



An Rialálaí Agraibhia Agri-Food Regulator

(REF ARA/N12/4)

Note of the tenth Meeting of the Board of the Agri-Food Regulator which took place on 20 January 2025 at 11 a.m. Boardroom, Agri-Food Regulator's Office, Backweston Campus, Celbridge, Co Kildare, Ireland, W23 X3PH

Date	20 January 2025
Time	11.00 – 15.00
Location	Agri-Food Regulator Boardroom, 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- Margaret Dineen- Elaine Donohoe- Grace McCullen- Angus Woods Agri-Food Regulator <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Niamh Lenehan, CEO- Aiden Kelly (Item 7)- Robert Lanigan (Item 8)- Lisa Evers (minute-taker)

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 9 December 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 15 October 2024 for publication.

Item 5: Audit & Risk Committee

A set of financial policies and procedures in addition to the Corporate Procurement Policy were presented to the Board for approval. The Board noted that the financial policies and procedures were well written and comprehensive. The policies and related procedures were approved by the Board subject to a typo noted by Angus Woods related to a figure on page 75 regarding 'Authorisation of Expenditure'.

The ARC is progressing the appointment of an independent member to the ARC.

It is understood that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) are to start the internal audit imminently.

Item 6: Budget 2025 and 17(4) Report

The Chair and CEO met with the Minister and DAFM officials on 15 January. The budget allocation for 2025 has been confirmed as €1.96m. The Chair indicated to the Board that he made the Minister aware of the disappointment the Board felt at the reduction of approximately 25% in contrast to the budget allocation in 2024. It was noted to the Minister that this budget allocation was decided at a time in its first year when the Regulator was actively building its capacity, in respect of both its staff and work programme. The Chair noted that the Minister indicated his support for the office.



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In respect of the 17(4) report submission, DAFM indicated that progress on the matter is a priority for them. DAFM intend to respond soon to the submission made by the Regulator last September and include a number of questions for the Agri-Food Regulator to consider.

The Board then spoke about the upcoming formation of the new Government and the appointment of a new Minister for Agriculture. It was suggested a letter of congratulations should be sent to the new Minister and also the new Ministers of State when appointed. This would also be an opportunity to highlight the work of the Agri-Food Regulator, its current requests before the Minister's Office and also to extend an invitation to meet with the Regulator.

Item 7: Conference May 2025

Aiden Kelly attended for this item. Aiden provided an overview of the draft programme for the event, the organisation of which was previously approved by the Board. It was noted that the event is a very significant undertaking for the Regulator in terms of resources and important for the Regulator in enhancing its brand awareness and visibility.

The event will take place on 20th May 2025 in Johnstown Estate Hotel, Enfield.

Item 8: Draft Communications Plan

Robert Lanigan attended for this item. Robert gave the Board an overview of the communications plan for 2025. He cited the list of upcoming opportunities where the Regulator will engage with stakeholders including the announcement of supplier survey findings and related event; the Compliance Buyers' Campaign, the ESG in Dairy Summit, where the CEO will be a panel speaker, publication of the 2024 Annual Report and a number of agricultural shows, including the Tullamore Show and National Ploughing Championships. Each activity will be communicated via specific platforms to target maximum coverage.



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Board members also suggested other events where the Regulator may consider attendance such as the Bord Bia Buyers' Breakfast event at Bloom and BLÁS na hÉireann Food awards.

Item 9: Policies and Procedures

Four policies were presented to the Board for approval - Blended Working Policy, Dignity at Work, Grievance Procedure and Disciplinary Code.

Following discussion, the Board approved all policies.

Item 10: CEO Update

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

Item 11: For Noting

The Agri-Food Regulator website analytics report was noted.

Item 12: AOB

- The CEO said the Executive will begin the process of procuring services for the development of a new website in the coming period.

Next Board meeting will occur on 17 February 2025.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING