

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 3 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

31 OCTOBER 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The nineteenth North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in Armagh on 31 October 2012. The meeting was attended by Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, and Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. Minister O'Neill chaired the meeting.
2. Ministers discussed the measures being taken in their jurisdictions to deal with the outbreak of ash dieback disease, and agreed to maintain contact so as to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the problem. They also exchanged views on the question of farm safety and expressed their sympathy to the bereaved families following recent tragic incidents.

COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)

3. The Council discussed and noted the most recent developments in regard to negotiations on CAP reform and the next steps in the reform process including that negotiations will continue at technical and political level between the European Council and the European Parliament. As the negotiations progress

DARD and DAFM officials will continue to monitor developments and will maintain close contact.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

4. Ministers agreed a MOU in relation to protecting the island of Ireland from exotic animal disease incursion. The MOU underlines the commitment to key principles in the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. It sets out the principles to be followed throughout the island to help prevent the entry and spread of exotic animal diseases through either jurisdiction, and to provide assurance regarding the controls applied throughout the island.
5. The Council welcomed an update on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan since the last Agriculture Sectoral meeting. This included the achievement of Aujeszky's Disease free status throughout the island of Ireland, which will open up further export opportunities for the pig sector; the on-going co-operation between officials on industry-led initiatives on production diseases not subject to national control programmes such as BVD; the setting up of an industry led organisation, Animal Health and Welfare NI, which will take forward initiatives to deal with such diseases; and agreement on reciprocal arrangements between industry bodies north and south, which was signed by Animal Health Ireland and Animal Health and Welfare NI.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

6. Ministers welcomed the progress of the INTERREG IVA funding for strategic cross-border rural development projects including the launch of the Regeneration in Villages and Emergency Rescue and the Social Farming Across Borders projects. It was agreed that DARD, DECLG and their respective rural networks organise an event to specifically encourage further co-operation between Local Action Groups on a north-south basis. The Council also agreed that Departmental officials engage to identify common priority issues that could be addressed on a cross-border basis through European Territorial Cooperation Programmes and that the Steering Committee for Cross-Border Rural Development collaborate to propose a mechanism for the co-ordination and targeting of support for cross-border areas.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. The Council agreed to hold its next Agriculture meeting in June 2013.

**Joint Secretariat
31 October 2012**