



An Rialálaí Agraibhia Agri-Food Regulator

Note of the Ninth Meeting of the Board of the Agri-Food Regulator which took place on 9 December 2024 at 11a.m. in the First Floor Boardroom, Shared Services Building, Backweston Campus, Celbridge, Co Kildare, Ireland, W23 X3PH

Date	9 December 2024
Time	11.00 – 14.40
Location	First Floor, Shared Services Building, Backweston Campus
In attendance	Board of the Agri-Food Regulator: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Joe Healy, Chair- Paul Brophy- Karen Brosnan- John Comer (until 13.40)- Margaret Dineen- Elaine Donohoe- Grace McCullen- Angus Woods (until 13.40) Agri-Food Regulator <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Niamh Lenehan, CEO- Robert Levins (Item 7)- Aiden Kelly (Item 8)- Lisa Evers (minute-taker) Drury <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deirdre Sheahan (Item 10)

Item 1: Opening by Chair

Item 2: Conflict(s) of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest noted.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of meeting on 15 October 2024 were approved.



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Item 4: Approval of previous Board meeting notes for publishing

The Board approved the meeting notes of the Board meeting on 4 September 2024 for publication.

Item 5: Audit & Risk Committee

Management accounts were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and will be provided on a quarterly basis.

It was noted that the ARC brought forward a proposal to appoint an external member to the ARC. The 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies recommends that the ARC should have members drawn from outside the Board. The Board agreed that the proposal to appoint an external member of the ARC should be progressed.

An internal audit of the Regulator is expected to start by year end and the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) audit is expected around April 2025.

Item 6: Budget 2025 – Update

It was noted that the Chair wrote to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in early December requesting clarification on the 2025 budget allocation for the Agri-Food Regulator. It was further noted that the Minister, in his meeting with the Board on establishment day, was clear on his commitment to An Rialálaí Agraibhia in respect of the provision of required support and resources. It was agreed by the Board that the Chair would write again to the Minister on their behalf with respect to both the budget allocation for 2025 and next steps regarding the 17(4) report submission.



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Item 7: Price and Market Data Analysis - Data Requests Update

The Executive provided an overview of progress with the current data request on horticulture. An overview of the current draft of the beef report was provided also. The Board agreed on 6 December to the publishing of this information on beef (see note on decision of ad-hoc meeting on 6 December further below). The Board approved the publication of the report that afternoon.

The Executive also provided the Board with an overview of publicly available data on the dairy sector. There is an opportunity for the Regulator to add value by collating available information.

- Ad-Hoc Meeting (6 December): Decision

An ad-hoc meeting of the Board was held on 6 December 2024 for the purpose of gaining approval to publish the first beef pricing report on 9 December. The proposal to publish was approved by the Board. In discussions, it was noted that the values in the report to be published are based on the average of values received from relevant processors. These figures are not consistent with figures provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to the EU as in this instance, the figures are weighted by national kill data. The Regulator does not have access to the national kill data to weight the figures received. The Board decided that the current methodology be used for the time being and that a data sharing agreement would be sought as soon as possible with DAFM regarding the sharing of weighted figures. It was further noted that a press conference is planned after the Board meeting on 9 December to reflect on the past year (first anniversary occurs on 13 December) and to launch the first beef report.



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Item 8: Unfair Trading Practices – Complaint Investigation

It was noted that the Agri-Food Regulator had secured a conviction in respect of a breach of the Unfair Trading Regulations on 15 November. The Court has placed a stay on the conviction until 13 December indicating that it would consider a fine and adjudicate on costs on that date. The Board congratulated the Executive on the successful outcome of the case.

Item 9: 2025 Supplier Survey & Event

The Board have previously approved the development of a survey for suppliers upstream of primary producers. The CEO provided an overview of the Executive's proposal regarding the mechanics of a supplier survey in 2025 and an event in May which would be used, *inter alia*, to present results. In developing this proposal, the model in place at the UK's Groceries Code Adjudicator was examined.

Item 10: Communications – Overview of 2024 & looking ahead

Deirdre Sheahan from Drury attended for this item. Drury noted that it was a very strong year for the Agri-Food Regulator with communications activities focussing on the development of a strong identity and understanding of the role of the Regulator.

Board members referred to the possibility of further leveraging retail publications in addition to events such as Blásta and Bloom for example. It was further noted that Ireland will hold the EU Presidency in 2026 and this could provide further opportunities to meet with counterparts from other EU countries.



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Item 11: CEO Update

The CEO provided a summary of the written update provided to the Board in advance of the meeting.

Item 12: Board Meeting Dates

The Board discussed meeting dates for 2025 and the following were agreed but are subject to change:

- Monday, 20 January
- Monday, 17 February
- Friday, 21 March
- Friday, 9 May
- Thursday, 10 July
- Friday, 5 September
- Monday, 20 October
- Tuesday, 9 December

Item 13: For Noting

The Regulator's website analytics report was noted.

Item 14: AOB

The Chair congratulated the CEO, staff and Board members of An Rialálaí Agraibhia on its first-year anniversary.

Next Board meeting will occur on 20 January 2025.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.