

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 26 MAY 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Tom Buchanan MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MP MLA
Mr Ian Milne 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
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 reminded Members of the event with rural stakeholders which will take place on Thursday 28 May 2015 in Cookstown followed by a Committee meeting in the same venue. The following Members confirmed their attendance; Mr Byrne, Mr Buchanan, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne and Mr McAleer.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meetings held on 19 May 2015.

1.34 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 19 May 2015 from the Minister on Dog Breeding Establishment Regulations and agreed to seek a written briefing on the issue.

5. Oral Briefing DARD: Outcome of the Cross Compliance Hedge Cutting Derogation Review/Amendment to GAEC Standard on Minimum Soil Cover

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.36 p.m.

Richard Crowe, Head of Countryside Management
Alan Galbraith, Agricultural Inspector Grade 1
Ken Laverty, EU Area Based Reform Branch

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

1.43 p.m. Mr McCarthy joined the meeting.

1.57 p.m. Mrs Dobson joined the meeting.

2.03 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

2.05 p.m. Mr Elliott joined the meeting.

2.07 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the issue of soil treatment following potato harvesting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the changes to the DRD policy on clearance of obnoxious weeds.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the date for hedge cutting in the Republic of Ireland.

6. Oral Briefing DARD: Cattle ID Cross Compliance

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.15 p.m.

Pauline Rooney, Acting Director of EU Based Schemes
John Lowe, Veterinary Officer
Ken Laverty, EU Area Based Reform Branch
John McConnell, Animal ID, Legislation and Welfare Branch
Raymond Kirk, Veterinary Officer

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

2.23 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

2.26 p.m. Mr Anderson and Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.

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

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

2.38 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.

2.39 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

2.41 p.m. The meeting suspended.

3.30 p.m. The meeting resumed.

The following Members were present; Mr Byrne, Mrs Dobson, Mr Irwin, Mr McCarthy, Mr McAleer and Mr Poots.

3.31 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.

3.36 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

3.47 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it gives consideration to the issues raised by the Committee and to review the approach it is taken in respect of Cattle ID Cross Compliance. The Committee agreed that a clear threshold applied equally to all is required.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the details of the EU Audit on Cross Compliance once it has been completed.

7. Oral Briefing DARD: Workforce Restructuring

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.48 p.m.

Gerry Lavery, Deputy Secretary, Central Services Group

David Small, Deputy Secretary, Service Delivery Group
Tracey Teague, Director of Corporate Services
Catherine McCallum, Central Services Group

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

3.38 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

3.48 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.59 p.m. Mr Anderson rejoined the meeting.

4.01 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the staff in post figures for the Department for 2011/12.

8. Inquiry into Better Regulation: Press Release and list of organisations

Agreed: The Committee agreed the list of organisations to request written evidence from for the Inquiry into Better Regulation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commence oral evidence sessions in September 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Press Release on the commencement of the Inquiry.

4.15 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

9. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-Con: The Animals and Animals Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regulations (NI) 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the written briefing on the Pre-Con: The Animals and Animals Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regs (NI) 2015; and agreed that the Department should report back to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

10. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-Con: The Carlingford Area (Definition of the Mouth of the Clanrye River) Regulations 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the Pre-Con: The Carlingford Area (Definition of the Mouth of the Clanrye River) Regulations 2015; and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

11. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-Con: The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Tagging and Logbook) (Amendment) Regs 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the Pre-Con: The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Tagging and Logbook) (Amendment) Regs 2015; and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

12. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-Con: The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Conservation of Juvenile Coarse Fish) Regs 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted Pre-Con: The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Conservation of Juvenile Coarse Fish) Regs 2015; and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

13. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-con: The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Private River Watcher Annual Returns) Regs 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the Pre-con: The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Private River Watcher Annual Returns) Regs 2015; and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

14. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-Con the Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Prescribed Species) Regs 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the Pre-Con the Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Prescribed Species) Regs 2015; and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

15. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-con Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Eel Passage) Regulations 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the Pre-con Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Eel Passage) Regulations 2015; and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

16. Written Briefing DARD: Pre-con Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Exemption from Angling Licence Fees) Regs 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the Pre-con Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Exemption from Angling Licence Fees) Regs 2015; and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

17. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the latest edition of the EU Matters newsletter.

18. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted that the BVD Eradication Scheme Order has been deferred until the next session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to its counterparts in the Oireachtas on Thursday 17 September 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Press Release for the breakfast event and Committee meeting in Cookstown.

Noted: The Committee noted that the agreed visit to AFBI Loughgall has been arranged for Thursday 25 June 2015. The following Members agreed to attend: Mr Anderson, Mr Buchanan, Mr Byrne, Mrs Dobson, Mr Irwin and Mr McMullan.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

4.26 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.

19. AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update on a further date for the cancelled meeting with the Minister to discuss the AFBI budget.

20. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 2 June 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

4.27 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date