



# An Rialálaí Agraibhia Agri-Food Regulator

**Note of the twelfth Meeting of the Board of the Agri-Food Regulator which took place on 21 March 2025 at 11 a.m. - Boardroom, Agri-Food Regulator's Office, Backweston Campus, Celbridge, Co Kildare, Ireland, W23 X3P**

<b>Date</b>	21 March 2025
<b>Time</b>	11.00 – 14.40
<b>Location</b>	Agri-Food Regulator Boardroom, Backweston Campus
<b>In attendance</b>	<p><b>Board of the Agri-Food Regulator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Joe Healy, Chair</li><li>- Paul Brophy</li><li>- Karen Brosnan</li><li>- John Comer</li><li>- Margaret Dineen</li><li>- Grace McCullen</li><li>- Angus Woods</li><li>- Elaine Donohue</li></ul> <p><b>Agri-Food Regulator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Niamh Lenehan, CEO</li><li>- Aiden Kelly and Mel Hall (Item 7)</li><li>- Lisa Evers (minute-taker)</li></ul> <p><b>Crowleys DFK:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- David Coombes (Item 5)</li></ul>

**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 Board Meeting**



# An Rialálaí Agraibhia Agri-Food Regulator

Minutes of the meeting on 17 February 2025 were approved.

## **Item 4: Approval of Board Meeting Notes for Publishing**

The Board approved the notes of the Board meeting on 20 January 2025 for publication.

## **Item 5: Audit & Risk Committee**

Mr. David Coombes attended for this item.

Ms. Margaret Dineen noted that the draft 2024 Financial Statements have been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The Regulator is required to submit its Financial Statements to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) by 28<sup>th</sup> February. The Financial Statements must also be submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) by 31<sup>st</sup> March. An audit date has not yet been confirmed by the C&AG.

The Financial Statements were presented to the Board by Mr. Coombes for discussion and approval. It was discussed that understanding of the documents would be improved in particular by adding a note on accruals in addition to providing a weighted average of staff resources available in terms of full-time equivalents given that the Regulator built capacity through the year.

The Board approved the 2024 Financial Statements.

## **Item 6: 17(4) Report – Update**

The Minister responded to the Board regarding the 17(4) submission on 27 February. An ad-hoc meeting of the Board was convened on 7 March to discuss a draft response to the Minister with the agreed response issuing on 12 March. The CEO received a communication from DAFM subsequently to request availability to meet with the Minister and the CEO is awaiting the setting of a date.



# An Rialálaí Agraibhia Agri-Food Regulator

## **Item 7: Conference - 20 May 2025**

Melanie Hall and Aiden Kelly attended for this item.

Mr. Kelly reported that the programme for the Regulator's inaugural conference is almost finalised. The findings of the Regulator's first survey of suppliers into the retail and wholesale sectors will be presented at the conference. The Board expressed disappointment that retailers would not be represented on the first panel.

It was noted the RSVP link where interested parties can register to attend the conference will be sent out next week to a list of contacts gathered by the Regulator.

On the survey responses, Ms. Hall said there have been approximately 308 survey completions, representing over 900 trading relationships. Despite much engagement between the Regulator and the businesses involved, it was reported that two businesses decided not to share the unique link to the survey with their suppliers as provided to them by the Regulator, while some shared the link very near the closing deadline. Despite these challenges, the communications campaign has been successful, with strong engagement across social media and radio.

The Board congratulated Ms. Hall and the team for their efforts.

## **Item 8: CEO Update**

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

There was a brief discussion by the Board on the next Strategy Statement to cover the period 2027-2029. Given that the organisation is almost at the halfway point in its current Strategy, it was agreed that it is necessary to begin preparing for the development of the next Strategy Statement.). Board members agreed that their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April provided a



# An Rialálaí Agraibhia Agri-Food Regulator

useful opportunity to begin preparations for the next Strategy Statement. The Board will provide feedback in writing to the Executive from their focussed session.

## **Item 9: For Noting**

The Agri-Food Regulator website analytics report was noted.

## **Item 10: AOB**

The Board noted and thanked the CEO for providing some relevant research papers on the topic of below-cost selling which were circulated after the last Board meeting and indicated that it was every member's responsibility to read further into the topic in the first instance.

Given that the Commission's 'Vision for Agriculture and Food' as published on 19 February refers to the circulation in due course of proposals in the area of below-cost selling, it was agreed that, for the 10<sup>th</sup> July Board meeting, the possibility of inviting an expert in this area to present to the Board would be explored.

**The next Board meeting will occur on 09 May 2025.**

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**