

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

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

Apologies: Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

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

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

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

1.37 p.m. Mr Elliott joined the meeting.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that there will be a change to the broadcasting service and there will no longer be a facility to televise additional committee meetings.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Health and

Safety Executive intends to issue invitations to both the ARD and ETI Committees to the launch of its new Farm Safety TV Advert. This event will take place on 11 March 2015 at Streamvale Open Farm.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that an informal meeting will take place with EU Commissioner Hogan on 27 March 2015.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he and Deputy Chairperson have requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss the AFBI budget.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015.

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 19 February 2015 in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 3 February 2015. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if it can standardised its approach to recording Bovine TB rates to allow comparison with other jurisdictions.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 9 February 2015 from the PSNI in respect of a suspected animal cruelty case. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to Mr Dallat MLA, who raised the issue originally.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 12 February 2015 from the UFU in respect of an update on the Dairy Industry.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 February 2015 from the Department in respect of the Review of the Horse Racing Fund.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 February 2015 from the Department in respect of the Interim Report of the Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 February 2015 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 10 February 2015.

5. Oral Briefing DARD SL1: The Zoonoses (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.39 p.m.

Sandra Dunbar, Grade 6
Stanley McDowell, Grade 5
Darren Griffiths, Grade 6
Denis Savage, Grade 7

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

1.43 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.
1.56 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.
2.02 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.
2.03 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.
2.05 p.m. Mrs Dobson and Mr McMullan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Zoonoses (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 until a written update is received from the Department on the outcome of its meeting with the UFU to discuss issues of concern in respect of the amendment to the regulations.

6. Oral Briefing DARD: Farm Business Improvement Scheme

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.08 p.m.

Colette McMaster, Grade 5
Elaine McCrory, Grade 6
Michael McLean, Grade 7

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

2.30 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.
2.34 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.
2.36 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.
2.41 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.
2.45 p.m. Mr McCarthy rejoined the meeting.
2.49 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.
2.53 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.
2.56 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.
2.56 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

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

Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a farmer.

2.57 p.m. The meeting moved into Closed Session

7. Oral Briefing: TB Strategic Partnership Group

The following members of the TB Strategic Partnership Group joined the meeting at 2.58 p.m.

Sean Hogan
Dr George McIlroy
Dr Cecil McMurray
John Thompson

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

3.04 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.21 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

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

Mr Irwin declared an interest that his herd is down with TB.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the next agenda item in closed session.

8. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a written briefing on the Draft Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Order 2014, originally scheduled for 10 March 2014. The Committee also agreed to schedule an oral briefing post Easter 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that each Member will forward a topic to the clerk for discussion at the informal meeting with the EU Commissioner. The clerk will also prepare a list of questions for consideration at the next meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an urgent one item agenda meeting from the Department on the new Basic Payment System.

Noted: The Committee noted the follow up notes from the Effective Questioning Session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

4.06 p.m. The meeting moved into Open Session

9. The Reservoirs Bill: Consideration of the Addendum to the Committee Report on the Reservoirs Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Addendum to the Committee Report on the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: Members agreed that an unapproved extract of the Minutes of Proceedings and Hansard transcript from this agenda item will be included in the appendices of the Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that its Report on Reservoirs Bill should be laid in the Business Office and that it should be ordered to print.

10. Written Briefing DARD: SL1 The Plant Health (Amendment) Order (NI) 2015 and The Plant Health (Wood and Bark) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the SL1 The Plant Health (Amendment) Order (NI) 2015 and The Plant Health (Wood and Bark) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2015 should move to the next legislative stage.

11. Written Briefing DARD SL1: The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed that SL1: The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 should move to the next legislative stage.

12. Written Briefing DARD: Public Consultation on Proposed Changes to Brucellosis Eradication Programme if officially brucellosis free by Spring 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Department returns to brief the Committee with an analysis of the consultation responses.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department indicating that it intends to submit the formal process to the Commission for Officially Brucellosis Free status.

13. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 20 February 2015 from the Minister on the reappointment of the Agri-Food Strategy Board.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 18 February 2015 from the Tyrone Farming Society in respect of the potential closure of Omagh Veterinary Laboratory. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment and request that the Committee is copied into the response.

Noted: The Committee noted the latest edition of the EU Matters newsletter.

Noted: The Committee noted the DARD Investment Strategy Report February 2015.

14. Any other business

There was no other business.

15. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 10 March 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

4.17 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date

