

## **COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA  
Mrs Joanne Dobson MLA  
Mr Tom Elliott MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA

Apologies: Ms Judith Cochrane MLA

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

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

#### **1. Apologies**

The apologies are recorded above.

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

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he had met with the Chairperson and Chief Executive of the Livestock Meat Commission on 21 August 2014 to discuss beef market specification issues.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that there were two visits over the summer to view the TVR Project. He advised that the Assembly Research Officer is preparing a note of the visit which will circulate in due course.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2014**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2014.

### **4. Matters Arising**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 2 July 2014 from the Minister in respect of the retrospective adjustment of Single Farm Payment entitlements.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 11 July 2014 from the Minister in respect of the announcement of further CAP Reform Technical Policy Decisions.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 30 June 2014 from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in respect of the confirmation for the approval for costs relating to the initial phase of the Reservoirs Bill.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 June 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 10 June 2014.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 4 July 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 10 June 2014.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 2 July 2014 from the Department in respect of the Outcome of the Good Agricultural Environmental Conditions Consultation Exercise.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 9 July 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 24 June 2014 and the Lough Neagh Cross-Departmental Working Group Report.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 July 2014 from the Department in respect of the June Monitoring Round and funding for the Farm Business Improvement Scheme.

- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated July 2014 from the Department in respect of confirmed outbreaks of the Ostreid Herpes Virus in oyster in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 31 July 2014 from the Department on the Review of the Balance of Competences (Agriculture).
- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 7 August 2014 from the Department in respect of the Badger-Cattle Proximity Study Report.
- Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 8 August 2014 from the Department in respect of the joint DARD/DCAL consultation on the policy proposals for a Fisheries Bill. The Committee agreed to request that it is kept informed of outcome of the consultation and to schedule briefings from the main fisheries bodies in 2015.
- Agreed:* The Committee noted the copied correspondence dated 19 August from Millar, McCall Wylie Solicitors to the Department in respect of the management of Strangford Lough. The Committee agreed to request that the Department copies it into the response.
- Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 21 August 2014 from the Department in respect of the Strangford Lough Fishing Licencing Scheme. The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the correspondence to the Strangford Lough Fisheries Management Partnership Group for information.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the update from the Department on Ash Dieback.
- Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 28 August 2014 from the Department in respect of the Badger Sett Survey.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to AFBI to request its analysis on how the proposed budget cuts will impact on its work.

## **5. Oral Briefing Ulster Farmers' Union – Beef Crisis**

The following representatives from the Ulster Farmers' Union joined the meeting at 3.39 p.m.

Mr Ian Marshall, President

Mr Ivor Ferguson, Deputy President  
Mr Robert Davidson, Beef and Lamb Complaints Chairman  
Mr Elliott Bell, Beef and Lamb Policy Officer

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

*3.48 p.m. Ms McIlveen joined the meeting.*

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

*3.52 p.m. Mr Elliott joined the meeting.*

*Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a dairy and beef farmer.*

*Mr Elliott declared an interest that he is a beef farmer.*

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

*4.21 p.m. Mr Milne and Mr McAleer joined the meeting.*

*4.27 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.*

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

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to request a written response outlining the issues which were discussed when she met with the UFU in July 2014.

## **6. Correspondence**

**Noted:** The Committee noted the correspondence dated 8 July 2014 from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in respect of its Inquiry: Building a United Community.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the correspondence dated 8 July 2014 from the Committee for Education on its Inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee noted the correspondence dated 8 July 2014 from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in respect of a research paper on Year-end surges in Northern Ireland departmental expenditure. The Committee agreed to forward the research paper to the Department for comment.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on EU events and conferences to January 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 18 July 2014 from the Department on the Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011. The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing on the final report and a copy of the interim report.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 21 July 2014 from the Department on the appointment of the chair to the TB Strategic Partnership Group.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 1 July 2014 from Newry and Mourne District Council in respect of concerns over beef prices. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Investment Strategy Activity Report for the Department for June, July and August 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 July 2014 from Mr John Dallat MLA on incidents of animal cruelty. The Committee agreed to request further information from Mr Dallat on the cases he refers to and forward the response to the Minister for comment. The Committee also agreed to hold an informal meeting with Mr Dallat and the persons named in the correspondence.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Gangmasters Licensing Authority in respect of the publication of its Annual Report and Accounts.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 21 August 2014 from Forest Service in respect of the publication of its Annual Report 2013-14.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 August 2014 from the Big Lottery Fund in respect of a funding update on the Supporting Families Programme.

## **7. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme as amended at the planning meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move the start time of the meeting on 16 September 2014 to 1.00 p.m.

**8. AOB**

There was no other business.

**9. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 1.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 4.46 p.m.*

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Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date