

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
A1. Government & industry should establish a Food Body to co-ordinate food marketing and supply chain issues.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A2. Consultation period following publication of this Report should canvas active support among industry stakeholders for this [Food Body] proposal.	Recommendation accepted and implemented - Food Body Working Group met for the first time in March 2002.
A3. If the industry gives support, Working Group, with necessary portfolio of skills and which command the support & confidence of agri-food industry should be established to consider precise structure, responsibilities and functions of this Body. It should be Government's responsibility to take lead in fostering & co-ordinating the creation of this Working Group.	Recommendation accepted and implemented - Food Body Working Group met for the first time in March 2002.
A4. If any of the individual Recommendations which follow are not progressed by a Food Body, other means should be sought for their implementation.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A5. Initially, the Body will provide leadership by co-ordinating and streamlining existing industry initiatives and programmes. It will also work in close partnership with Government in promoting the development of the food industry. In the longer term, there may be scope for the Body to assume some roles & responsibilities of existing organisations and initiatives.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.

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A6. Key task for the Body would be creation of a long-term strategy, targeting new markets and sectors for the development of the Northern Ireland agri-food industry.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A7. Government should provide substantial pump-priming funding for Body, with on-going funding provided by both Government and the industry itself.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A8. The Food Body should be chaired by a full-time (possibly international) senior industry figure, with management board representative of producers, processors (both large and small) and producer/processor associations and assistance from Government agencies, retailers, ICT experts and other stakeholders.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A9. Utilising Irish branding theme should be explored.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A10. The internet should be used creatively, where appropriate, to generate a positive image for Northern Ireland agri-food products. hyperlinks should be built into sites of Northern Ireland producers & processors. Where appropriate, this should co-ordinate with the project being undertaken by NIFDA (see I13).	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.

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A11. Selective and prioritised use should be made of generic branding.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A12. A facilitator, eg a Food Body, should be appointed to promote a more focused approach. This should assist the free flow of information and accelerate the process of learning and development.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A13. A priority for the agri-food industry should be production of differentiated and added-value products for the retail sector, while building links and relationships in the food service and catering sectors to preclude potential competitors. To do this, the industry will have to negotiate and secure the necessary funding.	Recommendation for the industry to implement.
A14. Northern Ireland agri-food companies must focus more attention on growing sectors, such as convenience foods, in the UK and Europe.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A15. Specialist foods and organic foods offer significant opportunity and must no longer be treated as short-term fashion trends.	Recommendation for the industry to implement.
A16. Industrial crops may provide new outlets and should be explored.	Recommendation for the industry to implement.

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A17. Foodaceuticals and opportunities presented by emerging biotechnology developments should be considered (see also H3).	Recommendation for the industry to implement.
A18. The NI agri-food industry would benefit from regular and inclusive discussions with Northern Ireland General Consumer Council, as well as national and European consumer groups.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A19. Potential customers and suppliers need to be identified and partnerships developed with them.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A20. Adequate funding should be sought for a range of marketing programmes.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A21. Targeted marketing programmes should be developed & promoted, focusing on <u>profitable</u> business with retailers, foodservice companies, convenience food manufacturers and speciality foods distributors.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A22. Marketing programmes which focus on product packaging and presentation, e-marketing and making use of exhibitions and events should be developed & promoted.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.

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A23. Marketing programmes which focus on innovation, risk management, market research and consumer trends, “good-for-you” foods, and ethnic and world foods should be developed and promoted.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A24. Marketing programmes which focus on how successfully to market a clean and green image and our food traceability systems should be developed & promoted.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A25. Marketing programmes which focus on health and dietary needs of consumers should be developed & promoted.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A26. Marketing programmes aimed specifically at educationalists, healthy-eating and fitness groups, children & young people should be developed & promoted.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
A27. A single, Unified Farm Quality Assurance Scheme for Northern Ireland should be developed. (see Recs B8 & B12) This should facilitate Lifetime Quality Assurance for all animals born, reared & processed in Northern Ireland, with a total ICT linkage from producer to processor within target time of 2 to 3 years (see Recs. B8, D4, and I8).	Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full consultation with key industry stakeholders.

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B1. The proposed Food Body should facilitate all agri-food supply chain initiatives, encouraging stakeholders to work in partnership & by driving out waste and inefficiency. Should also facilitate the implementation of agreed Retailer Code of Conduct.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
B2. Producers & processors alike must look to wider markets to maximise their returns and minimise costs.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
B3. Producers should increase their involvement with existing farmer/processor co-operatives to capture benefits of scale, reduce costs, promote market awareness and exploit market opportunities.	Recommendation for the industry to implement.
B4. The work of the Food Chain Group should be extended to NI.	Recommendation no longer applicable since the work of the Food Chain Group has ceased.
B5. All food chain participants should become involved in Task Forces (see also Rec. G9). These should identify and stem the unnecessary leakage of profits and establish stronger relationships and consumer focus throughout the chain. Main output would be in the form of strategies, action plans and programmes.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
B6. “Walking the Supply Chain” exercises should be facilitated to assist the integration of the food supply chain.	Recommendation under consideration.

