



RURAL SUPPORT

Ms Pauline Rooney
Environment, Food and Central Services
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
BELFAST BT4 3SB

Dear Ms Rooney

DARD Direct - Equality Impact Assessment

First, I wish to apologise for the delay in responding to your letter. The Board of Rural Support is grateful for the opportunity to comment on this initiative. Our response to the consultation is enclosed.

RS has a firm and sustained commitment to supporting farmers and their families. To this end, we working with Jackie Convey of DARD contingency planning section to develop and deliver a series of training sessions to staff in local offices. This training will help equip DARD staff with skills and awareness to identify and seek support for farmers who are suffering from stress. It will also highlight how DARD regulations can impact on farmers. We look forward to delivering this training in February and March 2009 and on an ongoing basis as required.

If you wish to speak to us about any of the issues raised in our response, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Yours sincerely

Gráinne McClean
Executive Director

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"A Listening Ear and Signposting Service for Farmers and Rural Communities"
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