

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 2 (14) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

1 OCTOBER 2014

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty third North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in Armagh on 1 October 2014. The meeting was attended by Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Simon Hamilton MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine and Alan Kelly TD, Minister of Environment, Community and Local Government. Minister O'Neill chaired the meeting.

SECTORAL PRIORITIES

2. Ministers had a discussion on various priorities for the Agriculture sector and noted that these will be contained in a report to be considered at a future NSMC Institutional meeting as part of the ongoing review into sectoral priorities.

COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)

3. The Council noted that implementation plans have been adopted by DAFM and DARD for the Common Agricultural Policy reforms agreed in 2013 and agreed that officials will monitor the development of the implementation process in respect of Pillar I and II decision.

4. They also noted that both Administrations are in the process of seeking approval from the European Commission for their respective Rural Development Programmes 2014 – 2020, with DAFM submitting their draft Programme in July 2014 and DARD due to submit theirs in October 2014.

CO-OPERATION ON PLANT HEALTH AND PESTICIDES

5. Ministers noted that DARD and DAFM have developed a protocol for the cross border movement of larch logs infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*.
6. They also noted that the All-Ireland Chalara ash die-back Conference took place in May 2014 and that DARD and DAFM are in the process of summarising stakeholder's responses to key questions. This should help in informing future policy development.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

7. The Council welcomed the continued work on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health & Welfare Strategy Action Plan since the last NSMC Agriculture meeting including:
 - the completed review of common disease surveillance priorities and the commitment to co-operation in areas of mutual benefit;
 - the agreement by DARD and DAFM of a "Common Chapter" dealing with control arrangements for African Horse Sickness;
 - the coming into operation of the Welfare of Animals at the Time Of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 on 21 May 2014;
 - the progress made by DARD towards OBF (Officially Brucellosis Free) status. DAFM now considering appropriate OBF monitoring regime following the expiry of the mandatory 5 year;
 - the progress made by DAFM officials to develop a code of practice for wild animals in circuses; and
 - the achievement of an agreement, in principle, to a joint contingency approach on rendering facilities.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

8. Ministers agreed the provision of proactive support by DARD and DECLG for LEADER Cooperation activities, including a specific focus on North South Cooperation.
9. The Council welcomed the intention of the Steering Committee for Cross Border Rural Development to proactively promote the development of rural recreation as a key driver in successful rural regeneration and noted that the

Rural Development projects funded through EU Interreg IVA are nearing completion and that a synopsis of the impacts and achievements of the Rural Development theme will be presented to the Council at a future meeting. Ministers welcomed the event following the meeting to mark the success of the Clones Erne East Blackwater project and redevelopment of the Canal Stores building.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD (*safefood*)

10. The NSMC approved the appointment of Mr Raymond Dolan as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Food Safety Promotion Board (*safefood*) with effect from 1 October 2014.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CEO OF INTERTRADEIRELAND

11. The Council also approved the appointment of Ms Margaret Hearty as Acting CEO of the Trade and Business Development Body (InterTradeIreland) on an interim basis.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12. The Council agreed to hold the next Agriculture meeting in Spring 2015.

**Joint Secretariat
1 October 2014**

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