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<p>B7. In each sector, effective food chain management, model farming units (see also G6), and effective quality assurance and licensing should be established. Best practices should be promoted through benchmarking (see also Recs. G5 and I6), demonstration and mentoring from participants within the industry. Industry must look for excellence.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through the Early Initiative PEACE II measures (focus farms, benchmarking and mentoring) and resources allocated in Draft Budget for a project on the facilitation of effective food chain management. However, the recommendation is for the industry also to implement (effective food chain management and quality assurance/licensing and adopting excellence).</p>
<p>B8. A Unified Farm Quality Assurance Scheme for Northern Ireland should be developed. (See also Rec. B12). In the case of livestock, this should facilitate Lifetime Quality Assurance for all animals born, reared &amp; processed in Northern Ireland, with a total ICT linkage from producer to processor within a target time of 2 to 3 years (see also Recs. A27, D4, and I8).</p>	<p>Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full consultation with key industry stakeholders.</p>
<p>B9. DARD should appoint a Director of Food Safety to act as a link between Food Standards Agency and the industry. The proposed Food Body would also play a vital role in furthering a food safety agenda.</p>	<p>Recommendation not accepted since such a post in DARD would have the potential to cut across the statutory responsibilities of other bodies notably the Food Standards Agency and the cross-border Food Safety Promotion Board.</p>

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<p>B10. DARD's Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) should be made a service to the Northern Ireland livestock industry as a whole (see also Recs. C18, C21,D19 and I7). It should be used more effectively in a number of non-veterinary functions.</p>	<p>Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full consultation with key industry stakeholders.</p>
<p>B11. An internet trading platform for Northern Ireland producers &amp; processors should be developed (see I12).</p>	<p>Recommendation for the industry to implement.</p>
<p>B12. Food Body should become the arena for more frequent and constructive communication throughout food chain. It should seek to implement forward pricing, transparency on costs from producer to retailer, lower insurance costs, objective grading of livestock (see Rec. also C19), higher payments for higher quality, contractual rather than speculative production and higher consumer satisfaction. Further, it should expand the Northern Ireland Food Chain Certification Initiative across all sectors (see Recs. A27 and Rec. B8).</p>	<p>Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.</p>
<p>B13. The Body should seek to unite all components of food chain, around common causes. It should work with all concerned to eliminate unnecessary costs. Should seek to iron out market volatility and work to ensure that, Northern Ireland production and processing costs are at least comparable with those of our major competitors.</p>	<p>Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.</p>



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B14. The Body should act, if required, as a one-stop-advisor for all Government and local government support measures for producers and processors.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
C1. The impact of planning regulation, conacre system & inheritance tax could be considered in longer term in context of a Rural White Paper but should not be pursued at this time as a means of speeding up restructuring.	The Government is not convinced that there is a problem. However, officials have been asked to bear the issue in mind in discussions on policy and to bring forward recommendations if it appears that there is indeed a problem.
C2. DARD should establish and fund a “Farmer Retirement Facilitation Scheme”.	Recommendation under consideration.
C3. The Group notes the commissioning by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of independent primary research by the Queens’ University of Belfast in conjunction with University College, Dublin to investigate the merits of New Entrants and Early Retirement Schemes.	Vision Group made no recommendation but noted ongoing research. This research indicated that early retirement schemes do not provide good value for money. However, it also suggests that interest subsidy based new entrants schemes could provide economic benefit.
C4. The Vision Group favours the support and encouragement for young farmers provided by a New Entrants Scheme (or a similar such measure) rather than an Early Retirement Scheme.	DARD is currently developing a new entrants scheme which will be put out to public consultation.

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<p>C5. The proportion of farmers under 45 years of age managing farms should be doubled by 2010. Match Funding should be used to finance a New Entrant Programme to provide targeted support for qualified, young, new entrant farmers. Further support should be given through the preferential allocation of any production quotas that may become available, together with preferential rates of grant.</p>	<p>DARD is currently developing a new entrants scheme which will be put out to public consultation.</p>
<p>C6. DARD, in collaboration with other Departments, should provide support for diversification of farm businesses and retraining of people for off-farm employment (see also under Developing People Theme).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and being implemented by DARD through one of the Early Initiative PEACE II measures announced in March 2002.</p> <p>DARD will build on existing good links with DETI, DEL and the FE sector in taking forward action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>C7. <u>Part A</u> - By 2002, formal linkages among DARD, the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment should be established to ensure that all economic development agencies, in conjunction with employers in rural areas, co-ordinate their job creation programmes and :-</p>	<p>DETI's Small Business Strategy is a framework for the totality of enterprise and small business development. A high level inter-departmental steering group has been established to oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy.</p>

