

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 1 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

8 FEBRUARY 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The seventeenth North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 8 February 2012.
2. The meeting was attended by Michelle O'Neill, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell, MLA. Minister O'Neill chaired the meeting.

COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP) AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES

3. The Council discussed developments on the debate on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Ministers noted the most significant issues which have emerged to date and the next steps in the CAP reform process. The most significant issues include the distribution of the CAP budget to Member States, the movement to a flat rate payment within Member States or regions and the possible introduction of a greening component to the Pillar 1 budget.

4. Ministers also noted recent developments in international trade negotiations, agri-food matters and climate change conferences.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

5. The Council welcomed a presentation that had been made by Animal Health Ireland to the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Steering Group which included details of existing and potential future areas for cross-border industry co-operation.
6. Ministers also welcomed an update report on the delivery of the 2011/12 All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan, including:
 - the completion of a scoping paper on all-island animal disease surveillance priorities;
 - continuing close liaison during negotiations with the EU Commission on the proposed new EU Animal Health Law;
 - final preparations for the submission to the EU of applications for Aujeszky's Disease free status; and
 - agreement by officials to seek to align dealer registration systems.

A further progress report on the activities to deliver the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy will be made to Ministers at the next NSMC Agriculture meeting.

CO-OPERATION ON PLANT HEALTH

7. Ministers noted that the Plant Health and Pesticides Steering Group had met in December 2011. Sub groups to implement the work programme have been reconvened. A full progress report will be presented to Ministers at the next NSMC Agriculture meeting.
8. Ministers welcomed significant ongoing cross-border co-operation in dealing with the challenges posed by outbreaks of *Phytophthora ramorum* in Japanese larch forests and more recent outbreaks of *Phytophthora lateralis* affecting Lawson cypress trees.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9. The Council agreed to hold its next Agriculture meeting in June/July 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
8 February 2012**