

Minutes of AFSB Meeting 32: Thursday 20 April 2017

Time	14.00 – 16.30	
Venue	Boardroom, InvestNI, Bedford Square	
Present	Tony O'Neill (Chair)	
	Declan Billington Trevor Lockhart Brian Dolaghan Jim Dobson	Francis Martin Ian Marshall John Thompson
Apologies	Owen Brennan David Small Norman Fulton	David Dobbin Eugene Rooney
Observers/Officials	Elaine McCrory, DAERA	
Support Team	Emma Murphy, DAERA	Amanda McIlwaine, DFE

1. Welcome

The Chair thanked all for attending and noted the apologies from those who were not present.

2. Chair's Update

The Chair provided an overview of activities which had taken place since the last meeting of the Board, including:

- A well-received Supply Chain Forum event focussing on the challenges and opportunities arising from Brexit;
- A number of meetings with various players on proposed industry funding arrangements for initiatives such as the marketing organisation and livestock genomics, which had been received positively and were now being progressed, including via the UFU;
- Meetings with Bord Bia and DfE/DAERA officials on both the marketing and livestock genomics initiatives to progress the respective business cases; and
- A series of roundtable events on Brexit intended to raise and increase awareness of the issues among stakeholders and prompt discussion on how industry might address these.

3. Update on the Agri Food Marketing Body

A progress report provided by DfE had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

The Chair provided a verbal update on AFSB interaction with the SIB consultant who has been tasked with developing the business case. He noted Board Members'

frustration with the delay in the delivery of the business case, and in the apparent lack of understanding of what the marketing body was intended to do and achieve. The Chair noted a recent paper provided by SIB on costings for the body and raised a concern that agreed fundamentals had been lost and that a 'watered down' business case was being developed. He further commented that the Board would not agree such a document.

It was noted that DfE has sought a first draft of the business case from SIB by Tuesday 25 April 2017, and that AFSB Members would be working closely with the consultant to ensure that the draft represented the previously agreed vision and principles and to provide specific information on the programme of work envisaged. It was further noted that it would be important to link together the quantum of spend proposed with the anticipated outcome.

The Chair will also be meeting Eugene Rooney to outline the concerns of the Board.

Action 1: Industry Board members (Trevor, Declan and Ian) to provide further information to SIB consultant.

Action 2: Chair to meet Eugene Rooney on his return to outline AFSB concerns.

4. Update on the Genomics Project

Ian Marshall provided an update on the livestock genomics project, noting that the draft business case had now been formally submitted to DAERA. He noted a frustration that the incentive element (schemes to encourage industry uptake), included at the request of the Department, was now being challenged as unaffordable; however the sub-group continues to work to develop the implementation plan whilst awaiting a DAERA's formal evaluation of the business case.

The Chair acknowledged the funding challenges for government but noted that the previous spirit of co-operative working between industry and government which had been driving both the marketing and genomics projects seemed to be diminishing, and he was concerned that successful delivery of these two key remaining elements of the AFSB's work would now be a particular challenge.

5. Brexit

There was a discussion on the earlier Brexit roundtable meeting, featuring Breffni Carpenter, and the previous events hosted by the AFSB. In general it was felt that these events were useful in terms of raising and increasing awareness of the challenges faced by industry, and that it would be useful to hear from some pro-Brexit speakers who may be able to provide clarity on the opportunities arising.

The Chair provided an update on various work being undertaken at a sectoral level to assess the impact and outcomes of Brexit and to anticipate the future short-term needs of the industry in terms of investment. It was noted that DAERA is also analysing trade relationships between NI and EU member states to help inform future policy, and had commissioned scenario planning work using the FAPRI model. It was suggested that the industry research should also feed into the Department's work.

The Chair noted that DAERA officials were attending UK Ministers meetings on Brexit, and he had met Graeme Wilkinson, DAERA Director of Brexit, to highlight some general industry principles, including the need for a transition window which would provide some security for industry and allow for appropriate investment and restructuring decisions. He emphasised the importance of industry being vocal and feeding into the Department's work. He also noted the importance of building a wider coalition of NI interests, bringing together producers, processors and environmental interests.

The Brexit Consultative Committee is due to meet again on 04 May, and it is hoped that the DAERA modelling exercise will be available for discussion at that stage.

Action 3: AFSB Members to identify a pro-Brexit speaker for future event.

6. End of Tenure – Outstanding Issues

Discussion was deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints.

7. Any other Business

John Thompson asked the Board to endorse a proposal from AHWNI that movement restrictions be applied to those herds where PI stock was being retained in order to accelerate eradication of BVD, in line with the timetable for eradication in RoI. He indicated that the proposal was supported by farmers, had no cost and was already provided for within the existing legislation. The Chair noted this seemed to be a sensible proposal and agreed to seek an update from DAERA on its position.

Action 4: Secretariat to seek formal comments from DAERA Veterinary Service and Animal Health Group on proposal to introduce herd movement restrictions.

8. Date of Next Meeting

A further meeting will be scheduled for May 2017.