



Northern Ireland
Assembly

**COMMITTEE FOR
AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

OFFICIAL REPORT
(Hansard)

**Addendum to the Report on the Diseases
of Animals Bill**

3 November 2009

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

**COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr (Chairperson)
Mr Tom Elliott (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Burns
Mr Willie Clarke
Mr Pat Doherty
Mr William Irwin
Dr William McCrea
Mr Jim Shannon

The Chairperson (Mr Paisley Jnr):

We will now discuss the draft addendum to the report on the Diseases of Animals Bill. There are 25 paragraphs in the addendum, and Committee members will be asked either to agree or to amend each paragraph. Paragraphs 1 to 3 are about Committee membership and can be taken together if members are content. Are members content with paragraphs 1 to 3?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

The Committee's support team will make any agreed amendments to the report, the second draft of which will be brought to the Committee at its meeting on 10 November. When members are content with the draft, Committee officers will get the final report published and laid in the Business Office. It is expected that the Minister will have the Consideration Stage in either mid-

or late November, dependent on Executive clearance, and the Committee's support team will keep Members apprised of developments.

We have agreed paragraphs 1 to 3, so we will start with paragraph 4. Are members content with paragraph 4?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 5?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 6?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 7?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 8?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 9?

Dr W McCrea:

That is just a factual report of the sequence of events?

The Chairperson:

Yes.

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 10?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 11?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 12?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 13?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 14?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 15?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 16?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 17?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 18?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 19?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 20?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 21?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 22?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 23?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 24?

The Committee Clerk:

I reconsidered paragraph 24 when I reread the correspondence after I had produced the papers. At the meeting on 29 September, although members recommended the new clause 8 amendments, they indicated their concern about poor biosecurity and that the link to compensation was identified in the efficiency delivery plans. I suggest that we insert an additional couple of lines that read:

“The Committee also, however, recorded its disappointment that the Department has identified the reduction of brucellosis compensation arising out of poor biosecurity as a means of contributing towards departmental efficiency savings. The Committee is resolute in its position that the objective of this clause is the eradication of brucellosis in Northern Ireland and that the Department should not be distracted from the achievement of this objective by the targeting of brucellosis compensation as an efficiency saving.”

Dr W McCrea:

Absolutely. I compliment the Committee staff for producing a factual report. Our full discussion on the matter is factually contained in the report.

The Chairperson:

Do members agree with the paragraph 24, including the additional wording?

Members indicated assent.

Mr Elliott:

Do we need to include the issue of biosecurity guidance, which have debated for a long time? I am not aware that the Department has acted on that matter yet.

Dr W McCrea:

We want to ensure that the Committee plays a vital role in its drafting. The Department made that promise.

The Committee Clerk:

I need to check the original report to see whether it stated that the Committee wanted the biosecurity guidance to be included.

Dr W McCrea:

The Department made a clear promise.

The Chairperson:

Did the Minister mention that in Committee on 15 September?

Mr Elliott:

It has been discussed throughout the whole process.

Dr W McCrea:

The Department and the Minister assured the Committee that we would participate in the drafting.

The Committee Clerk:

The biosecurity guidance must be brought into effect by subordinate legislation. As part of that policy development, the Committee must see the biosecurity guidance before it is empowered.

Mr Elliott:

The problem is that the guidance will not form part of the subordinate legislation, because it is only a guidance document. The Committee was promised that it would have sight of, and be part of the drafting of, that document.

The Committee Clerk:

The legislation that empowers the guidance cannot pass if the guidance is not available to the Committee. Therefore, if subordinate legislation is not an option, Members can vote down the

legislation.

Dr W McCrea:

Yes. However, that is what we were promised. This is all factual.

Mr W Clarke:

I agree. Departmental officials stated that they were going to get a broad agreement with the vets and other stakeholders, including trade unions, and then come to the Committee.

The Chairperson:

Can the Committee include that in its record? I know that there is a reference at around paragraph 15 of the addendum to the report.

The Committee Clerk:

Paragraph 16(iv) of the addendum to the report on the Diseases of Animals Bill' states:

“The Committee and key industry representatives would be fully involved in drawing up the draft Biosecurity Guidance and the order specifying the key areas which would trigger consideration being given to the withholding of compensation.”

Mr Elliott:

I think that is enough, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with paragraph 24?

Members indicated assent.