

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Tom Buchanan MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA

Apologies: Mr Tom Elliott MLA

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

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

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee and he and the Deputy Chairperson will be meeting with the Minister on 18 May 2015 to discuss the AFBI budget. Details of the meeting will follow in due course.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the joint meeting with the ETI Committee has been finalised for 9 June 2015 at 12.30 p.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission a research paper on the progress of Going for Growth and in particular the associated actions for DARD/DETI over the 2014/15 period.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meetings held on 21 April 2015.

4. Matters Arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 30 April 2015 from the Department on a range of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 14 April 2015.

5. Oral Briefing DARD: Forest Service Business Plan

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.37 p.m.

Malcolm Beatty, Chief Forest Officer
Marcus McAuley, Corporate Services Director

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

1.38 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

1.45 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

1.48 p.m. The meeting was suspended.

2.03 p.m. The meeting resumed. The following Members were in attendance: Mr Anderson, Mr Irwin, Mr McCarthy and Mr McMullan.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the costs associated with the ongoing work regarding Ash Dieback.

6. Oral Briefing DARD: Fishing Industry Task Force

The following Departmental officials and representatives joined the meeting at 2.13 p.m.

John Speers, Director of Fisheries & Environment Division
Paddy Campbell, Sea Fisheries Policy & Grants
Alan McCulla, ANIFPO
Dick James, NIFPO

Daniel Whittle, Whitby Seafoods.

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

2.31 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.

2.31 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

2.32 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

7. Pre-Consultation: European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Investment proposals Consultation

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.41 p.m.

John Speers, Director of Fisheries & Environment Division

Ronnie McBride, Deputy Principal

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

2.43 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.

2.51 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

8. Oral Briefing UFU: Cattle ID Cross Compliance

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2.55 p.m.

Ian Marshall, President

Ian Buchanan, Hill Farming Policy Chair

Crosby Cleland, Beef and Lamb Policy Chair

Elliott Bell, Policy Officer Beef & Lamb/Hill Farming

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

Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a farmer.

3.06 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

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

3.20 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

3.30 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Hansard of the briefing to the Department with a view to seeking an oral briefing to address the issues raised by the UFU.

9. Written Briefing DARD: SL1 The Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

Agreed: The Committee noted the written briefing on The Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and agreed that it was content that the regulations move to the next legislative stage.

10. Written Briefing DARD: EU Animal Health Regulation and Official Control Regulation

Agreed: The Committee noted the written briefing on the EU Animal Health Regulation and Official Control Regulation and agreed to request a further written briefing on the impact the regulation may have for Northern Ireland.

11. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for the Environment in respect of a request by NI Environment Link regarding financial support for the environmental sector; the Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 April 2015 from the Committee for Finance and Personnel on the Report on Sickness Absence in the NI Public Sector.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 30 April 2015 from the Committee for Finance and Personnel on the Monitoring of Savings Delivery Plans 2014-15.

Noted: The Committee noted Issue 04/2015 for the EU matters newsletter.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 30 April 2015 from RSPB, requesting to brief the Committee on the Land Matters Strategy. The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing at an appropriate date.

Noted: The Committee noted the DARD Investment Strategy report for April 2015.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to give further consideration to a visit to Brussels once a visit programme has been drafted.

The Chairperson reminded Members that CAP case studies need to be forwarded to the clerk by the end of this week.

Agreed: The Chairperson reminded Members that the meeting on Thursday 28 May 2015 will be held in the office of Rural Community Network in Cookstown prior to a breakfast event in the same location. It was agreed that the committee office would issue an email to advise Members of the details.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work programme.

13. AOB

There was no other business.

14. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 19 May 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

3.42 p.m. The meeting moved into Closed Session.

15. Better Regulation Review – Terms of Reference

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Terms of Reference for the Committee review on Better Regulation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to the publication of a signposting advertisement in the local papers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission Research to set up an on-line survey in order to engage with relevant stakeholders.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to the setup of a Committee Twitter account, to be management by committee office staff.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission appropriate research papers to help inform the review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the list of organisations to seek oral evidence from, in addition to seeking oral evidence from meat processing plants and auctioneers.

3.55 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.

3.58 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date