



**PAPER NSMC AGR 2 (12) JC**

**NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**AGRICULTURE MEETING**

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,  
ARMAGH**

**25 JULY 2012**

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The eighteenth North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in Armagh on 25 July, 2012. The meeting was attended by Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Sammy Wilson MP, MLA Minister for Finance and Personnel. Minister Coveney chaired the meeting.

**EU RELATED MATTERS**

**COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)**

2. The Council discussed recent developments and next steps in the CAP reform process and noted the possibility that an EU agreement may be reached during the Irish EU Presidency in the first half of 2013. The Council further noted the strong commonality between Agriculture departments on the main issues. As the process develops, Ministers and officials will maintain close contact with a view to maximising benefits for farmers and rural communities in both jurisdictions.

## **REFORM OF THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY**

3. The Council noted that on 12 June the EU Council of Ministers agreed a “general approach” on proposals for a basic Common Fisheries Policy Regulation and the Common Market Organisation Regulation. The Danish Presidency has also submitted a progress report for the EU Council to note on a proposal for a European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Regulation. The EU Council’s agreed proposals for reform of the Common Fisheries Policy will be considered by the European Parliament. A final CFP reform package is likely to be agreed during the Irish EU Presidency in 2013. Ministers agreed that officials of the two Agriculture Departments will remain in close contact to ensure that shared aims for fisheries reform are represented to the greatest extent possible in the final agreement.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES**

4. Ministers discussed recent developments and opportunities on international trade, including the agri-food industry’s strong record of export-led growth making the sector well placed to exploit opportunities for increase global trade. Ministers also discussed prospects for developing agri-food links between China and Ireland in areas such as animal health, Equine studies, research and trade.

## **CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH**

5. The Council welcomed progress on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan, including:
  - submission to the EU by both Agriculture Departments of the applications for Aujeszky’s Disease free status, with the aim of having both applications considered at the same EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health meeting;
  - the hosting of an international vaccination experts’ scientific symposium in May 2012 in Belfast; which considered the potential that vaccination could play in the eradication of bovine TB;
  - further liaison between officials during discussions on the proposed new EU Animal Health Law; and
  - a successful joint cross- border mapping exercise “Exercise Mirrormap3” held on 29 February 2012.
6. Ministers looked forward to receiving a further progress report at their next meeting.

## **CO-OPERATION ON PLANT HEALTH**

7. The Council noted a progress report provided by the Plant Health and Pesticides Steering Group on the implementation of its work programme, including:
  - an informal meeting held in February 2012 to discuss potato and ornamental pests, surveys and the review of EU Plant Health Legislation and two forestry meetings held in March 2012;
  - facilitation, under the research agendas of the two Agriculture Departments, of a number of research projects including projects on potato blight, black leg and *Phytophthora ramorum* and the collaboration on the EU Euphresco project on current and emerging *Phytophthora* species;
  - preparations for a tri-lateral meeting with the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) to discuss areas of mutual concern in particular, the EU reform of the Plant Health Legislation; and
  - agreement to establish an early incident warning protocol in relation to measures to control pesticide use.
8. The Council also welcomed the continued significant ongoing cross-border co-operation in dealing with the challenges posed by outbreaks of *Phytophthora* diseases in forests.

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

9. Ministers welcomed ongoing co-operation on Rural Development Programme issues, specifically in relation to supporting cross-border engagement by Local Action Groups. Ministers also welcomed the progress of the €10M INTERREG IVA funding for six strategic, cross-border rural development projects and the recent launch of the following four projects:
  - Harnessing Natural Resources
  - Castleblaney & South Armagh (CASA) Rural Investment Initiative
  - River Links
  - Clones Erne East Blackwater (CEEB) Rural Regeneration.

## **ADDITIONAL MATTERS**

10. The Council approved the InterTradeIreland 2012 Business Plan and recommended the Budget and noted the Tourism Ireland Annual Report and Draft Accounts 2011.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

11. The Council agreed to hold its next Agriculture meeting on 31 October 2012.

**Joint Secretariat**  
**25 July 2012**