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<p><u>Part B</u> - refocus their emphasis on the provision of part-time as well as full-time rural employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Provision of employment is ultimately the responsibility of businesses. Government cannot dictate the balance between part-time and full-time employment opportunities.</p>
<p>C8. Local economic development agencies should develop a greater interest than hitherto in the development of farm businesses and the potential for both full &amp; part-time employment in rural areas.</p>	<p>While the level of start-up activity varies depending on sector and geographical area, it is clear that certain groups are underrepresented. For example: females, those from NTSN areas and from rural communities and young people.</p> <p>Invest NI in partnership with other Government Departments and the District Councils are committed to working with Local Enterprise Agencies (through the Enterprise NI network), and other providers to target and achieve ambitious levels of growth of locally focused businesses. Increasing the number of individuals choosing to move into entrepreneurship as well as encouraging communities to create social enterprises will continue to be a clear priority.</p>

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C9. To facilitate off-farm employment, DARD should pilot the development of a range of low labour input farming systems and support collaboration between farmers to accommodate part-time farming. This should be supported & demonstrated through a network of model farm units (see Rec. G6).	Recommendation accepted and both farmer collaboration and focus farm concepts are currently being implemented through the Early Initiative PEACE II measures announced in March 2002.
C10. DARD should introduce a programme to support travel abroad to assess the opposition, identify innovation and report back on opportunities, which can be applied in Northern Ireland.	The Government view is that this is something that might be taken up by a Food Body if one is introduced.
C11. <u>Part A</u> - DARD should introduce a system of electronic individual identification of livestock.  <u>Part B</u> - In addition, DARD should progress a traceability system based on genetic finger printing or any alternative technology which delivers similar advantages (see also Recs. D16,D18 and I9)	Accepted in principle but will await the introduction of an EU common approach.  Accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.
C12. Systems must be developed to integrate good environmental management practice with welfare friendly production of quality livestock and livestock produce.	Recommendation accepted and being implemented through one of the Early Initiative PEACE II measures announced in March 2002.
C13. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development should lobby her counterparts in GB and in Brussels to seek to replace support based on grazing livestock numbers with an area-based support mechanism.	Under the Commission's preliminary proposals support to agriculture will be de-coupled from production but in a way which links payments to land.

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C14. One of the highest priorities must be to secure a relaxation of the export restrictions (see Rec. J5).	Changes have been negotiated to the detailed rules of the Date Based Export Scheme (DBES) to allow plants to part-dedicate their facilities to slaughtering cattle for export and DARD will be reviewing the scope for further relaxation of the Beef Export Ban subject to the outcome of ongoing surveillance testing.
C15. A major challenge is to improve cattle & carcase quality and exploit this to secure improved returns from live and dead market.	Accepted and currently being implemented for carcase conformation through the Beef Quality Initiative and for a project on post-slaughter meat quality resources have been allocated in the Draft Budget.
C16. A DARD or EU funded programme is urgently required to stimulate production & retention of top quality female replacements from within the suckler herd to improve output of Northern Ireland pedigree herds. Aim should be to produce 180,000 E, U & R grade cattle annually by March 2004 & 210,000 E, U & R grade cattle annually by March 2007. (see also Rec. H8).	Accepted and currently being implemented through the Beef Quality Initiative.
C17. <u>Part A</u> - Another challenge is to develop and adopt/optmise low-cost, grass-based systems of beef production in order to compete more effectively as EU support is reduced. These systems must be capable of accommodating year-round production so that market demands in terms of continuity of supply can be met.	Recommendation for industry to implement depending on individual circumstances.

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<p><u>Part B</u> – Appropriate R&amp;D, (see also Rec. H9), competence development, benchmarking and technology transfer programmes should stimulate this change.</p>	<p>Recommendation requires further study.</p>
<p>C18. <u>Part A</u> - DARD to assist the beef sector to move forward by adopting ICT and other forms of new technology (see Recs. H7 and I10).</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - Objective grading of cattle (see also Recs. B12 &amp; C19)</p> <p><u>Part C</u> - Electronic identification and movement monitoring of cattle (see also Recs. C11 (Part A), D16 (Part A) and I9 (Part A))</p> <p><u>Part D</u> – Provision of improved ICT-based business support services e.g. further development of APHIS (see also Recs. B10, C21, D19 &amp; 17).</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation accepted &amp; currently being implemented through existing Life Long Learning programmes, an Early Initiative PEACE II measure and resources allocated in Draft Budget.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation accepted in principle with action being taken by government and industry as soon as improved technology is available.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation accepted in principle but will await the introduction of an EU common approach.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Working Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together.</p>

