

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 1 (14) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

16 APRIL 2014

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty second North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in Armagh on 16 April 2014. The meeting was attended by Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Edwin Poots MLA, Minister for Health. Minister Coveney 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.
3. Ministers also discussed recent developments in International Trade.

COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)

4. The Council noted the plans, proposals and key issues arising from implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy reforms agreed in 2013. Ministers agreed the continued close contact between officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) concerning the policy options arising from the reform package and practical implementation issues.

CO-OPERATION ON PLANT HEALTH AND PESTICIDES

5. The Council noted that a detailed Document on Plant Health and Pesticides was presented to the NSMC in Agricultural format in November 2013. Ministers acknowledged that the Departments have worked closely in developing the protocol for the cross border movement of larch logs infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*, which will be finalised by Easter 2014. It was noted that the All – Ireland Chalara ash die-back Conference will take place on 8 May 2014.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

6. Ministers welcomed the continued work on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health & Welfare Strategy Action Plan since the last NSMC Agriculture meeting including:
 - That applications have been made by each relevant competent authority to the OIE for Peste Des Petites Ruminants (Sheep and Goat Plague) disease free status;
 - The making of African Horse Sickness Regulations by DAFM which now means there is a large degree of parity on the island for the control of any outbreak of this serious epizootic disease;
 - That significant progress has been made by DAFM officials to engage with key industry stakeholders in relation to wild animals in circuses;
 - The continued work by officials to scope the possibility of a joint contingency plan in relation to rendering capacity on the island of Ireland; and
 - That officials met in February 2014 and continue to progress work to establish respective disease surveillance priorities with a view to agreeing all island surveillance priorities.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

7. The Council noted the continued efforts and progress being made by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in relation to the development of all-island co-operation within their respective Rural Development Programmes 2014 – 2020.

8. Ministers welcomed the expected successful completion of all six EU INTERREG IVA rural development projects during 2014.

OTHER MATTERS

9. Ministers spoke about issues affecting the beef sector in some detail and agreed to continue to work together in this area.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10. The Council agreed to hold the next Agriculture meeting in September 2014 in the 'Canal Stores' building in Clones, the refurbishment of which has been funded as part of the EU INTERREG Programme.

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