling Club.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the list of organisations to request written evidence from in respect of the forthcoming Reservoirs Bill.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request oral evidence from a number of councils and a private reservoir owner in respect of the forthcoming Reservoirs Bill.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to look at the possibility of a video link to receive oral evidence from Scottish councils.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that a signposting ad should issue to the three daily papers at the appropriate time.
- Noted:* The Committee noted that the scheduled briefing on “Going for Growth” on 10 December 2013 has been deferred as the request of the Department.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

11. AOB

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the PSNI to request an update on the emergency services radio signal for the Glens of Antrim area.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the PSNI to seek an update on the work of the Agricultural Task Force and request the current statistics for the theft of cattle and agricultural machinery.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to express concern for Northern Ireland Dairies that have lost milk contracts in the Republic of Ireland.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of the Environment to seek an update on the Marine Conservation Zone and Rathlin Island.

12. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 3.50 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date