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C19. A pilot of objective grading based on the yield of saleable meat should be carried out as soon as improved technology is available (see also Rec. B12). Exercise should compare payment on basis of objective grading with present method.	Recommendation accepted in principle with action to be taken by government and industry as soon as improved technology is available.
C20. DARD should also consider, in consultation with the industry, the transfer of the function of carcase classification from the Livestock & Meat Commission (LMC) to meat companies and a re-focusing of LMC activities under promotional marketing.	Recommendation not accepted because of lack of support from relevant organisations in the consultation exercise. Government believes there must be a measure of independence in this exercise.
C21. DARD should accelerate the development of its Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) to support marketing, supply chain communication and monitoring of quality, as well as animal health and movement information (see Recs. B10, C18, D19 and I7). In this context, the future ownership of the APHIS system should be reviewed.	Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full consultation with key industry stakeholders.
C22. A major challenge for the sheep sector is to improve quality of breeding stock and exploit improved lamb quality to secure improved market returns.	Recommendation for industry to implement.

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<p>C23. DARD should work with industry to stimulate production &amp; retention of top quality female replacements and to improve the quality of output from Northern Ireland pedigree flocks. (See Rec. H10) Initiatives would include promotion of recording in pedigree flocks, benchmarking and a study of the reasons why many farmers do not retain the best quality females for breeding.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and some initiatives already being implemented through DARD's existing Lifelong Learning programmes.</p>
<p>C24. <u>Part A</u> – A further challenge is to develop and adopt/optimise low-cost, low labour input, environmentally sustainable, grass-based systems of production in order to compete more effectively as EU support is reduced.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> – Appropriate R&amp;D, (see also Rec. H11), competence development, benchmarking and technology transfer programmes should stimulate this change.</p>	<p>Recommendation for industry to implement depending on individual circumstances.</p> <p>Recommendation requires further study before decisions can be taken.</p>
<p>C25. Results &amp; recommendations from the current study of Scrapie in Northern Ireland should be carefully examined with a view to developing and implementing actions, which can reduce or eradicate Scrapie and secure competitive advantage for Northern Ireland. If its value is confirmed by the study, the Ram Genotyping Project should continue to have high priority.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented.</p>



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C26. Lamb producer groups have had major beneficial influence on the sheep sector & continued support should be provided for lamb groups to foster further collaboration between farmers & encourage linkages with processors.	Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented with DARD staff facilitating lamb producer groups throughout NI.
C27. The key challenge for milk producers and processors is to prepare to compete at significantly lower prices.	Challenge rather than recommendation.
<p>C28. <u>Part A</u> - Producers will need to adopt and carefully manage low cost systems which optimise production from grass, utilised as far as possible in situ, and be more responsive in meeting the quality requirements of processors.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - Appropriate R&amp;D, (see also Rec. H11), competence development, benchmarking and technology transfer programmes should stimulate this change.</p> <p><u>Part C</u> - Appropriate new technology includes the use of sexed semen for the production of replacement dairy heifers (See also Rec. H6) and complementary use of beef bulls for production of cattle for finishing.</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation for industry to implement depending on individual circumstances.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation requires further study.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation for the industry to implement.</p>
C29. <u>Part A</u> - The key challenge for pig sector is to produce required quality at a price which the market will sustain & which will provide a reasonable profit for the producer.	Sub-recommendation for the industry to implement.

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<p><u>Part B</u> - The sector must set a priority for benchmarking &amp; ‘model units’ (see Rec. G6) in support of technology transfer &amp; competence development programmes.</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation accepted and “focus farms” project is currently being implemented through one of the Early Initiative PEACE II measures whilst benchmarking is currently being implemented through existing Lifelong Learning programmes.</p>
<p>C30. DARD should liaise with Dublin authorities to seek development &amp; implementation of an Aujesky’s Eradication Programme for pig industry in the ROI. DARD should also seek to complete implementation of this programme in Northern Ireland at the earliest opportunity (see also Recs. D2 and Rec. J8).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures.</p>
<p>C31. The poultry meat sector should remain in its present form as processors continue to process both imported &amp; home-produced meat. Similarly, small egg-production sector will survive, but it must adjust as the market dictates.</p>	<p>Statement rather than recommendation.</p>
<p>C32. <u>Part A</u> - The key challenge for potato growers is to identify &amp; meet requirements of buyers &amp; produce a consistently high quality product while practising strict cost control and waste avoidance.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - With buyers increasingly providing technical support DARD should concentrate primarily on supporting the development of business competence.</p>	<p>Challenge rather than recommendation.</p> <p>DARD will continue to provide both types of support.</p>

