

**MINUTES OF A REMOTE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION HELD ON MONDAY 23
NOVEMBER 2020 AT 10.00 AM BY MS TEAMS**

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

2020/8/1 Apologies

None.

2020/8/2 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.

2020/8/3 Minutes of Commission Meeting Held on 26 October 2020

The minutes of a meeting, held on 26 October 2020, were approved by the Commission and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed: Mrs O Chesney

Seconded: Mr G Maguire

2020/8/4 Matters Arising

- **AgriSearch**

Further to discussion at the last meeting the Chief Executive had circulated with the papers for this meeting a copy of the AgriSearch Strategy presentation.

Action Point: The Chief Executive will arrange for a briefing of the LMC Board by AgriSearch in the New Year.

Signed _____
Chairman

- *Withheld – commercially sensitive*
- **Stakeholder Engagement:**

The Chief Executive informed the Board that DAERA had scheduled the first of its EU Exit Stakeholder briefings for Monday 23 November 2020 and as the timing of that briefing had not been known until a few days prior to the Board meeting it was not possible to schedule a stakeholder engagement with the LMC Board at this meeting.

Action Point: The Chief Executive will try to schedule a stakeholder engagement with the LMC Board for early February 2020.

2020/8/5 Chairman's Report

The Chairman commented on a number of current issues affecting LMC and the red meat industry and some take home messages from his participation in a series of meetings and events since the last meeting of the Board.

- An Irish Farmers Journal Webinar on Brexit and International Trade on 27 October 2020 which provided some very useful insight to the Brexit negotiations by Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney. International trade with the USA was also discussed and what the approach to trade deals is likely to be under a Biden Administration;
- *Withheld – commercially sensitive*
- An Irish Farmers Journal Webinar on Sustainability and Agri-Food on 03 November 2020 where it was noted that the term 'suckler beef' is not widely used or known outside the British Isles;
- An OFC Bitesize conference on 05 November 2020 entitled Farmers in Competition with former Prime Minister of Australia and appointed adviser to UK Board of Trade, Tony Abbott and NFU President, Minette Batters, discussing their very different views on the basis for future trade deals with the UK and what these could mean for the industry and consumers;
- A very insightful AFBI closed discussion forum on 18 November 2020 which considered the latest FAPRI – UK report on the 'Impact on UK Agriculture of Changes to Direct Payments Following Brexit';
- An Agricultural Flat Rate VAT Project steering group meeting on 20 November 2020. The Chairman commented that the Grant Thornton report on 'levelling the playing field' was another good piece of work commissioned by LMC and would be well received by industry stakeholders.

With the on-going Covid-19 restrictions limiting the ability for indoor gatherings the Chairman advised that it would not be possible to hold the annual Staff / Board engagement and Christmas lunch in December 2020.

Signed _____
Chairman

Withheld – commercially sensitive

Action Point: The Board agreed that exempt payments as per HMRC guidelines would be made to meet or reimburse reasonable additional household expenses that LMC employees have incurred as a result of carrying out the duties of their employment at home under homeworking arrangements due to Covid-19.

2020/8/6 Chief Executive’s Report

In advance of the meeting the Chief Executive had circulated a written report relating to this section of the meeting.

- *Withheld – commercially sensitive*

- **State Aid**

Update noted.

- *Withheld – commercially sensitive*

2020/8/7 Covid-19

The Board discussed latest developments regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The high level of Covid-19 positive cases in the Northern Health Trust area was noted. *Withheld - commercially sensitive.* The spread of Covid-19 within the community (outside the control of factory management and operating protocols) creates a very difficult situation for businesses and there is a strong push being made by stakeholder organisations to get key workers in food businesses prioritised as much as possible for vaccinations when they become available.

2020/8/8 UK Exit from the EU

The Board discussed latest developments regarding the UK’s exit from the EU as the end of the transition period draws near. It was noted that DAERA has scheduled a series of three stakeholder engagement webinars on 23 November, 08 December and 15 December 2020 to help inform industry of the new arrangements for moving agri-food products in and out of Northern Ireland which will be starting on 01 January 2021. Moving products of animal origin from Great Britain to Northern Ireland (which is a valuable sources of raw material for fulfilling business orders) will become much more of a challenge with potential for significant administrative and physical checks.

Signed _____
Chairman

2020/8/9 PGI for Irish Grass Fed Beef

The Chief Executive briefed the Board on developments since the last meeting including the significant media attention which had ensued following the recent issue of a joint LMC, NIMEA and UFU press release on the issue; the engagement between Minister Poots and Minister McConalogue on the issue; clarification which LMC had been able to get from Tania in the Brussels Office on the EU Opposition Procedure for PGI registrations and processes for making amendments, and; a further request which had been made to Bord Bia for technical details on the grass fed standard verification and follow-up meeting.

Action Point: The Board agreed that it was important for LMC and industry to keep pushing this issue as hard as possible with officials and with Bord Bia to try and ensure that Northern Ireland is included in the PGI application from the outset as there was no guarantee of getting in at a later date.

2020/8/10 Agricultural Flat Rate VAT (AFRV)

The Board was briefed on the findings of the Agricultural Flat Rate VAT project which was being carried out by Grant Thornton for LMC. The Chief Executive has been chairing a small project steering group comprising members of NIMEA, UFU and LMC to help facilitate the work by Grant Thornton. *Withheld – commercially sensitive.* The final report of the project will hopefully be finalised after the next steering group meeting on 27 November 2020.

Action Point: The board agreed that once the report is finalised that LMC should fully support the stakeholders lobbying efforts to try and effect change in this important area.

2020/8/11 Red Tractor Assurance

The Chief Executive briefed the Board on an important engagement which had taken place on Friday 20 November 2020 of the Beef and Lamb Assurance Schemes leadership teams in Scotland (QMS), Wales (WLBP) and Northern Ireland (FQAS) with Red Tractor. *Withheld commercially sensitive.* Some further engagement is needed to iron out a few technical details but it is hoped that a common framework can soon be agreed to define the mutually beneficial relationship between the schemes and how this will operate going forward.

2020/8/12 Risk Management/Health & Safety

- **Draft Minutes of LMC Audit & Risk Assurance Committee Meeting held on 26 October 2020** – Noted.
- **LMC Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20** – Final copy has been submitted to the C&AG for signature.

Signed _____
Chairman

2020/8/13 Any Other Business

- *Withheld – commercially sensitive*

- **Publication of Annual Reports**

The process for approval and laying of LMC's Annual Reports and Accounts was discussed. It was noted that formal approval of the ARA's for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 had been given by Minister Poots and these can now be laid. Once written confirmation is available from DAERA then these will be published on the LMC website.

2020/8/14 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Monday 14 December at 10.00am on Microsoft teams.

The Board meeting ended at 12.00pm.

Signed _____
Chairman