

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 27 MAY 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan 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. 34 p.m. *The meeting commenced in Open Session.*

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the National Ploughing Championships will be taking place on 23-25 September 2014 in County Laois and Members should indicate at the next meeting if they intend to attend.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a visit to a farming development project on route to the National Ploughing Championships.

1.35 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. Mr Irwin and Mr Swann joined the meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2014.

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider at the next meeting, scheduling additional meetings to enable several outstanding briefings.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Minister in respect of a further decision on CAP.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department commenting on the presentation to the Committee from Farmers from Severely Disadvantaged Areas.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department regarding the Review of Animal By-Products (Identification) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 and Transfer of Provisions to the Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (Amendment).

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department regarding the delay in the research projects recommended in the Committee Report on Bovine TB.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for Justice which provides additional information on the draft Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force to Protect Against Crime.

5. Alleged illegal slaughtering of cattle and Meat cutting Operation & Suspected illegal movement of milk: Oral briefing DARD/FSA

The following officials joined the meeting at 1.43 p.m.

Michael Hatch, Senior Principal Veterinary Officer, DARD
Alan McCartney, Head of Agri-Food Inspection Branch, DARD
Michael Jackson, Head of Local Authority Policy & Deliver, FSA

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

Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a milk producer.

1.58 p.m. Mr Byrne and Mr McAleer left the meeting.

2.06 p.m. Ms McIlveen left the meeting.

2.27 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

6. Agricultural and Rural Crime: Oral briefing PSNI

The following representatives of the PSNI joined the meeting at 2.25 p.m.

Assistant Chief Constable, George Hamilton
Superintendent Brian Kee
Sergeant Gary McMullan
Operations Manager, Jeff McNamara

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

2.37 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

2.44 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.

2.45 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

2.55 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Press Release on agricultural and rural crime should issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider Agenda Item 9 next.

7. The Public Bodies (Abolition of Food From Britain) Order 2014

Agreed: The Committee discussed the Public Bodies (Abolition of Food from Britain) Order 2014 and agreed that it is content with the draft motion which the Department will table as soon as Committee approval has been obtained.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a Committee Memorandum at the next meeting, which will be placed on the Assembly website to record the Committee view.

8. Pre-Con: Review of the NAP 2011-14, Renewal of Nitrates Directive 7 Proposed NPA 2015-18

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a briefing on the review of NAP 2011-14 when the Department has finalised its consultation of the 2015-18 programme.

3.25 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

3.26 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.

3.27 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

9. SL1: The Foot and Mouth Disease (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014

Agreed: The Committee considered SL1: The Foot and Mouth Disease (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014 and agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy.

10. Consideration of Amendments: Reservoirs Bill

The following Rivers Agency officials joined the meeting at 3.28 p.m.

Mr David Porter, Director of Development
Mr Kieran Brazier, Head of Bill Team

The Committee considered the proposed amendments to Clause 22 and Clause 25(2)(k). The Committee considered a tabled consequential amendment to Clause 117 which occurs as a result of the amendment to Clause 22.

The Committee considered a tabled amendment to Clause 120.

Rivers Agency officials briefed the Committee on the clauses it is not proposing to amend which are clause 6(8), clause 15(1)(c), clause 16(5), clause 17(2), clause 105 and clause 106.

The Committee noted that Rivers Agency has yet to respond on a number of outstanding amendments and clarification on a range of issues identified in previous meetings.

The Committee noted that a letter from the Minister addressing issues such as financial assistance and a two-phased approach to the Reservoirs Bill is still outstanding.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Finance and Personnel Committee to request information on the provision for financial assistance within the Budget Bill No. 2 for the Reservoirs Bill.

3.57 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

3.59 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

4.00 p.m. Ms McIlveen rejoined the meeting.

4.02 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.

4.14 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

4.30 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

4.46 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting

4.47 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

11. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the OFMDFM Committee which contains the latest Brussels Bulletin from Invest NI. The Committee agreed to seek the notes from the Horizon 2020 conference in Belfast on 27 May 2014.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee regarding post-project evaluations.

Agreed: The Committee noted Explanatory Memorandum 35916 and 35917 and agreed to forward to the Department to request an assessment of the impact this may have on Northern Ireland.

Noted: The Committee noted Explanatory Memorandum 35836, 35837 and 35924.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

13. AOB

There was no other business.

14. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 3 June 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 5.02 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date