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C33. Potential to increase output of moist grain for use by local ruminant enterprises should be developed. There is also scope for increased biomass production and utilisation (see Rec. H12).	Recommendation for industry to implement.
C34. Northern Ireland Assembly should be alerted to unfair competition facing horticultural growers & encouraged to provide similar financial support.	This recommendation has been accepted in principle by DARD and will be taken forward as appropriate in conjunction with C35. Given the current suspension of the Assembly, and the need to allow a period of time for a public consultation exercise, it is unlikely that further progress can be made before April 2003.
C35. DARD should assist the industry to devise and implement a strategy to develop the commercial horticultural industry. All (sub-sectors) require support to identify & adopt innovative systems and technologies, particularly those related to environmentally friendly production, & to identify & develop linkages & collaboration to exploit new business opportunities.	Recommendation accepted. A Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Commercial Horticulture Sector was commissioned earlier this year. Final report from PricewaterhouseCoopers, the consultants commissioned to produce the Review, is expected in mid-November. At that stage decisions will be taken regarding commencement of a public consultation exercise.

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<p>C36. DARD should, seek to ensure that undertakings relating to equines announced in the Prime Minister's Summit of March 2000 are followed through to positive outcomes and to identify and implement other measures to provide Northern Ireland equine industry with a more level playing field. The designation of the horse as an agricultural animal should be pursued in the longer term.</p>	<p>There are wider issues to consider re: designation of the horse as an agricultural animal and DARD will consult with equine sector in due course.</p>
<p>C37. By 2002, DARD should broker &amp; facilitate discussions and subsequent actions to establish more unified structures to represent the key equine industry interests and provide stronger leadership in development of industry. One or two 'umbrella organisations' may be needed. DARD and new organisation(s) should engage with responsible bodies in the Republic of Ireland to agree and implement mutually beneficial actions.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted in principle and DARD will facilitate the establishment of more unified structures to represent the key industry interests and the development of an equine strategy.</p>
<p>C38. By 2003, DARD should assist new industry body or bodies to create &amp; implement a strategy &amp; action plan to develop equine industry.</p>	<p>See response to C37 above.</p>
<p>D1. Urgent steps need to be taken by DARD to investigate what practical and/or legislative measures can be undertaken to strengthen the protection afforded at ports against the introduction of new animal &amp; plant diseases (see also Recs. D25 and J8).</p>	<p>Accepted and currently being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002.</p>

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D2. DARD efforts and resourcing should be enhanced in developing and pursuing an all-Ireland animal and plant health policy aimed at controlling the spread of, or eliminating, diseases (see also Recs. C30 and J8).	Accepted and currently being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002.
D3. DARD and the industry must make an objective assessment of animal health status of Northern Ireland compared with GB & other EU Member States.	Accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.
D4. All farm quality assurance schemes covering livestock should have a significant animal health and welfare component drawn up in conjunction with the veterinary profession, (see also Recs. A27, B8 and I8).	Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full consultation with key industry stakeholders.
D5. Use should be made of a network of model farms to promote and demonstrate the practice and benefits of high herd/flock health and welfare status (see also Rec. G6)	Recommendation accepted and both farmer collaboration and “‘focus’ farm” concepts are currently being implemented through the Early Initiative PEACE II measures announced in March 2002.
D6. Part A - The industry itself must do all that it can to mitigate the risks of importing disease.	Sub-recommendation for industry to implement.

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<p><u>Part B</u> - In this context, DARD should initiate an update and re-launch of the industry codes of practice for importing livestock.</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation accepted in principle and DARD is willing to give the industry help and advice to implement it.</p>
<p>D7. A system should be developed, to monitor and track the movements of imported animals. Substantial legal and resourcing issues would need to be addressed in advance of pursuing such a policy. DARD should explore these as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented. A DARD database of animal imports has been set up to keep track of live animal imports from GB, other Member States and third countries. This is supported, in respect of slaughter sheep from GB, by an agreed DARD/industry code of practice which requires positive tracking of all slaughter sheep to the meat plant of destination.</p>
<p>D8. DARD must liaise with the port &amp; airport authorities and operators to ensure that a pro-active, on-going programme is in place to encourage incoming passengers to act responsibly in respect of food imports.</p>	<p>A publicity campaign drawing the attention of travellers to the rules on personal imports was launched in August 2002. This will be taken forward on an ongoing basis in conjunction with the ports and airports authorities.</p>
<p>D9. The UK authorities should be lobbied to ensure that incoming direct Third Country passenger movements are subject to particular scrutiny and education.</p>	<p>DARD is working with the other Agriculture Departments to ensure that arrangements are in place to better prevent the introduction of disease through illegal meat imports. A risk assessment review of the priorities for action is</p>

