

**Beef Taskforce
Minutes
Thursday 22nd April 2021
Virtual
2pm – 4.30pm**

Attendees:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Michael Dowling	Chair	Aidan Murray	Teagasc
Sinead McPhillips	DAFM	Ray Doyle	ICOS
Maria Dunne	DAFM	Tomas Bourke	IFA
Pat McCormack	ICMSA	Eddie Punch	ICSA
Des Morrison	ICMSA	Edmund Graham	ICSA
Derrie Dillon	MACRA	Colm O'Donnell	INHFA
Philip Carroll	MII	Joe Condon	INHFA
Cormac Healy	MII	Dermot O'Brien	BPM
Joe Ryan	MII	Enda Fingleton	BPM
Padraig Brennan	Bord Bia	Sean Coughlan	ICBF

Valerie Woods DAFM Secretariat

Greg Murray DAFM Secretariat

Apologies: Tim Cullinan IFA

Attendance for specific items:

Brendan Foster – Grant Thornton

Joe Burke - Bord Bia

Review of previous meeting minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed by written procedure

Grant Thornton - Market Transparency Studies (update presented by Brendan Foster of Grant Thornton)

Report 1 & 2

Grant Thornton (GT) gave a brief summary of the first and second reports looking at a

- review of *legislation relating to the beef sector* and
- *the market requirements for the in-spec bonuses paid by processors to farmers for cattle meeting certain criteria*

Reports one and two have been published and are available on the DAFM website here:

Report 3

- A draft report has been issued to Taskforce members (a week before the meeting).
- Written observations requested by close of business 7th May to BTF Secretariat
- Only statistically representative data sets were included in the analysis for report 3

Discussion:

- Disappointment was expressed by some members in particular that the report has failed to identify the division of price among those in the supply chain.
- The urgency of the need for the legislation for the establishment of the National regulator equivalent to be developed was emphasised by some members.
- A number of queries relating to the scope and content of the report were raised. It was agreed that these would be responded to along with the written observations, on report 3 on price composition along the supply chain, that were requested from members by 7th May.
- Another session was requested to discuss the report with more detail on data at retail, processor and manufacturing level needed.
- It was agreed that there would be further discussion on the reports at the next meeting.

National Food Ombudsman establishment update – (Sinead McPhillips DAFM)

ASG McPhillips outlined the two-step approach being adopted to establish this office:

- 1st Step – transposition of the UTP directive by 1st May by Statutory Instrument
- 2nd Step – decision on the title and additional functions of the office, requiring primary legislation

Public consultation to be launched shortly to feed into the necessary legislation for establishment.

Discussion:

- A request was made to invite senior representatives from the processing industry to the next Taskforce meeting, with the price situation in February cited as a specific case which needed further explanation.
- A request was made to invite the CCPC to a meeting of the Taskforce.
- The chair requested written submissions from members on the topics proposed for discussion with both parties by 7th May and undertook to invite the parties to the next meeting.

Suckler Brand Promotion update (Sinead McPhillips DAFM)

- There was a useful discussion at latest meeting on 26th March following a presentation to the group from MCCP (strategy and marketing partner of Bord Bia)
- Market Research suggests central Europe is the best market for the proposition. It was explained that there remains significant work still to be done in the development of the proposition.
- MCCP have requested feedback directly from members of the group to specific questions it has distributed to them.
- Bord Bia provided additional detail on the process for developing the proposition.

Market update (April):

Bord Bia delivered a presentation on the current market situation which is available on Gov.ie here: gov.ie - Beef Taskforce (www.gov.ie)

Discussion:

- Bord Bia confirmed that all prices given were ex VAT.
- Estimates of throughput are based on a range of factors including the level of live exports.
- There is an awareness of trends towards food nationalism and the favouring of domestic produce in the UK market. These dynamics in UK market are driving prices up 30c ahead of EU average.
- Increased reliance on the EU market in the context of Irish prices being ahead of the EU average could be a disadvantage.
- Live exports to NI have risen by 12,000 head (equivalent to two days kill)
- It was acknowledged that consumption is trending downward in key EU markets. Strong domestic demand was also acknowledged.
- Supplies are tighter this year as there was earlier finishing at the back end of 2020, and also reflecting a high volume of calf exports in 2019.
- In response to a question on the potential for increasing calf exports, Bord Bia outlined that they have close engagement in Dutch market where Irish calves are favoured and continue to promote calf exports to other markets, particularly to Spain.
- The need for continued market diversification was discussed.

Update on Market Access & China (Maria Dunne DAFM)

- There has been ongoing high level diplomatic engagement between Ireland and China on the suspension of beef exports. The timing of this decision is in the hands of the Chinese Authorities.
- There is progress towards gaining entry to the South Korean market however it is slow and there are several steps still to be completed.

An update on the progress report on actions (under the Beef Sector Agreement Aug /Sept 2019 as published) was delivered by DAFM (Maria Dunne)

Summary of Status of Actions

- 38 actions in total
- 25 are complete
- 8 are ongoing actions and don't have a completion date. E.g. Sector supports generally
- 5 actions that are not yet complete are those numbered 9, 12, 14, 15 and 29

9) Grant Thornton Reports

- Final GT report being finalised as outlined earlier.

12) EU Experts to Brief Taskforce

- an invite had issued last March in advance of the pandemic restrictions. This will be rescheduled.

14) Transparency models in other jurisdictions

- will be progressed after the GT reports complete as originally agreed.

15) Consultation process on UTP directive

- A consultation on the UTP Directive was carried out in 2019; a consultation on the additional functions to be assigned to the NFO is ongoing.

AOB

- It was proposed that consideration would be given to the inclusion of young in the 20c bonus that applies to steers and heifers.
- It was requested that an overview of the working of the voluntary insurance scheme operated in meat plants be provided.
- It was requested that a report on any issues with grading machines in factories in 2020 be provided.

Agreed Actions: Action	Owner
Observations on Grant Thornton Report 3 to be submitted in writing to Taskforce secretariat by Friday 7 th May COB	All Taskforce
Representatives from Processing Sector to be invited to a future Taskforce meeting	Chair/DAFM
Representative(s) from the CCPC to be invited to a future Taskforce meeting	Chair/DAFM
Written submissions from members for topics for discussion with Processors	All Taskforce
Written submissions from members for topics for discussion with CCPC	All Taskforce
BPM to outline specifics in relation to its request re DNA profiling	BPM Taskforce reps