

**RESTRICTED - EXECUTIVE**

**E (M) (01) 7**

**MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 6 MARCH 2001**

**Those Present:**

- First Minister**
- Deputy First Minister**
- Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development**
- Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure**
- Minister of Education**
- Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment**
- Minister of the Environment**
- Minister of Finance and Personnel**
- Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**
- Minister of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment**

**In Attendance:**

- Secretary to the Executive**
- Deputy Secretary to the Executive**

**E (01) 66 – Foot and Mouth Disease**

1. The Chairman noted that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development had circulated a paper setting out the proposed general principles which would form the basis for public guidance on foot and mouth disease and that the Executive Information Service had circulated a copy of text which it was proposed to insert in the following day's newspapers.
2. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development briefed the Executive on the latest position in relation to the outbreak. She noted that there were no suspects under investigation although 2 sheep had not yet been traced. In addition, a slaughter programme was underway for animals within 1km of the original outbreak and a review was being carried out of

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the precautions being taken at ports and airports. She advised that a clear period of 30 days would need to elapse before restrictions could be fully relaxed.

### 3. The Executive:

- (i) agreed the general principles and the further practical steps set out in the paper presented by the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development;
- (ii) agreed the text for inclusion in newspaper advertisements;
- (iii) noted that while the immediate focus should remain on control and eradication, work was needed on the overall impact of the disease; Mrs Rodgers said that the work of the Vision in Agriculture Group could be useful in this regard.
- (iv) requested the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to examine and report back on the legislative changes being proposed in the Republic of Ireland in relation to illegal trading of livestock and to maintain close contact with the Irish authorities in relation to measures being taken at the border against the spread of the outbreak;
- (v) noted the need for a proportionate response to the situation which would not alienate the public but which would address both the perception and the real issues;

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- (vi) noted that DOE Regulations relating to limitations on drivers' hours were to be amended with effect from 10 March in response to the crisis;
- (vii) noted that DHSSPS would consider the implications of the outbreak for stress in rural families.
- (viii) noted the potential negative impact on the tourism industry;

## **PRESS RELEASE**

4. The Executive agreed a Press Release for issue after the meeting.

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