

MMcC/EC/pd
RD/6

28 May 2009

Policy and Economics Division
DARD
Room 355
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB

Dear Sir /Madam

CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR LESS FAVOURED AREAS (LFA)

Please find below a response from the Southern Organisation for Action in Rural Areas Local Action Group to the Consultation Process on the Review of Support Arrangements for Less Favoured Areas.

The presence of our Farming Families within the Northern Ireland landscape remains reliant upon component income being available from various sources such as the market place and the European Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance Scheme. The possible change to this present situation as a result of the EU Legislative Review would create severe problems for many Farming Families within the Less Favoured Areas of our Local Action Group region.

The SOAR Local Action Group are of the opinion that to simply allocate future resources to farmers based on the physical criteria indicated by the European Commission without taking into account the specific variables which are present within Northern Ireland would be unacceptable.

The SOAR Local Action Group would recommend that LFA designation of SDA and DA should remain intact as the extension to LFA which occurred in 1982 had been a corrective process to ensure that those areas of land, which had previously been wrongly excluded as a result of a demarcation exercise, would avail of Compensatory Allowances on Suckler Cows and Ewes. It would be wrong to revert back to a flawed demarcation in this respect.

SOAR Local Action Group would request DARD to use its knowledge and experience to ensure that there is no change to the geographical allocations within Northern Ireland of the LFACA and that the mapping exercise which the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Marian Fischer-Boel indicated at the Balmoral Show Breakfast would be necessary to provide evidence to the EU Court of Auditors, would have a minimal effect on our farming community.

Yours faithfully

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

Miceal McCoy
Chair of SOAR