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	underway as is a review of the roles and responsibilities of the UK authorities concerned with enforcement.
D10. The opportunity should be taken as soon as possible, to lobby the Irish & UK Governments to raise with the EU Commission the question of animal & plant health protection on Third Country trade and to seek a reappraisal of control mechanisms.	The EU has been pressed to secure tighter and clearer controls on personal imports of animal products from third countries and under new rules adopted on 20 September 2002, from 1 January 2003 personal imports of meat, meat products, milk and milk products will be prohibited for travellers entering the UK.
D11. <u>Part A</u> - There must be a willingness on the part of industry to report any suspected illegal activities in respect of animal movements and subsidy fraud.  <u>Part B</u> - DARD must facilitate both raising awareness of damage that can be done and encouraging whistle blowing.	Sub-recommendation for industry to implement.  Sub-recommendation under consideration.
D12. Group welcomes DARD's plans to adopt a more proactive and higher profile approach to prevention, detection and punishment of illegal activities. The resources devoted to this must be significantly enhanced & targeted more accurately based on an assessment of risk.	Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002.

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D13. Every effort must be made by DARD to police rigorously the Operation of Sheep Annual Premium Scheme.	Legislation has been strengthened and the basis of inspections reviewed.
D14. DARD to encourage enhanced policing by ROI revenue authorities of their VAT rebate system with respect to origin of sheep slaughtered in ROI meat plants.	Problem has been raised with ROI authorities.
<p>D15. <u>Part A</u> - Sheep in Northern Ireland, should be individually identified and their lifetime movements traceable.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - Pigs in Northern Ireland, should be individually identified and their lifetime movements traceable.</p> <p><u>Part C</u> - However, NI producers should not suffer a significant cost disadvantage within the context of the British Isles and it would be desirable if a similar approach to this issue could be adopted across the UK and Ireland. Therefore there needs to be close co-operation between Northern Ireland, GB &amp; ROI authorities on this issue, with individual regions then able to operate within this overall framework.</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation accepted in principle but will await the introduction of an EU common approach.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.</p> <p>Everyone in the British Isles pays the cost of tagging.</p>
D16. <u>Part A</u> - The Group is in favour of an electronic identification system (see also Recs. D18, C11 and I9) but await outcome of EU deliberations.	Sub-recommendation accepted in principle.



## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<u>Part B</u> - In the meantime, the existing, flock-based identification system for sheep should be rigorously enforced.	Sub-recommendation accepted and being implemented by DARD.
D17. One option that should be explored as an interim measure for sheep is that of individually identifying (by means of an ear tag) breeding stock entered for premia claims.	Recommendation under consideration.
D18. While individual identification should be extended to pigs, this should only be pursued when the EU legal position & the technical problems of pig electronic identification have been fully resolved.	Sub-recommendation accepted in principle.
D19. The capacity of the APHIS system needs to be expanded. DARD needs to explore means of addressing the resourcing issue (see also Recs. B10, C18, Rec. C21 and I7).	Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full consultation with key industry stakeholders.
D20. The Group endorses DARD's approach to the issue of a standstill policy but sees considerable merit in introducing an "individual animal standstill" policy.	Recommendation accepted and 30 day individual standstill policy implemented as one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002.
D21. <u>Herds</u> importing animals from outside Northern Ireland are subject to a 21-day standstill rule rather than just the individual	Currently individual animal standstills apply for cattle and pigs while flock restrictions apply

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
imported animals.	for sheep. These arrangements are being reviewed currently on a risk assessment basis.
D22. Rigorous enforcement of animal welfare and traceability legislation by DARD, which should be applied equally across entire livestock marketing chain, should be sufficient to drive out the unscrupulous elements.	Recommendation noted.
D23. Individual producers must be made aware of risks to their livelihood of mixing animals from unknown sources and be made aware of the penalties for non-compliance with legislation. There is a significant education role here for DARD and this needs to be resourced and taken forward quickly (see also Rec. G18).	Recommendation under consideration.
D24. Other links in livestock marketing chain also have an obligation to act with utmost integrity, particularly livestock markets. Legislative controls must be rigorously observed and policed by DARD. There must also be a determination on the part of these operators not to tolerate or facilitate the activities of unscrupulous individuals and to report suspicious transactions.	Recommendation for the industry to implement.
D25. The animal health legislative framework within Northern Ireland must be comprehensively reviewed and reformed (see also Recs. D1 & J8). DARD must initiate this process as soon as possible with a view to completing it within three years. DARD must also take opportunity to review its plant health legislative framework at the same time.	Sub-recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget for a DARD 'Bill Team'.

