

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2020
THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Clare Bailey MLA
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA
Mr John Blair MLA
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA (via teleconferencing)
Mr Pat Catney MLA
Mr Harry Harvey MLA (via teleconferencing)
Mr William Irwin MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor

The meeting commenced at 10.35 a.m. in open session

1. Apologies

None

2. Ministerial Briefing on the allocation of funding due to Covid 19

Mr Edwin Poots, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs joined the meeting at 10.35 a.m.

He was accompanied by:

Norman Fulton, Deputy Secretary, Food and Farming Group

The Minister briefed the Committee on the additional £25 million funding which has been made available for farmers and horticulture. This was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and his officials for their attendance.

3. Draft minutes 6 May 2020

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 6 May 2020.

4. AOB

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Pat Catney would be leaving the Committee and would be replaced by Patsy McGlone. The Chairperson thanked Mr Catney for his contribution over the past number of months.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a detailed written briefing on reviews it has undertaken around penalties for fish kill incidents and a summary of any analysis on the associated damage to eco systems and habitats.

The meeting moved into Closed Session at 12.10 p.m.

Agreed: Committee agreed to request details of the two independent reports the Minister referred to in his briefing on the meat and dairy sector and to request copies from the publisher.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request clarification around figures quoted by Members regarding funding bids that had been originally made by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to stakeholders to seek their views on the allocation of the £25 million additional funding which has been secured by the Department and to forward a response to the Department in due course.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold a meeting on 4 June 2020 in the Senate Chamber at 4.00 p.m. to receive a briefing from the Department on the implementation of the protocol.

5. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs will be an informal meeting which will take place on Thursday 28 May 2020 at 10.00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams.

12.17 p.m. *The meeting adjourned.*

Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date