

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 1 JULY 2014
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Ms Judith Cochrane MLA
Mrs Joanne 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 Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer

1.04 p.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session.

1. Apologies

There are no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Press Release on the publication of the report on the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson could decide on releasing or withholding information

on any non-routine Freedom of Information requests received over the summer recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission a research paper from RaISe on the Grange Research Project in advance of the visit in September 2014. The Committee further agreed that the Assembly Research Officer would attend the visit.

The Chairperson acknowledged that it was Mr Swann's last meeting with the Committee and thanked him for his commitment and contribution to the work of the Committee.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014.

4. Matters Arising

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

5. The Seeds (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2014

Agreed: The Committee noted the Department's intention to consult on the Seeds (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI 2014 and agreed that it returns to the Committee with an analysis of the consultee responses.

6. SR 2014/172: The Plant Health (Amendment) Order (NI) 2014

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development has considered SR 2014/172: The Plant Health (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014 and has no objections to the rule.

7. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the copied correspondence from the UFU to the Minister in respect of their concerns with the current beef market. The Committee agreed to request that it is copied into the response from the Minister.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the UFU on their concerns with the current beef market.

1.12 p.m. Mr Buchanan, Mr Milne and Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 June 2014 from the ETI Committee on the dissemination of EU Information to Assembly committees.

Noted: The Committee noted EU Explanatory Memorandum 36010 forwarded by RaISe.

Agreed: The Committee noted EU Explanatory Memorandum 36020 and agreed to forward it to the Department for comment.

8. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted the two dates for the visit to the TVR Project as 16 July and 18 August 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule Financial Scrutiny Training at the strategic planning session on 9 September 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

9. Oral Briefing DARD: 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme Update

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.16 p.m.

Colette McMaster, Assistant Secretary
Lorraine Lynas, Principal Officer
Brian Ervine, Principal Officer
Elaine McCrory, Principal Officer
Gareth Evans, Principal Officer

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

1.17 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

1.48 p.m. Mr McAleer and Mr McMullan left the meeting.

2.01 p.m. Mr Swann joined the meeting and Mr Milne left the meeting.

2.17 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.

2.18 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

2.22 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

2.26 p.m. Ms Cochrane joined the meeting.

2.27 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

2.28 p.m. The meeting suspended.

2.46 p.m. The meeting resumed. The following Members were present: Mr Buchanan, Mr Byrne, Ms Cochrane, Mrs Dobson, Mr Frew, Mr Irwin, Ms McIlveen and Mr Swann.

10. Ministerial Briefing DARD: CAP Reform Decisions, RDP 2014-2020 and Going for Growth

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.46 p.m.

Ms Michelle O'Neill, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development
Mr Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary
Mr Norman Fulton, Chief Agricultural Economist
Mrs Collette McMaster, Assistant Secretary

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

2.48 p.m. Mr Milne and McAleer rejoined the meeting.

Mrs Dobson declared an interest that her husband was a beef and cereal farmer.

11. AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to Scotland to view a number of relevant areas of concern to the Committee.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 9 September 2014 at 12.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 3.20 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date