NORTH/SOUTH MINISTERIAL DISCUSSES FURTHER CO-OPERATION ON CHALARA

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD, met his Northern Counterpart Michelle O Neill, MLA at a joint North South Ministerial Council where they shared information on actions taken in both jurisdictions in relation to Chalara fraxinea, or ash dieback diseases as it is commonly known.

Following the announcement last Friday introducing an import ban on ash plants from infected areas, the Minister said that "the situation in relation to the single incidence of the disease is now under control."

In order to strengthen controls further and to enhance the protection of ash plantations throughout the island the Minister said that the intention of both Ministers is to see that "legislation will be introduced to apply additional controls relating to the importation of ash wood. The nature of such controls would be to restrict imports from areas where the disease is present and to insist on measures to ensure that the wood is heat treated or bark-free to eliminate any risk."

The Minister said that "these controls are necessary to provide further protection to our valuable national asset and to provide assurances to the forestry sector that all the necessary steps are in place to enhance the controls that my colleague Minister Shane McEntee TD, announced last Friday".

A further North/south Ministerial meeting is due to be held this coming Friday to agree the required strengthened controls.

North South Ministerial Council - Agriculture Meeting 31 Oct 2012 Joint Communiqué (doc 63Kb)
The nineteenth North South Ministerial Council Agriculture meeting was held in Armagh on 31 October 2012. The meeting was attended by Michelle O’Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, and Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. Minister O’Neill chaired the meeting. Ministers discussed: CAP, Animal Health, Rural Development, Farm Safety and the measures being taken in their jurisdictions to deal with the outbreak of ash dieback disease, and agreed to maintain contact so as to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the problem.