

**MINUTES OF A REMOTE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION HELD ON
MONDAY 01 JUNE 2020 AT 10.00AM BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Present:

Mr G McGivern (Chairman)
Mrs O Chesney
Mr J Lennon
Mr G Maguire
Mr P McElroy
Mr H Sinclair

In attendance:

Mr I Stevenson
Miss S Blain

2020/4/1 Apologies

None.

2020/4/2 Declaration of Interests Pertaining to Agenda Items for Discussion

The Board agreed that none of the agenda items required any Board members to abstain from discussions.

**Compliance with the Management Statement & Financial
Memorandum, Sponsor Manual and Managing Public Money NI**

Confirmed.

2020/4/3 Minutes of Commission Meeting Held on 27 April 2020

The minutes of a meeting, held on 27 April 2020, were approved by the Commission and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed: Mr J Lennon
Seconded: Mrs O Chesney

2020/4/4 Matters Arising

➤ **Balmoral Show**

The Board noted that the rescheduled 2020 Show had now been cancelled

Signed _____
Chairman

➤ **Red Tractor**

The Chief Executive reported that a meeting of the National Devolved Beef and Lamb Assurance Schemes with Red Tractor on 7 May 2020 had been a useful step forward in progressing a framework for mutual recognition of each other's schemes and for agreeing membership fees for participation in red tractor – the 2020/21 contribution would be a 10% increase on 2019/20

2020/4/5 Correspondence

➤ **AERA Committee**

The Board discussed recent correspondence from the NI Assembly Committee for Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs and LMC's responses to three recent items of correspondence. The Board was content with the level of detail and information in the LMC responses and the fact that the AERA Committee was communicating so regularly with LMC. The Board identified that promotion of the Northern Ireland meat industry's credentials and products in external and international markets was an area that hadn't been raised in the AERA Committee correspondence.

Action Point: The Chief Executive will draw this important matter to the attention of the Committee when the next opportunity arises.

➤ **House of Lords**

The Board noted correspondence from the House of Lords EU Environment Sub-Committee regarding its launch of a new short inquiry on what the Northern Ireland Protocol will mean for the agri-food industry in Northern Ireland and the trade of agri-food products between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. The Chief Executive reported that he had spoken with the Policy Analyst for the Sub-Committee and had provided him with some suggestions regarding the scope of the inquiry, potential areas of focus and key stakeholders to contact in the Northern Ireland Beef and Sheep Meat Sector for the oral evidence sessions it was holding in June.

➤ **NI Farm Groups**

The Board considered the correspondence from NI Farm Groups and agreed that a meeting with the LMC Board was not needed at this time.

Action Point: The Chief Executive will send a response to the NI Farm Groups letter outlining the industry engagement which had taken place and the FQAS Industry Board agreement to resume FQAS on-farm inspections.

Signed _____
Chairman

2020/4/6 Chairman's Update

The Chairman reported on a number of teleconferences and zoom calls which he had participated in since the last meeting including a DAERA/ALB meeting on 30 April 2020 and a meeting with the Lissue House PAD Project Team on 13 May 2020. The Chairman noted the very useful summaries which were being circulated to the Board by the Chief Executive after each of the weekly Covid-19 DAERA Agri-food Industry conference calls. He also commended the staff team at LMC for the excellent work being done during lockdown and in particular the increased presence on social media with communication and promotional activity.

Mr G Maguire agreed with the Chairman that the summaries of the weekly industry calls with DAERA on Covid-19 were useful and he also updated the Board on what was currently happening on the ground in meat processing plants. He noted that the NI industry was very quick at the outset to put in place social distancing and workplace safety measures, which had built trust and confidence and were functioning well. He said that a lot had been invested in these measures to date and that a strong case was being made to government by NIMEA for assistance with these costs being borne by industry and for grant support to help with the building of new amenities. With Covid-19 recovery underway, the focus was definitely switching to Brexit and the economics of the new business operating environment.

