

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA

Apologies: Mr Edwin Poots MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

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

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

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015.

4. Oral Briefing ASDA and Tesco: General Purchasing Policy

The following representatives joined the meeting at 1.38 p.m.

Chris Brown, Sustainable Business Director, ASDA
Joe McDonald, Senior Manager, Corporate Affairs, ASDA
Barney Kay, Head of Agriculture, Tesco
Cliff Kells, Commercial Manager for Northern Ireland, Tesco

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

1.41 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.

1.52 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a farmer.

2.02 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

2.27 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

2.27 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

2.28 p.m. Mr McCrea left the meeting.

2.31 p.m. Mr McCrea rejoined the meeting.

2.34 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.

2.46 p.m. Mr McCarthy joined the meeting.

2.49 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

2.52 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

2.58 p.m. Mr McCrea left the meeting.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request written clarification on the differential between the price paid to the supplier and that charged by the retailer in relation to turnips and carrots.

3.09 p.m. The Tesco and ASDA representatives left the meeting.

3.10 p.m. The meeting suspended.

3.40 p.m. The meeting resumed in Open Session with the following Members present: Mrs Dobson, Mr Irwin, Mr McAleer, Mr McCarthy, Mr McMullan and Mr Milne.

Agreed: The Committee approved the draft Press Release on the oral briefing from Tesco and ASDA representatives for circulation after the meeting.

5. Oral Briefing Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association: Better Regulation and Other Issues

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.41 p.m.

Campbell Tweedie, President, NIMEA
Conall Donnelly, Executive Director, NIMEA

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

3.42 p.m. Mr Anderson rejoined the meeting.

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

3.59 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

4.09 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

4.19 p.m. The NIMEA representatives left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to DARD to request details of the state aid support measures, both direct and indirect, provided to meat producers in other EU countries.

6. Written Brief Rivers Agency: Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee noted a written update on the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

7. Written Brief DARD: Increase of Penalties for Offences under The Welfare of Animals Act 2011

The Committee considered and noted a letter from DARD informing the Committee that DARD intends to amend the penalties provided for in section 31 of The Welfare of Animals Act 2011.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing from DARD officials when the proposed amendments have been finalised.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Justice to inform them of DARD's intention to include these amendments in the Justice (No.2) Bill.

8. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the most recent issue of EU Matters.

Noted: The Committee noted an upcoming "Meet your MEP" event on 30 October 2015 featuring Jim Nicholson MEP.

Noted: The Committee noted the call for evidence from the Assembly and Executive Review Committee on the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill.

Noted: The Committee noted correspondence from Solace NI clarifying their role as the representative body of senior local government officials.

9. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

10. AOB

There was no other business.

11. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 03 November 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

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

12. Inquiry into Better Regulation

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reconsider this agenda item at the meeting on 03 November 2015.

4.26 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date