



PAPER NSMC AGR 2 (10) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

AGRICULTURE SECTORAL FORMAT

FARMLEIGH, DUBLIN

13 OCTOBER 2010

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fourteenth North South Ministerial Council meeting in Agriculture sectoral format was held in Farmleigh, Dublin on 13 October 2010. The meeting was attended by Brendan Smith TD, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Pat Carey TD, Minister for Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs, Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Edwin Poots, MLA, Minister for the Environment. Minister Smith chaired the meeting.

CO-OPERATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

2. The Council welcomed the on-going progress on the delivery of the initial activities of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and noted an Action Plan for 2010/11. Ministers looked forward to receiving a further progress report at the next NSMC meeting in Agriculture sectoral format.

CO-OPERATION ON PLANT HEALTH

3. Ministers noted the progress made by the Departments on the development of a work programme for a joint strategic approach to plant health and pesticides and looked forward to the work programme being presented to a meeting of the NSMC in Agriculture sectoral format in early 2011. They also noted the ongoing co-operation between the Departments in dealing with a number of outbreaks of *Phytophthora ramorum* in Japanese larch forests. There have been seven confirmed outbreak sites spread across counties Antrim and Down and four confirmed outbreak sites in counties Tipperary, Kilkenny and Cork. Ground and aerial surveys continue to be carried out to determine the distribution of this disease. At the commencement of the outbreaks, the relevant Contingency Plans were applied in both jurisdictions and there is significant ongoing co-operation between the Agriculture Departments on the issue.

CAP AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES

4. The Council noted the upcoming publication by the European Commission of its communication on the future of the CAP.
5. Ministers welcomed the improvement in the dairy market situation. The European dairy industry was in serious crisis during most of 2009 due to a substantial price drop for dairy products resulting in a significant reduction in prices paid to dairy farmers. In late 2009 the dairy market improved and returns have now stabilised.
6. In relation to international trade, the Council also noted the absence of developments in relation to the WTO DOHA round of trade talks and the re-launching of trade negotiations with the MERCOSUR group of South American countries.

CO-OPERATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

7. The Council welcomed a presentation by DCEGA and DARD officials on their approaches to their respective Rural White Papers and the cross-border dimensions to this work.
8. Ministers formally endorsed the Rural Enabler Project, which seeks to address issues of sectarianism and racism in a rural context, and which has been approved funding of £2.7m under the PEACE III Programme.
9. The Council noted :
 - the launch of 'Local Action Group guidance on North South Cooperation projects' that will be used by both Departments for the LEADER elements of their respective Rural Development Programmes and the planned seminar for early December where Local Action

Groups will be invited to network and develop potential cross border projects.

- the high level of interest in the funding of €10m available from the Rural Development element of the INTERREG IVA Programme to address rural disadvantage / deprivation through strategic cross-border actions within the eligible area of Northern Ireland, the border counties of Ireland and Western Scotland and that it is expected that funding awards will be made later in 2010; and
- the upcoming conference on combating rural poverty and social exclusion at which Minister Carey and Minister Gildernew have been invited to speak.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10. The Council agreed to hold its next meeting in Agriculture sectoral format in January 2011.

**Joint Secretariat
13 October 2010**