

## COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 30 JUNE 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mr Tom Buchanan MLA  
Mrs JoAnne Dobson MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Edwin Poots MLA  
Mr Robin Swann MLA

In attendance: Ms Cathie White, Clerk  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk  
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve, Clerical Officer

*1.39 p.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

There are no apologies.

#### **2. Chairperson's Business**

*Agreed:* The Committee welcomed Mr Robin Swann as a Member of the Committee and agreed to write a letter of thanks to Tom Elliott in recognition of his work on the Committee.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he and several other Members had visited AFBI Loughgall on Thursday 25 June 2015; AFBI has offered to provide a private tour to any Member who was unable to attend the visit.

The Chairperson advised the Committee and he and the Deputy Chairperson had met with the Minister this morning to discuss the cuts to the AFBI budget.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that from September 2015, committee meeting packs will no longer be provided in paper form. Refresher training will be provided to any Member who requires it.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson could make the decision regarding releasing or withholding information on any non-routine Freedom of Information requests received over the summer recess period.

*1.43 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.*

*1.44 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.*

### **3. Minutes of the meeting 23 June 2015**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2015.

### **4. Matters Arising**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 June 2015 from the Minister for Social Development in which he offers to meet with the Chairperson and the UFU to discuss Universal Credit and self-employed farmers. The Committee agreed that the arrangements for this meeting should proceed.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 June 2015 from the Minister in respect of concerns raised by the National Sheep Association regarding the new EU Country of Origin Rules.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 June 2015 from the Minister on the Committee Position Paper on TRPSI

*Noted:* The Committee noted the copied correspondence dated 23 June 2015 from the Minister to the UFU on the Definition of Rural Areas.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 23 June 2015 from the Department on Dog Breeding Establishments. The Committee agreed to consider the analysis of the consultation responses on the Review of the Welfare of Animals legislation once it has been received.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 June 2015 from the Department on EU Food Labelling EU Commission Reports. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the NI Assembly EU Officer.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 June 2015 from the Department on Bovine Viral Diarrhoea and agreed to request that the Department advises the Committee if there is any deviation from the anticipated progress.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 23 June 2015 from the Department in respect of the proposed EU Animal Health Regulation and agreed to seek an update at the appropriate time.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 25 June 2015 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 9 June 2015.

## **5. Oral Briefing DARD: TB/TVR**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.49 p.m.

Geraldine Fee, Animal Health & Welfare Assistant Secretary  
Colin Hart, Deputy Veterinary Officer  
Roly Harwood, Senior Principal Veterinary Officer  
Ian McKee, TB/BR Policy Branch

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

*Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a farmer.*

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

*1.59 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*2.15 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.*

*2.25 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.*

*2.26 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request information on the number of badgers which have been recovered from road accidents and the results of the laboratory tests for TB.

*2.29 p.m. The officials left the meeting.*

## **6. Oral Briefing DARD: Pre-Con Tuberculosis (Examination and Testing) Scheme (Amendment) Order**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.30 p.m.

Geraldine Fee, Animal Health and Welfare Assistant Secretary  
Colin Hart, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer  
John O'Neill, Divisional Veterinary Officer  
Dearbhla Redmond, TB/BR Policy Branch

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

*2.36 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.*

*2.41 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*2.44 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.*

*2.45 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Department should lay the Statutory Rule during recess and request an update on the consultation responses in September.

*2.46 p.m. The officials left the meeting.*

## **7. Oral Briefing DARD: TBSPG Interim Report June 2015**

The following TBSPG representatives joined the meeting at 2.46 p.m.

Sean Hogan  
John Thompson  
Campbell Tweed  
Dr George McIlroy  
Dr Cecil McMurray

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

*2.47 p.m. Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.*

*2.49 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.*

*2.59 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.*

*3.12 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*3.19 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.*

*3.26 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.*

*3.28 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.*

*3.32 p.m. The TBSPG representatives left the meeting.*

## **8. Oral Briefing DARD: Consultation on the DARD Children and Young People's Action Plan 2014-2017**

The following Department officials joined the meeting at 3.32 p.m.

Gerry McPeake, Assistant Director, Departmental HR  
Sharon Fitchie, Grade 6, Equality and Internal Communications Branch

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

*3.33 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.*

*Mr Swann declared an interest that he was a past president of the Young Farmers' Club.*

*3.39 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*

*3.42 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the Department returns to the Committee with an analysis of consultation responses on the Children and Young People's Action Plan 2014-2017.

*3.42 p.m. The officials left the meeting.*

## **9. Written Briefing DARD: Beef sector/suckler cow industry**

**Agreed:** The Committee noted the written briefing from the Department on the Beef Sector/Suckler Cow Industry and agreed to seek the opinion of other farming organisations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from the Department after summer recess.

## **10. Written Briefing DARD: SL1 The Nitrates Action Programme (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015**

Ms Siobhann Barrs, Departmental Official, joined the meeting at 3.50 p.m.

**Agreed:** The Committee noted the Nitrates Action Programme (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and agreed to defer consideration of the regulations until the Department provides clarification on the definition of silage.

*3.54 p.m. Ms Barrs left the meeting.*

## **11. Written Briefing DARD: SL1 The Common Agricultural Policy (Review of Decisions) Regulations 2015**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the SL1: The Common Agricultural Policy (Review of Decisions) Regulations 2015 should move to the next legislative stage.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it advises the Committee of any future changes to procedures on the Review of Decisions.

## **12. Correspondence**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the June procurement Activity Report for the Department.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from Farm Policy Branch advising that it's Agriculture and Horticulture Development board Annual report 2014/15 has been published.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 23 June 2015 in respect of the Strategy for Implementation of the EU School Milk Scheme for the 2015-16 School Year. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update upon approval of the scheme.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 June 2015 from the Minister on EU Financial Corrections.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 25 June 2015 from the Department in respect of the proposal to launch a public consultation on the Horse Racing (Charges on Bookmakers) Order (NI) 2016. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request it that receives an update on the outcome of the consultation prior to making the regulations.

## **13. Forward Work Programme**

The Chairperson reminded Members that a strategic planning session will take place on Tuesday 8 September 2015 from 12.00 to 2.00 p.m. in the Private Dining Room.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the visit to the Global Food Institute, QUB will take place on Tuesday 17 November 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the topics for discussion for the meeting with the Committee for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Committee will include Food Labelling, TTIP, Animal Health, TB reduction and the Genomics Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek written briefs from the Department on each of the agreed topics as discussed above.

#### **14.AOB**

There was no other business.

#### **15.Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 12.00 p.m. in the Private Dining Room followed by the Committee meeting at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*4.02 p.m. The meeting moved into closed session.*

#### **16.Inquiry into Better Regulation: Special Adviser List**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that a panel consisting of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Mrs JoAnne Dobson would interview the candidate for the Special Advisor to the Committee on Monday 7 September 2015.

*4.05 p.m. The meeting adjourned.*

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William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date

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