

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

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

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mrs Joanne Dobson MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA

Apologies: Mr Joe Byrne MLA

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

1.41 p.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session.

1.42 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 5.

2. Oral briefing NISRA: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion (Rural Deprivation)

The following NISRA officials joined the meeting at 1.42 p.m.

Dr Tracy Power, Director of Analysis

Mr Robert Beatty, Head of Census

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

1.51 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.

1.55 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.

2.01 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.

2.04 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

2.08 p.m. Mrs Dobson and Mr Poots left the meeting.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he had met with the Chairperson of the ETI Committee to discuss a joint approach on Going for Growth; and a joint committee meeting has been suggested as the way forward, followed by a review to ensure the approach was successful.

4. Minutes of the meeting held 2 December 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014.

5. Matters Arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 November 2014 from the Department on the application of cross-compliance penalties for overdue TB herd tests.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 2 December 2014 from the Department on the TVR completion of year 1 field activities.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 3 December 2014 from the Department on the report on the Belfast Lough Cockle Fishery 2014.

6. Oral Briefing DARD: Public Expenditure – January Monitoring 2014-15 proposals

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.30 p.m.

Mr Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary
Mr Roger Downey, Accountant

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

2.32 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.

2.38 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

2.39 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's January Monitoring Round proposals.

7. Oral Briefing CAFRE: Training Courses for the Young Farmers Scheme

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.39 p.m.

Mr John Fay, Assistant Secretary
Mr Martin McKendry, Senior Principal Officer
Ms Pauline Rooney, Senior Principal Officer

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

2.40 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

2.51 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Press Release for issue.

3.02 p.m. The meeting suspended

3.13 p.m. The meeting resumed.

The following Members were present; Mr Anderson, Mr Irwin, Mr McMullan and Mr Poots.

8. Oral briefing UFU: NI Dairy Industry

The following UFU representatives joined the meeting at 3.13 p.m.

Barclay Bell, Deputy President
Jonathan Moore, Dairy Chairman
William Irvine, Dairy Vice Chairman
Chris Osbourne, Senior Policy Officer

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

Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a member of the UFU and the Dairy Council.

3.24 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.

3.39 p.m. Mr Dobson rejoined the meeting.

3.51 p.m. Mr Elliott joined the meeting.

3.55 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

3.56 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

3.57 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an oral briefing on the issues impacting on the dairy industry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request feedback from the UFU following their attendance at the Winter Fair on issues raised by farmers in respect of the dairy industry.

3.58 p.m. The meeting suspended.

4.20 p.m. The meeting resumed.

The following Members were in attendance; Mr Anderson, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne, Mr McAleer, Mr McMullan and Mr Poots.

9. Written Briefing DARD: The Public Bodies (Abolition of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides).

Noted: The Committee noted the written briefing on the Public Bodies (Abolition of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides) and further noted the oral briefing on this scheduled for 13 January 2015.

10. SL1: The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2014

Agreed: The Committee noted the SL1: The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2014 and were content with the merits of the policy.

11. SR 2014/283: The Dogs (Licensing and Identification) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development has considered SR 2014/283: The Dogs (Licensing and Identification) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014 and has no objections to the rule.

12. SR 2014/291: The CAP Direct Payments and Support Schemes (Cross Compliance) Regulations

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development has considered SE 2014/291: The Common Agricultural Policy Direct Payments and Support Schemes (Cross Compliance) Regulations (NI) 2014 and, subject to comment from the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objections to the rule.

13. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the EU Matters Newsletter and agreed to ask the Department for the amount from the crisis reserve which will be coming back to NI farmers.

Noted: The Committee noted the Investment Strategy for the Department.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 4 December 2014 from the Department on the Seed Potatoes (Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and agreed to request a summary of the consultation responses when available.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 3 December 2014 from the ETI Committee on the NI Broadband Improvement Project.

Agreed: The Committee noted the emailed correspondence from Home-Start on the review on Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion; the Committee agreed to add the correspondence to the website and consider it alongside all evidence gathered to date.

14. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee noted the request from the Omagh Forum to present to the Committee on review on Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion; the Committee agreed to an informal meeting with the Chair and Deputy Chair and to request a written briefing in advance of the meeting.

4.30 p.m. The meeting moved into closed session

Agreed: The Committee discussed and agreed the Forward Work Programme for the period January-March 2015.

15.AOB

There was no other business.

16.Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 13 January 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

4.40 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date