

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 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
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

Apologies: Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA

In attendance: Mr Trevor Allen, Senior Assistant Clerk
Ms Lynda Conlon, Assistant Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor

1.37 p.m. The meeting commenced in Closed Session.

Agreed: The Committee endorsed the decision of the interview panel not to recommend the appointment of a Specialist Advisor for the Inquiry into Better Regulation and agreed to communicate this decision to the applicant. The Committee also agreed to consider its options on this issue at the next meeting.

1.39 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. The meeting moved into Open Session.

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Noted: The Committee noted that the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson met with the DARD Permanent Secretary to discuss issues that the Committee has had with the preparedness of DARD officials appearing at Committee meetings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the EFRA Committee's Inquiry into Farmgate Prices should be placed on the agenda for the meeting of 29 September 2015 to allow the Committee to discuss the drafting of a written submission to the Inquiry.

Noted: The Committee noted that a meeting is being organised with the Chairperson of the EFRA Committee on 18 November 2015.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015.

4. Oral Briefing DARD: Review of Decisions Process

The following Department officials joined the meeting at 1.43 p.m.

Brian Lamont, Programme Planning and Management
Dera Watson, Agricultural Inspector Grade II, Programme Planning and Management
Amanda Blakley, Staff Officer, Review of Decisions
Deirdre Murray, Staff Officer, Review of Decisions

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

1.56 p.m. *Mr Byrne left the meeting.*
2.00 p.m. *Mr McCarthy joined the meeting.*

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of the monetary value of the Review of Decisions cases that had found in favour of the appellant between 2012 and 2014.

2.16 p.m. *Mr Swann left the meeting.*
2.29 p.m. *Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.*
2.32 p.m. *The officials left the meeting.*

5. Oral Briefing AFSB – Inquiry into Better Regulation

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2.33 p.m.

Tony O'Neill, Chair, Agri-Food Strategy Board
Francis Martin, Board Member, Agri-Food Strategy Board

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

2.37 p.m. Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to AFSB to request a copy of the questionnaire circulated to processors by the AFSB Better Regulation sub-group as part of the DETI Review of Business Red Tape.

2.51 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

2.58 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.

2.58 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

3.01 p.m. The AFSB officials left the meeting.

6. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that an update on the progress made by the Department on mitigating the impact of the landing obligation on Northern Ireland fisheries is provided at the DARD oral briefing on the Fishing Industry scheduled for 24 November 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Department provide an oral briefing on the issue of labelling as soon as possible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting an update on the revision of the Official Food and Feed Controls Regulation (882/2004) as the Minister had previously expressed her intention to have an input into the establishment of all future negotiating lines on these regulations.

Noted: The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for OFMDFM dated 10 September 2015 regarding Departmental engagement with Assembly Committees on EU Matters.

Noted: The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for OFMDFM dated 17 September 2015 forwarding a report from the NI Human Rights Commission on UK compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Noted: The Committee noted an invitation from AFSB to a Supply Chain Forum on 14 October 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the RaiSe Researcher to attend the AFSB Supply Chain Forum on 14 October 2015 and report back to the Committee

7. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to meet with the Grocery Code Adjudicator in London on Wednesday 18 November 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

8. AOB

There was no other business.

9. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 29 September 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

3.03 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date