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Creed hosts All -Island Civic Dialogue for the Equine and Greyhound Sectors

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD, today hosted the fourth in a series of all-island sectoral dialogues to discuss the implications of Brexit for the agri-food sector. The focus of today's discussions was the implications of Brexit for the Irish equine and greyhound industries. The Minister was joined at today's event by Minister of State Andrew Doyle, who has special responsibility for the greyhound sector.

Speaking after the event in Portlaoise today, Minister Creed highlighted the importance of these sectors for the rural economy in particular, and referred to the unique range of issues they have to deal with in a Brexit context. He said: *"We are all familiar with the important economic, social and cultural roles that the equine and greyhound sectors play in Ireland, to the great benefit of rural communities in particular. It is also true to say that they are among the most highly integrated sectors with their UK counterparts, from both a North-South and East-West perspective. It is vitally important, therefore, that we ensure that we have a full understanding of all of the issues at play for these sectors as we respond to the Brexit challenge."*

The Minister welcomed the very useful and informative exchange that had taken place at today's Dialogue. Mentioning in particular the issues faced by the equine sector, he said: "I was very heartened by the degree of engagement that was evident during today's

discussions, which benefitted hugely from the strong attendance of equine industry representatives from Northern Ireland. Issues such as the importance of maintaining the Tripartite Agreement covering the movement of horses between Ireland, the UK and France, as well as all-island administrative and other aspects of the industry's day-to-day operations were teased out in some detail. This is of great assistance to my own and my Department's efforts to ensure that these issues adequately inform our approach to the Brexit negotiations."

Minister of State Andrew Doyle also referred to the concerns of the greyhound industry following today's proceedings. He said: *"I too was very pleased with the engagement from the greyhound industry today. Our separate breakout discussions afforded us a valuable opportunity to focus in detail on the challenges facing the sector arising from Brexit, and I am satisfied that the full range of issues was aired to the satisfaction of all concerned."*

Concluding, Minister Creed said: "Notwithstanding the ongoing uncertainty in relation to Brexit, we must continue to prepare as diligently and as comprehensively as we can. Today's dialogue with the equine and greyhound sectors was an important further step in this regard, and I look forward to ongoing co-operation with these sectors as the negotiations unfold."

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