

North/South Ministerial Council  
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuisidh/Theas  
An Chomhrunaidíocht

**PAPER NSMC AGR 1 (09) JC**

**NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

**AGRICULTURE SECTORAL FORMAT**

**FARMLEIGH HOUSE**  
**DUBLIN**

**20 MARCH 2009**

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The tenth NSMC meeting in Agriculture sectoral format was held in Farmleigh House, Dublin on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009.
2. The Irish Government was represented by Brendan Smith, TD, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and Sammy Wilson, MP, MLA, Minister of the Environment. Minister Smith chaired the meeting.
3. Ministers took note of the discussion at the NSMC Plenary meeting on 23 January of the recent animal feed contamination incident and its impact on farmers and producers across the island. They agreed to continue to work closely together in completing the measures the Irish Government and the NI Executive have put in place to tackle the matter. They also agreed to strengthen their cooperation in dealing with major incidents of this nature and requested their officials to review and, if necessary, revise the existing arrangements.

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

4. Ministers welcomed the consultation that has taken place in the development of the draft All Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and agreed to convene a cross-border event in 2009 which will bring together key stakeholders to discuss the delivery of the Strategy.

## **PLANT HEALTH AND PESTICIDES**

5. The Council noted progress made on the development of a strategic approach to plant health and pesticides. Senior officials from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are reviewing and identifying current and new areas of interest in both Plant Health and Pesticides and developing a programme of work. A joint report from the Departments will be submitted to the Council in early Autumn 2009.

## **COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY ISSUES (CAP)**

6. The Council discussed the outcome of the Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy, including increased modulation and related implications, changes in market management mechanisms, the management of milk quota expiry and simplification of the Single Farm Payment Scheme including cross compliance. Ministers agreed broadly on these issues with any differences in approach arising from the different circumstances applying North and South. Simplification is one of the areas where both administrations saw the possibility of useful gains.
7. The council also referred to the current state of play in regard to the WTO negotiations. Ministers shared the view that they wanted to see a fair, balanced and ambitious outcome but one which would not undermine Irish and EU agriculture. They were also of the view that the EU had made a very significant contribution to the negotiations.
8. The Council noted the benefit of continued discussion between Ministers on issues of common concern in relation to the EU Common Agriculture Policy and WTO, and requested officials to remain in close contact on CAP and WTO issues.

## **NEXT MEETING**

9. The Council agreed that its next meeting in Agriculture sectoral format would take place in June 2009.

**Joint Secretariat  
20 March 2009**