

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC AGR 2 (11) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

26 OCTOBER 2011

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The sixteenth North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 26 October 2011.
2. The meeting was attended by Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Michelle O'Neill, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan TD Minister for the Environment Community and Local Government, and Edwin Poots, MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Minister Coveney chaired the meeting.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

3. The Council noted and welcomed ongoing co-operation on the Rural Development Programme, including support for cross-border engagement by Local Action Groups. Ministers welcomed approval of €10M of INTERREG IVA funding for six strategic cross-border rural development projects.
4. Ministers received a presentation outlining the work of the 'Harnessing Natural Resources' project led by Cavan County Enterprise Board in collaboration with

Cavan County Council, Fermanagh District Council, Leitrim County Council, Swanlinbar Development Association, Coillte and Inland Fisheries Ireland.

5. The Council noted the ongoing cooperation on approaches to tackling rural poverty and social exclusion. A year 1 independent review of the PEACE III Programme 'Rural Enabler' project has been undertaken and will shortly be presented to the SEUPB and the Project Steering Committee.

COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY (CAP) AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES

6. Ministers noted the publication by the EU Commission of the legislative proposals for the future of the Common Agricultural Policy including the alteration of national net ceilings for direct payments, changes to the single payment model, a green payment and a capping of large payments, changes to the details of rural development measures and changes on financial regulations.
7. The Council discussed the CAP reform process which will involve the debate of the Commission Proposals by the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, with the process expected to conclude in agreement before mid-2013.
8. The Council noted recent developments in international trade negotiations, particularly that in the negotiations with the MERCOSUR group of South American countries, the central issues of tariff liberalisations and market access are not expected to be addressed until mid 2012.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

9. Ministers welcomed the outcome of a joint meeting between Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) from both jurisdictions and the EU Commission at which the CVOs set out the case for the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and the Commission acknowledged that the Strategy's aims formed part of the considerations of the new EU Animal Health Law.
10. The Council also welcomed the Update Report on the delivery of the 2011/12 All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan, including:
 - the launch of the first All-Island Animal Disease Surveillance Report and the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding between official laboratories to foster enhanced co-operation and participation in collaborative research;
 - the recent developments on animal disease contingency planning including the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the production of maps of disease control zones in the case of an outbreak on either side of the border; and the preparations for a further joint mapping exercise on this.

11. Ministers welcomed collaboration which has assisted towards proving Aujeszky's Disease free status and agreed that Departments should continue to work closely to ensure that timing of submission of applications for Aujeszky's Disease free status are co-ordinated.
12. The Council looked forward to receiving a further progress report on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy at the next NSMC Agriculture meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. The Council agreed to hold its next Agriculture meeting in January 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
26 October 2011**