

## COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA  
Mrs Joanne Dobson MLA  
Mr Tom Elliott MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Edwin Poots MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk  
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor  
Mr Barry McLernon, Clerical Officer  
Mr Mark Allen, Research Officer (agenda item 5)

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

#### **1. Apologies**

There are no apologies.

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Christmas card list.

*1.34 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an Effective Questioning Scrutiny Session in the New Year.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held 25 November 2014**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2014.

### **4. Matters Arising**

*Agreed:* The Committee considered and agreed the draft reply to Farmers for Action on Legal Advice and agreed that it should issue.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 November 2014 from the Department on EU Financial Corrections; and agreed to write to the Department to ask if the funds previously set aside to pay this will now be released.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 21 November 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 4 November 2014.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 November 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised by the ETI Committee on the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 November 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 11 November 2014; and agreed to forward it to the UFU for information. The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister to raise a number of concerns and to ask what consultation has taken place on Cattle Tags.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the update from the Department on Avian Flu.

### **5. Oral briefing RalSe: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion (Rural Deprivation)**

The Assembly Research Officer joined the meeting at 1.37 p.m. and briefed the Committee.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

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

*1.41 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.*

*1.52 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.  
2.01 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.  
2.04 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request information on the impact the level of home ownership has on the Noble index.

## **6. Oral Briefing Trutz Haase: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion (Rural Deprivation) Committee Review**

Mr Trutz Haase joined the meeting at 2.05 p.m. and briefed the Committee

This was followed by a question and answer session

*2.10 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.  
2.27 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.  
2.33 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.  
2.45 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.  
2.49 p.m. Mr Anderson rejoined the meeting.  
2.50 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 8 next.

## **7. Oral Briefing Dairy UK: An Appreciation of the Dairy Markets**

The following representatives from Dairy UK joined the meeting at 2.50 p.m.

Trevor Lockhart, Vice Chairman  
Dr Mike Johnston, NI Director

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

*2.54 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.  
2.56 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.  
3.16 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.  
3.20 p.m. Mr Byrne and Mr McMullan left the meeting.  
3.21 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.  
3.24 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.  
3.40 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.  
3.52 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.  
3.54 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.  
3.54 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.*

*Mr Irwin declared an interest that his family have a dairy herd.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to urge her to engage with DEFRA on the floor price of intervention and export refunds; and to make Single Farm Payments a priority and consider advance payments of 75% for those subject to inspection.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the UFU on the dairy markets.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to both the DEFRA Minister and the EU Commissioner on the issue of intervention and export refunds and copy to MEPs.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the banks to express the concerns highlighted by Dairy UK on cash flow for farmers.

*3.58 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.*

*4.05 p.m. Mr McCarthy rejoined the meeting.*

## **8. Oral briefing DARD: Mid-year progress report on DARD 2014/15 Business Plan Targets**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 4.05 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary  
Colette McMaster, Assistant Secretary  
Pauline Keegan, Assistant Secretary

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

*4.05 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.*

*4.06 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.*

*4.17 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*4.17 p.m. Mr Anderson rejoined the meeting.*

*4.24 p.m. Mr Byrne left them meeting.*

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

*4.28 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.*

*4.35 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the Outline Business Case for the capital investment requirements to replace the AFBI facilities at Loughgall and Newforge.

## **9. Written Briefing DARD: The Zoonoses (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the Department's intention to consult on the Zoonoses (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and agreed that the Department returns to the Committee with an analysis of the responses.

## **10. Budget 2015/16: Committee Response**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft response, subject to a number of amendments, to the Committee for Finance and Personnel on the Department's proposals for the Budget 2015/16. The Committee agreed to copy the response to the Department for information.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the email correspondence from the ETI Committee in respect of budget proposals to suspend the current Farm Safety Campaign. The Committee agreed to write to the ETI Committee to express its disappointment and urge that the campaign is retained.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask what engagement it plans to have with stakeholders, beyond a written consultation process, in respect of its budget proposals.

## **11. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Ulster Farmers' Union on Missing Cattle Tags; and agreed to forward it to the Department for comment.

## **12. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an oral briefing in the New Year on cross compliance.

*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 9 December 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*5.05 p.m. The meeting adjourned.*

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William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date