

**COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**TUESDAY 08 MARCH 2016  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Seán Rogers MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mrs Joanne Dobson MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Edwin Poots MLA  
Mr Robin Swann MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Lynda Conlon, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Officer

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

**1. Apologies**

There are no apologies.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee meeting of 15 March 2016 will not be broadcast.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 01 March 2016**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 01 March 2016.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from the Department, dated 03 March 2016, and agreed to write to DARD to clarify why it does not collect information on the financial outturns of the Rural Development Programmes in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland in order to benchmark its own performance.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the response submitted by DARD to the European Commission consultation on the experience of the first year of implementation of greening obligations.

*Noted:* The Committee noted a briefing from the Department in connection with legal concerns relating to the Mourne Shores Glasdrumman Common Land Trust.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Report on Farmgate Prices by the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the response by the Department of Finance and Personnel to points raised in RalSe research papers relating to the Executive's Draft Budget 2016-17.

*Noted:* The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding issues raised by Departments, including DARD, at the Joint Ministerial Committee (Europe).

#### **5. Correspondence**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland – Results for June 2015.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the December 2015 Agricultural Survey.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Revised Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the 'Brussels Report: November 2015 – February 2016' produced by the Northern Ireland Executive Brussels Office.

## **6. Committee Discussion: Legacy Report**

The Committee gave consideration to the draft Legacy Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed pages 202 to 208.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the following amendment to page 209: to strongly recommend that the incoming Committee continue to focus on supply chain issues and farmgate prices in the new Mandate.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed Appendix 1.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed pages 212 to 217.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the financial information section in the End of Session 2015-2016 Report should be completed by Committee staff when the relevant details are made available by the Finance Office.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed Appendix 3.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the statistical information section in Appendix 3 should be updated by Committee staff with information from the AIMS database at the end of the session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Chair and Deputy Chair have the authority to sign off the draft Legacy Report once the requested amendment has been made.

## **7. Written Briefing DARD: The Scrapie (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the SL1 moves to the next legislative stage.

## **8. S.R. 2016/54: The Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

*2.18 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2016/54 The Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to comment from the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objections to the rule.

**9. S.R. 2016/59: The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

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

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2016/59 The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to comment from the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objections to the rule.

**10. Oral Briefing DARD: Update on Bovine TB**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.21 p.m.

Geraldine Fee, Director, Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division  
Colin Hart, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, Veterinary Service  
Roly Harwood, Senior Principal Veterinary Officer, Veterinary Service  
Ian McKee, Central Policy, TB/BR Policy Branch

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

*2.32 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.*

*2.34 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request that the Department provide details of spending on Bovine TB in 2014-2015 as a proportion of the overall DARD budget and a breakdown of costs across compensation, staff and veterinary costs.

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

*2.49 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.*

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

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

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

*3.03 p.m. Mr McCrea joined the meeting.*

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

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

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

3.14 p.m. *Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*

3.21 p.m. *The officials left the meeting.*

## **11. Oral Briefing DARD: Agricultural Land Use Strategy**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.22 p.m.

John Speers, Director of Fisheries and Environment, DARD  
John Gilliland, Chair of the Agricultural Land Use Strategy Group  
Patrick Casement, Industry Representative, Agricultural Land Use Strategy Group  
John Best, Industry Representative, Agricultural Land Use Strategy Group

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

3.24 p.m. *Mr McCrea left the meeting.*

3.28 p.m. *Mr McCrea rejoined the meeting.*

*Mr McCarthy declared an interest that he is a small landholder.*

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

4.01 p.m. *Mr Milne left the meeting.*

4.02 p.m. *Mr Rogers rejoined the meeting.*

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

*Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a tenant and landowner.*

4.24 p.m. *The official left the meeting.*

## **12. Written Briefing DARD: Rivers Agency - Update on Reservoirs Act and Audit**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to add the written briefings provided by the Department under Agenda Items 12, 13 and 14 to the relevant Committee webpages.

The Committee noted a paper from DARD providing an update on the Reservoirs Act and Audit.

## **13. Written Briefing DARD: Plant Health and Tree Disease**

The Committee noted a paper from DARD providing an update on the Plant Health and Tree Disease.

**14. Written Briefing DARD: Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**

The Committee noted a paper from DARD providing an update on the Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

**15. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

**16. AOB**

There was no other business.

**17. Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 15 March 2016 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*4.26 p.m. The meeting adjourned.*

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William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

**15/03/2016**

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Date