

North/South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh/Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 1 (10) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE SECTORAL FORMAT

AFBI, HILLSBOROUGH

31 MARCH 2010

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The thirteenth North South Ministerial Council meeting in Agriculture sectoral format was held in the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Hillsborough on 31 March 2010. The meeting was attended by Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Edwin Poots, MLA, Minister for the Environment, and Brendan Smith TD, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Minister Gildernew chaired the meeting.

CO-OPERATION ON RESEARCH

2. The Council noted a presentation by officials on Co-operation on Research, which dealt with the current structures and funding streams for research in both jurisdictions and demonstrated the importance and benefits of ongoing cooperation. They welcomed plans to continue this cooperation and engagement on areas of mutual interest and benefit, including access to international and EU Funding Programmes, and looked forward to receiving an update at a future NSMC meeting in the Agriculture sectoral format.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

3. The Council agreed an All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy designed to optimise the animal health status of the island through the alignment of policies to control animal disease. Full co-operation on animal health issues has the potential to help reduce and prevent animal disease spread and facilitate trade.
4. Ministers welcomed the ongoing progress on the delivery of initial activities of the Strategy including :
 - that progress towards the mutual recognition of Genotype Programmes is at an advanced stage; and
 - that the cross-border stakeholder event will take place on 12 April 2010.

CAP ISSUES

5. Ministers noted that the EU Commission is expected to publish a review of the EU budget in June/July 2010 and a Communication on the future of the CAP in Autumn 2010 and that DARD and DAFF will continue their consultations with stakeholders. Both administrations will remain in close contact as negotiations progress. Ministers also noted the challenges facing the agriculture sector, in particular in relation to greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, and requested officials to remain in close contact on these issues and report developments to a future NSMC meeting in Agriculture sectoral format.
6. The Council welcomed the allocation of €300m by the EU to assist dairy farmers severely affected by the dairy crisis and noted the method of allocation of payments to farmers.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. The Council agreed to hold its next meeting in the Agriculture sectoral format in late summer 2010.

**Joint Secretariat
31 March 2010**