

Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 3SB

19 December 2007

Dear Stakeholder,

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Health Check Proposals.

Please find attached the EU Commission CAP Health Check Communication document and a brief summary of the main issues. These documents are also available on the DARD website at www.dardni.gov.uk/consultations or by contacting Mr. Joe O'Reilly at the address below.

The CAP Health Check proposals published on 20 November 2007 address important issues such as the future of milk quotas, compulsory modulation and the single farm payment scheme.

At this stage, it is important for stakeholders to take the opportunity to pass their views to the European Commission before it begins to formulate legislative proposals in early 2008. As part of its public consultation process, the Commission has produced the attached Stakeholder Questionnaire seeking views on specific issues raised in the Health Check Communication. Contributions received by **15 January 2008** – the closing date of this particular consultation – will be taken into account by the Commission in preparing its Impact Assessment Report. All stakeholders are encouraged to send their views to the EU Commission at the address below:

Tassos HANIOTIS
Head of Unit
Agricultural Policy Analysis and Perspectives
Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 130 7/157
1049 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel: +32-2-299 1381
Fax: +32-2-296 3987

e-mail address: AGRI-G1-HC-IA@ec.europa.eu



If your views are to have an influence on the legislative proposals on the CAP Health Check, which are due to be drafted by the EU Commission in March and published in May 2008, then it is important that they are submitted as soon as possible.

We would be grateful if you could copy your response to the Department and to the European Parliament Agriculture Committee Rapporteur at the addresses below:

Joe O'REILLY
DARD
Policy and Economics
Room 810
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
BELFAST
BT4 3SB

email: joe.o'reilly@dardni.gov.uk
fax: 028 9052 4676

Lutz GOEPEL
Agriculture and Rural Development Committee Rapporteur
European Parliament
Bât. Altiero Spinelli
10E246
60, rue Wiertz
B-1047 Brussels

fax : +32 (0)2 28 49760

Copying your submissions to the Department will help to inform DARD's position in the months ahead. DARD will, of course, embark on a full consultation process when the Commission publishes its formal legislative proposals in May 2008.

Your response, and all other responses copied to the Department, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. **Before** you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do

not wish information about your identity to be made public please include an explanation in your response.

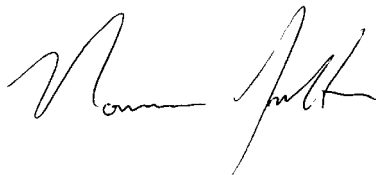
This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).

If you require further information about the CAP Health Check you can contact myself or my colleagues Dr. Seamus McErlean (028 90524675) or Mr. Mark McLean (028 90524342).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norman Fulton', written in a cursive style.

Norman Fulton
Director of Policy and Economics
Policy and Economics Division