

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 30 JULY 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs JoAnne Dobson MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

Apologies: Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Tom Buchanan MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Mr Stewart Kennedy, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve, Clerical Officer

1. 43 p.m. *The meeting commenced in Open Session.*

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 July 2015 from Commissioner Hogan on the review of intervention prices for dairy products.

3. Oral briefing Dairy UK: Dairy Industry Crisis

The following representatives from Dairy UK joined the meeting at 1.48 p.m.

Dr Mike Johnston, NI Director, Dairy UK
Mr Trevor Lockhart, Vice Chairman, Dairy UK

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

2.55 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.
2.56 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.
3.00 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.

4. Oral Briefing UFU: Dairy Industry Crisis

The following UFU representatives joined the meeting at 3.06 p.m.

Mr Barclay Bell, Deputy President
Wesley Aston, Chief Executive
Christopher Osbourne, Dairy Policy Officer
Jonathan Moore, Dairy Committee Chairman

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

3.10 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.
3.44 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.
3.47 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to suspend the UFU briefing and move to agenda item 6.

5. Oral Briefing Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

The Minister and the following Department officials joined the meeting at 3.49 p.m.

Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary
Louise Warde Hunter, Deputy Secretary
Stephen Millar, Head of Agri-Food Support Services Unit

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to resume the briefing from the UFU

4.45 p.m. the UFU briefing resumed.

4.46 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

4.46 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

4.47 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

4.49 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.

4.51 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

6. Oral Briefing Dairy Farmers: Dairy Industry Crisis

There was following witnesses joined the meeting at 4.52 p.m.

Mr Jonny Matthews

Mr Kyle Savage

Mr Charlie Weir

Mr James Stewart

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

4.52 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.

5.11 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

5.16 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.

5.33 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting

5.48 p.m. The meeting moved into Closed Session

6.10 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to support the Department in its request to meet with Commissioner Hogan to discuss the dairy crisis and advise the Commissioner accordingly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it is included in the delegation with the Minister to meet Minister Truss.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the four political parties that have Westminster MPs and request that they meet with Minister Truss with Members from the ARD Committee.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Prime Minister Cameron to support a request by the UFU to meet with him to discuss the dairy crisis.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it brings forward options to support farmers in critical circumstances; to consider if any of the options the French have taken will be applicable here; to bring the issue of volatility in the farming industry to the Executive as a matter of urgency; and to ask the Department to develop a programme of measures to be brought forward to help address the current farming crisis.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the four main supermarkets to request that they come before the Committee to discuss their policy for buying from the dairy sector.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Groceries Code Adjudicator to request an urgent meeting to discuss the current farming crisis and the food supply chain.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills to question the extent of remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and request that it be extended to include the food supply chain in totality.

6.14 p.m. Mr McMullan and Mr Poots left the meeting.

6.15 p.m. The meeting moved into Open Session

Members present Mrs Dobson, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne and Mr Swann.

Agenda item 6 resumed.

The Committee advised the dairy farmers of the course of action it has agreed.

7. AOB

There was no other business.

8. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 12.00 p.m. in the Private

Dining Room followed by the Committee meeting at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

6.21 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date

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