

Agriculture Water Quality Working Group

Minutes 14th Meeting

Date: 29th January 2024, at 10:30am

Venue: The Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise

Attendance list: see Appendix 1.

1. Welcome by the Chair and Minutes of the meeting on 15/01/24.

The Chair (Louise Byrne) opened the meeting by welcoming the various stakeholders.

The draft minutes of previous meeting were circulated in advance of the meeting and were taken as read with no suggested changes requested.

Action: Secretariat to publish minutes of meeting held on 15/01/24.

2. Matters arising from the previous meeting

The Group were advised all members of the group had agreed to the Group's recommendations document by the end of the previous week. The recommendations were now being brought forward to Minister McConalogue.

- **Update on Teagasc Research regarding excretion rates**

DAFM is awaiting Teagasc's response to comments arising from UCD's peer review. Issue of gender for 1-2 year old bovines will be brought back to the Group after Teagasc have provided their response.

DAFM outlined that it is considering how to best introduce the option for reduced crude protein in concentrates and the nutrient excretion rate for young bovines for 2024. To allow appropriate planning on farms, DAFM may signpost significant potential regulatory changes for farmers prior to the completion of the Interim Review process.

Action: Peer review of Teagasc's work on excretion rates to be finalised, the outcomes are to be presented to the Group.

- **Any other areas moving to a derogation stocking rate limit of 220**

Some members outlined the need to communicate early if any other areas were moving to a maximum derogation stocking rate limit of 220 kg N/ha from the start of 2025. There were suggestions this should be flagged in any signposting communications. This was noted.

3. European Commissions evaluation of the Nitrates Directive

Ted Massey, DAFM provided a presentation outlining the purpose of, and how the public can engage with, the European Commission's evaluation of the Nitrates Directive. Some Group members expressed views regarding the consultation. The deadline for submissions in response to the public consultation is the 8th of March.

Action: DAFM's presentation to be circulated to the Group.

4. Understanding and Communicating Water Quality – Presentation by Ruth Hennessy LAWPRO, followed by group discussion.

Ruth Hennessy, LAWPRO provided a presentation which included how water quality is measured, reporting cycles/data sources, the impacts and risks associated with nitrogen and phosphorous, as well as factors determining nutrient load.

A Group discussion followed. A number of the questions raised were felt could be best answered by experts from the EPA. Other points raised included the need for a source of accessible, simple water quality data the public can easily understand, the need for climate change adaptation, as well as the importance of hydromorphological elements in determining water quality.

Action: LAWPRO's presentation to be circulated to the Group.

Action: DAFM to invite EPA to attend a future meeting of the Working Group. To inform preparation for that meeting, stakeholders are asked to email

AgWaterGroup@agriculture.gov.ie with any questions they would like EPA to address at that meeting.

5. AOB and date of next meeting

There were no points raised under AOB. The date for the next meeting will depend on progress under the Interim Review.

Appendix 1: Agriculture Water Quality Working Group Attendance List, 29/01/24.

Stakeholder	Invitee
IFA	Tadhg Buckley
IFA	J Murphy
ICMSA	Eamonn Carroll
ICMSA	Mairead Longe
MACRA	Maria Snell
ICSA	Eddie Punch
INHFA	John Joe Fitzgerald
ICOS	Eamonn Farrell
Dairy Industry Ireland	Conor Mulvihill
Carbery	Liam Bohane
Dairygold	Billy Cronin
Tirlán	Matthew Moylan
Teagasc	David Wall
Teagasc	Eddie Burgess
DHLGH	Maire Archbold
ACA	Tom Canning
LAWPRO	Ruth Hennessy
LAWPRO	Anthony Coleman
LAWPRO	Eoin McAleer
DAFM	Louise Byrne
DAFM	Ted Massey

DAFM	Noeleen McDonald
DAFM	Joanne Purcell
Apologies	
DAFM	Bill Callanan
Meat Industry Ireland	Dale Crammond
MACRA	Liam Hanrahan
An Forum Uisce	Matt Crowe
ICMSA	John Enright
ICMSA	Denis Drennan
INHFA	Vincent Roddy
Irish Grain Growers	James Kelly
Irish Grain Growers	Clive Carter
ACORN Group of Private Merchants	Barry Larkin

Ends.