Action Point: Chief Executive to ensure that stakeholders are copied into the LMC press release which is to be issued on the success of the #steakhousesaturday social media campaign.

Action Point: Chief Executive to communicate the Board's feedback to staff on the high quality of work being done in support of LMC stakeholders during this period of lockdown.

2020/4/7 Chief Executive's Report

In advance of the meeting the Chief Executive circulated a number of papers relating to this section of the meeting.

➤ Gifts and Hospitality

Action Point: The Board approved the 2019/20 Gifts and Hospitality Register for publication on the LMC website.

➤ FQAS Inspections

The Board noted that on-farm inspections would be re-commencing on Monday 8 June 2020 and that a detailed protocol for safely conducting the inspections had been agreed by the FQAS Industry Board and NIFCC.

Signed _____
Chairman

➤ *Withheld – commercially sensitive*

➤ **CoI Declarations**

Action Point: All Board members to complete and return their annual Conflict of Interest Declaration forms to the Chief Executive.

➤ **European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS)**

Action Point: The Board agreed that the Chief Executive should submit his name to the on-going elections for membership of the ERBS Board.

➤ **UK Cattle Sustainability Platform**

Action Point: The Board agreed that the Chief Executive should submit his name to the on-going elections for Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the UK Cattle Sustainability Platform.

➤ **Summary Management Accounts**

The Board discussed the summary management accounts for the year to end March 2020. The Board noted that Covid-19 had led to an unavoidable surplus in the FQAS account at year end. Many on farm inspections had been cancelled by farmers as soon as Covid-19 emerged in Northern Ireland and as the lockdown progressed the FQAS Board decided to defer all on-farm inspections from 18 March 2020.

Action Point: The Board approved the Summary Management Accounts.

2020/4/8

Covid-19 Developments

The Board noted the comprehensive work which had been undertaken by LMC in partnership with UFU and NIMEA to help quantify the losses to the beef and sheep sector as a direct consequence of Covid-19. Further to the announcement on 20 May 2020 by Minister Poots that a £25 million funding boost had been secured for the beef and dairy sectors as they grapple with the effects and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, LMC has been working closely with industry stakeholders to quantify an appropriate share of this funding for the beef and sheep sector.

Action Point: The Chief Executive will request a meeting for the red meat supply chain with Minister Poots to discuss the Covid support package.

Signed _____
Chairman

2020/4/9 *Withheld – commercially sensitive*

2020/4/10 Board Self-Assessment

The Board was circulated prior to the meeting with an amalgamated summary of all member responses to the Board Self-Assessment exercise. The Chairman thanked members for their active participation in the exercise. He noted that some of the common themes recorded in the written comments were important considerations for LMC strategy such as how can the organisation reward achievement, how does LMC benchmark itself to other organisations and how can the future marketing of the industry be improved.

2020/4/11 Risk Management / Health and Safety

➤ **External Audit**

The Board noted that External Audit was scheduled to commence on 1 July 2020. With no LMC Board meeting scheduled for July 2020 an ARAC meeting can be held remotely when required.

➤ **Risk Assessment**

The Chief Executive advised that a review of the Covid-19 Risk Assessment of the office workplace was currently being led by the Corporate Governance Manager in order to ensure that as more people returned to Lissie Walk that measures were in place to protect the health and safety of staff, suppliers and visitors. LMC and NIFCC were both still operating to the guidance that all staff who can work from home would continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

2020/4/12 Any Other Business

➤ **Joint DAERA/LMC Board Meeting**

With regard to agenda items for this meeting the Board was happy with the meeting taking the form of free-flowing strategic level discussion and that as part of that discussion the topics of Covid-19 recovery and resetting, Brexit, food strategy, sustainability and support for agri-food marketing were highlighted as important ones to try and cover.

2020/4/13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Mon 29 June 2020 at 10am.

The Board meeting ended at 12.15pm.

Signed _____
Chairman