

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 2 (13) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

13 NOVEMBER 2013

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty first North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in Armagh on 13 November 2013. The meeting was attended by Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Fergus O'Dowd, Minister of State at the Department of Environment Community and Local Government and Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA. Minister O'Neill chaired the meeting.
2. Ministers discussed recent developments in International Trade.

CO-OPERATION ON PLANT HEALTH

3. The Council agreed that the respective Agriculture Departments will work closely with a view to developing a protocol for the cross border movement of larch logs.
4. Ministers discussed and acknowledged:
 - ongoing cross border co-operation in an effort to control and eradicate tree diseases;

- that the All-Ireland Chalara Control Strategy” launched in July 2013 is being implemented;
- ongoing co-operation on laboratory diagnostics;
- ongoing discussions in relation to the possible co-ordinated introduction of pre-notification legislation for certain tree species;
- continuing co-operation on the proposed new EU Plant Health legislative regime;
- continuing co-operation on National Action Plans for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive and the pesticides usage surveys; and
- DARD’s intention to increase the resources devoted to plant health.

COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP)

5. The Council noted recent developments on CAP including the completion of the CAP reform political agreement between the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on 24 September 2013. Ministers noted that the legal texts arising from this political agreement should be adopted by the end of 2013, and agreed that the close contacts between DARD and DAFM officials on CAP issues should continue.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

6. Ministers agreed the significance of the continued work on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan, in particular:
 - that the African Horse Sickness Regulations (NI) 2013 will come in to operation on 18 November and DAFM is progressing similar legislation in line with the All-Island approach to deal with African Horse Sickness in the event of an outbreak of this epizootic disease;
 - the continued work by officials to scope the possibility of a joint contingency plan in relation to rendering capacity on the island of Ireland;
 - that officials are progressing work to establish respective disease surveillance priorities with a view of agreeing all island surveillance priorities; and
 - that officials from both jurisdictions continue engagement, including with GB Government departments to consider a range of equine registration issues.

EQUINE DISPOSAL SCHEME

7. The Council agreed that if significant equine welfare and abandonment issues arise over the coming winter, any required action will be on all-island basis.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

8. Ministers welcomed:

- the North South rural development conference held in October which will contribute to strengthening the delivery of the LEADER programme; and
- the announcement of support for rural, faith based community engagement.

The Council agreed that officials should organise a North South conference in 2014 to develop further co-operation ideas and activity with the intention of delivery of early projects and acknowledged the breadth of actions currently being delivered to support cross-border rural development through the current INTERREG programme.

ADDITIONAL MATTERS

9. Ministers approved the appointment of Mr Mick Murphy to the Board of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission from 13 November 2013 to 12 December 2015.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10. The Council agreed to hold its next Agriculture meeting in February 2014.

**Joint Secretariat
13 November 2013**

www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org