



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 24 June 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30/Virtual Meeting via StarLeaf

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)
Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Clare Bailey MLA
Rosemary Barton MLA
John Blair MLA
Harry Harvey MLA
William Irwin MLA
Patsy McGlone MLA

Apologies: Maurice Bradley MLA

Present: Nick Henry, Clerk
Kate Duffy, Clerical Officer

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Neal Flanagan, Assistant Clerk
Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor

The meeting commenced at 10.01 a.m. in Open Session



Northern Ireland
Assembly

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

None.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2021.

4. Matters Arising

The clerk briefed the Committee on issues identified within the RaISe research paper on the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill 2021 which would require clarification from the Department in order to progress the scrutiny of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a letter to the Department to seek clarification on the issues identified by RaISe on the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill 2021.

5. Oral Evidence Session Climate Change Bill: Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association (NIMEA)

The following representatives from NIMEA joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 10.04 a.m.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Conall Donnelly, Executive Director, NIMEA
Sarah Haire, Head of Agriculture, Dawn Meats/Dunbia
Dean Holroyd, Group Technical & Sustainability Director, ABP Food Group

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to NIMEA to request copies of the documents that were referenced during the oral evidence session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission research from RaISe on the relationship between biogenic methane and climate change and the measures requiring adaptation.

6. Oral Evidence Session Climate Change Bill: Dairy Council Northern Ireland

The following representative from the Dairy Council Northern Ireland joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 11.25 a.m.

Dr Mike Johnston, MBE, Chief Executive

Dr Johnston briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Johnston for his attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the written evidence from the Dairy Council Northern Ireland on the Committee's webpage.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

7. Oral Evidence Session Climate Change Bill: UK Carbon Capture and Storage Research Centre (UKCCSRC)

The following representative from the UKCCSRC joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 12.04 p.m.

Jon Gibbons, Director

Mr Gibbons briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Gibbons for his attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish to the written evidence from UKCCSRC on the Committee's webpage.

John Blair left the meeting at 12.30 p.m.

8. Departmental Written Briefing: SL1 – The Agricultural Commodities (Coronavirus) (Income Support) Scheme No.2 (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SL1: The Agricultural Commodities (Coronavirus) (Income Support) Scheme No.2 (Northern Ireland) 2021 which will allow the Department to make Covid-19 income support payments of up to £5.2m to pig producers in respect of cull sows, sheep producers in respect of wool, and potato producers directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the agri-food industry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a timescale for the issue of payments for the compensation scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on who is required to complete the sheep inventory and whether the information gathered will be held centrally within the Department upon completion.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy and that it should move to the next legislative stage.

9. Departmental Oral Briefing: SL1 – The Agricultural (2017 North West Area Flooding) (Income Support) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2021

The following departmental officials joined the meeting by StarLeaf at 12.38 p.m.

Norman Fulton, Head of Food and Farming Group
Steven Millar, Head of Brexit Contingency, Agri Food Trade

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

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department on issues raised by the Committee in respect of the compensation scheme at the meeting on 3 June 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it formally notes its disappointment that non-force majeure applicants are not able to avail of the income support scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy and that it should move to the next legislative stage.

10. Departmental Written Briefing: SL1 The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SL1 The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which will amend regulations to give effect to specific charges as set out in the Waste Management Charging Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2021 by uplifting the relevant fees and charges in line with the GDP deflator.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy and that it should move to the next legislative stage.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

11. Departmental Written Briefing: SL1 The Animals (Records, Identification and Movement) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Department has not provided any briefing papers in respect of this agenda item and therefore agreed to defer its consideration of the SL1.

12. Departmental Written Briefing: SR The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee agreed that SR The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 should be affirmed by the Assembly.

13. Departmental Written Briefing: Statutory Instrument – The Common Organisation of the Markets in Agricultural Products (Transitional Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 [AG/042]

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Department has not provided any briefing papers for this agenda item and therefore agreed to defer its consideration of the Statutory Instrument.

14. Departmental Written Briefing: Statutory Instrument – The Market Surveillance (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021

Agreed: The Committee noted that the Department has not provided any briefing papers for this agenda item and therefore agreed to defer its consideration of the Statutory Instrument.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

15. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. Correspondence from the Department on issues arising from the meeting on 3 June 2021;
- ii. Correspondence from the Department advising that the consultation on the introduction of additional Animal Welfare Protections for Service Animals in Northern Ireland “Finn’s Law” will run from 17 June to 11 August 2021.
- iii. Correspondence from NI Environment Link advising that an error had been made during the oral evidence session at the meeting on 16 June 2021;
- iv. Correspondence from the Women’s Policy Group NI inviting Committee Members to the virtual relaunch of the Covid-19 Feminist Recovery Plan - One Year on taking place on 28 July 2021.
- v. The Forty-Third Report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Ulster Farmers’ Union inviting the Committee to a site visit to a farm that is actively engaged in practices to mitigate climate change.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise the clerk of their individual availability in August for a site visit to a farm as invited to by the Ulster Farmers’ Union.

The Committee considered correspondence from the RSPB NI seeking clarity on several aspects of the UKG Environment Bill including the Implementation of the Environment Bill in Northern Ireland and the remaining aspects which still require Legislative Consent Motions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the issues raised by RSPB NI.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Ulster Beekeepers Association regarding issues relating to the importation of bees from Italy and the lack of inspection which it has raised with the Minister.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on the issue of inspection of the importation of bees from Italy and to ascertain when the Ulster Beekeepers Association can expect a reply from the Minister.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Dairy Council Northern Ireland inviting the Committee to a joint virtual visit with the Committee for the Economy to hear about the sustainability of the dairy food supply chain on 8 July 2021 at 1.30 p.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise the clerk of their individual availability for a virtual site visit on 8 July 2021 by close of play.

16. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

17. AOB

None.

18. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs will take place on Thursday 1 July 2021 at 10.00 a.m. and will be hybrid meeting streamed on the Assembly's website.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.10 p.m.

Declan McAleer, MLA
Chairperson, Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee