

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013

## **Food Fortress Initiative Launched**

The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) and DARD have hosted a red meat stakeholder meeting to formally launch the Food Fortress Feed Materials Scheme and to highlight quality and traceability of our local meat.

Pat O'Rourke, Chairman of LMC and Chair of the event said "Industry has now officially launched the 'Food Fortress Feed Materials Scheme'. Food Fortress is an industry wide initiative that will enhance assurance in the supply chain and allow the agri-food industry to promote our local, traceable, quality assured produce to both new and existing customers with greater confidence.

The event highlighted how cutting edge technology and innovative risk assessment practices designed at the world leading Global Food Safety Unit at Queens University Belfast will be used to strategically sample and test animal feed and therefore minimize the risk of contamination in the supply chain. This initiative will be implemented by industry in 2014 and will strengthen the robust food production systems and processes that we have in place in Northern Ireland at present".

The theme of the stakeholder event was 'Working Together for Growth-Thinking Globally, Acting Locally'. DARD Permanent Secretary Noel Lavery welcomed delegates before Professor Chris Elliott, Director of the Institute of Global Food Security at Queens University, gave a presentation on risk management in the food industry and Robin Irvine, Chief Executive of the NI Grain Trade Association, explained the 'Food Fortress' feed assurance initiative. Ian Stevenson, Chief Executive of the Livestock and Meat Commission, indicated how the red meat industry will implement the 'Food Fortress' initiative.

Mr O'Rourke continued, "The beef and sheep meat industry will be one of the first sectors to implement this new initiative. The beef and sheep industry contributes over £1bn to the local economy and the sector continues to grow. This growth is based on our ability to produce high quality produce for markets both at home and

for export markets. The Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS) underpins beef and sheep production in Northern Ireland and the introduction of the Food Fortress Feed Materials Scheme is further evidence of how seriously we take food production here. Customers demand food that is safe, wholesome, nutritious and produced to the highest standards and that is exactly what our local beef and sheep industry delivers.”

Ends

**Notes to Editors:**

1. A copy of the presentations can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#)
2. For more information contact Colin Smith, LMC Industry Development Manager Tel: 028 9263 3000 or email: [csmith@lmcni.com](mailto:csmith@lmcni.com)