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>D26. <u>Part A</u> - In the meantime, DARD must aim to secure resources it needs to enforce adequately existing legislation.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - DARD should make efforts to encourage the Judiciary to deploy the full range of sanctions available to it when sentencing those convicted of breaches of animal health legislation in order to maximise its deterrence value.</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation accepted and already implemented by strengthening the DARD enforcement team.</p> <p>This is a matter for the Courts.</p>
<p>E1. The Northern Ireland Assembly Executive Committee should have the objective of developing a competitive, sustainable agricultural industry in Northern Ireland that is dedicated to high quality, consumer-led production, that encourages all farmers who are willing and able to play their part, underpins the existing family farm structures, provides environmental, conservation and other benefits to society and contributes in full to the rural economy and social infrastructure (see J1).</p>	<p>The Government remains committed to the maintenance and development of an industry which contributes significantly to the regional economy, produces safe and wholesome food and provides public goods, such as the landscape and the countryside.</p>
<p>E2. The Group welcomes the acceptance by the Northern Ireland Assembly Executive Committee of its Recommendation for a cross-cutting, Rural Proofing mechanism.</p>	<p>Statement rather than recommendation.</p>
<p>E3. A “Rural Baseline 2001” should be established to measure the effectiveness of Rural Proofing.</p>	<p>Accepted. A pilot study has been undertaken by the Rural Development Council.</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>E4. The amount of red tape and bureaucracy must be reduced. Government must consider recommendations of the Better Regulation Task Force, with a view to implementing those that are applicable to Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted in principle. It is envisaged that the ongoing introduction of efficient ICT-based systems (such as those involved in the e-Government initiative including further development of the DARD Rural Portal) will assist in meeting many of the requests within this recommendation.</p>
<p>E5. DARD must increase ease of access to rural development public funding.</p>	<p>A Sub-Group of the Rural Stakeholder Forum is reviewing the ways in which DARD presents these measures and delivers the support available under them.</p>
<p>E6. Special investment should be encouraged to create a quality natural resource rural tourism product.</p>	<p>DARD, in conjunction with the Environmental and Heritage Service and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, has launched the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative. The Initiative, which is funded under the PEACE II Programme, is to help disadvantaged rural areas take advantage of the particular opportunities presented by their natural resources to develop their tourism potential.</p>
<p>E7. The NITB, DARD and stakeholders should establish a Rural Tourism Advisory Committee.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted in principle but further discussion with relevant Departments</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
	is required as to the best vehicle for taking this forward.
E8. There should be better access to information on NITB marketing strategy & on grants and other support available.	The NITB marketing strategy is presently being completed and will be presented to the industry in December. The strategy will be widely available, including on the Board's website which can be accessed through the RURALni portal.
E9. DARD should develop, in association with DETI and DOE, a strategic approach to the development of sustainable energy systems at rural community level (see Rec. F15).	Renewable energy policies are under review within DARD and DETI, the lead NI Department on energy issues. While DETI will take the lead in energy strategy and policy, DARD could potentially play an important complementary role in encouraging and supporting rural diversification. Factors to be taken into consideration include the outcome of the Forest Policy Review and DETI's proposed Energy Bill. DARD will continue to liaise closely with DETI, and other interested parties, on developments in this important area.

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>E10. Efforts should be made to maximise use within Northern Ireland of monies raised from “Green” taxes, such as Climate Change Levy (CCL) (see Rec. F16).</p>	<p>Taxation is a matter for HM Treasury. CCL funds are recycled principally through a reduction in Employers National Insurance contributions. The bulk of the remaining funds are used by Invest NI to promote energy efficiency and low carbon innovation. Invest NI maximises the benefit derived from these funds by working with the Carbon Trust. Both DETI and DARD are also eligible to bid for a proportion of CCL funds. DARD will, as part of its development of a policy on renewable energy, examine funding mechanisms and particularly the accessing of monies raised from “Green” taxes such as the CCL.</p>
<p>E11. Every effort should be made to ensure that Research and Development Programme of DARD’s Science Service is sufficiently aligned with industry, educational and environmental needs (see Rec. H2).</p>	<p>It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&amp;D with Rural Stakeholder representation.</p>
<p>E12. DARD should broker the production and regular updating of a user-friendly directory of all forms of support available to farmers and rural Micro, Small &amp; Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).</p>	<p>There are already a number of government publications outlining the support available to farmers. These include the A-Z Guide for Farmers, produced by DSD in association with Family Farm Development Ltd., and the DARD Directory of Funding Sources for NI. Details of</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
	these documents can be found on the RURALni portal, along with links to the websites of Invest NI and the NITB.
E13. DARD, in consultation with farming industry, should devise a better definition of farm household income.	Existing definitions are adequate for most purposes. Data availability may be a constraint on further developments.
E14. Action needs to be taken via appropriate programmes of re-skilling & up-skilling to address the issue of underemployment.	Recommendation accepted and re-skilling currently being implemented through Early Initiative PEACE II measure announced in March 2002.
<p>E15. <u>Part A</u> - DEL, LEDU, the T&amp;EA and all other economic development agencies, in conjunction with employers in rural areas, need both to co-ordinate their job creation programmes, and</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - to refocus their emphasis on the provision of part-time as well as full-time rural employment.</p>	<p>DETI's Small Business Strategy is a framework for the totality of enterprise and small business development. A high level inter-departmental steering group has been established to oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy.</p> <p>Provision of employment is ultimately the responsibility of businesses. Government cannot dictate the balance between part-time and full-time employment opportunities.</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>E16. By 2002/3, DARD, DEL, FE Colleges, T&amp;EA and DETI should agree, develop and implement a strategic partnership to meet the re-skilling and employability needs of the rural community and, subsequently, implement agreed programmes of education and training (see Rec. G21).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002 (reskilling). DARD will build on existing good links with DETI, DEL and the FE sector in taking forward action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>E17. Local economic development agencies must develop a greater interest than hitherto in the development of farm businesses.</p>	<p>While the level of start-up activity varies depending on sector and geographical area, it is clear that certain groups are underrepresented. For example: females, those from NTSN areas and from rural communities and young people.</p> <p>Invest NI in partnership with other Government Departments and the District Councils are committed to working with Local Enterprise Agencies (through the Enterprise NI network), and other providers to target and achieve ambitious levels of growth of locally focused businesses. Increasing the number of individuals choosing to move into entrepreneurship as well as encouraging communities to create social enterprises will continue to be a clear priority.</p>



## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
E18. DARD should periodically conduct a strategic analysis of the focus of agricultural education in Northern Ireland (see also Rec. G20).	Recommendation accepted in principle and the O'Hare Report on Education and R&D in Agriculture and Food Science will inform this process.
E19. DARD should seek to increase area of farm woodland plantings by extending the period for annual payments from 15 to 25 years at mid-term review of the Rural Development Regulation Plan for Northern Ireland (see Rec. F9).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
E20. There should be no difference in the payments for on-farm tree plantings for LFA and non-LFA land, tighter management specifications should be imposed (see Rec. F10).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
E21. By 2005, DARD should seek to raise awareness of and training in woodland management by encouraging participation by farmers in the activities of forestry societies and offering training opportunities appropriate to farmers (see Rec. F11).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
E22. In its current Review of Forest Policy, DARD should consider how to encourage development of new market opportunities & industries to enhance the return from timber and its by-products.	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
E23. The Review should also consider further development of appropriate funding mechanisms to promote broad-leaved afforestation (see Rec. F12).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
E24. Means of encouraging the development of agro-forestry in appropriate areas should also be addressed in the Forest Policy Review (see Rec. F13).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
E25. Opportunities for growing of crops to provide alternative energy sources should be reviewed under this process as well (see Rec. F14).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.  See also response to E9 above.
F1. All relevant environmental legislation and advisory support should be implemented and all farmers should have access to adequate, convenient and free environmental training and advice.	Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.
F2. Enhanced resources should be targeted towards a campaign to effect a reduction of point source pollution on high-risk river and lake catchments. By 2006, 10,000 farms should be provided with an advisory support package.	Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.
F3. An independent evaluation of the Erne Catchment Nutrient Management Scheme should be conducted to determine its suitability for rollout.	Recommendation accepted and implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002.
F4. Nutrient management education and planning and the responsible use of organic and inorganic fertilisers should be promoted across Northern Ireland farms. Nutrient management planning should be implemented on 8,000 intensive farms by 2006.	Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>F5. An environmental on-farm capital grant scheme should be developed to support biodiversity objectives, to help address point source pollution problems and to underpin the creation of a green, clean image for NI. The Group welcomes allocation of funding by DARD to a new Farm Waste Management Scheme &amp; recommends early re-opening of capital enhancement (e-plan) element of the existing agri-environment schemes.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.</p>
<p>F6. Systems of good farming practice should be extended to include farms other than those participating in the LFA Compensatory Allowance Scheme and the agri-environment schemes, which will have to apply the principles of good farming practice.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.</p>
<p>F7. Facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy.</p>	<p>The NI Biodiversity Strategy was formally launched on 7 September 2002. An inter-Departmental mechanism is to be established to co-ordinate activities in the Strategy's implementation. Reference to biodiversity commitments will feature in DARD's forward Business Plans as well as those for its Forest Service and Fisheries Division. DARD is also currently reviewing its Countryside Management Strategy and this will include specific actions concerned with biodiversity.</p>
<p>F8. Facilitate the implementation of recommendations of Strategic Study of the Northern Ireland Organic Sector.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in Draft Budget.</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
F9. DARD should increase the area of farm woodland plantings (see Rec. E19).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
F10. There should be no difference in the payments for on-farm tree plantings for LFA and non-LFA land, but tighter management specifications should be imposed (see Rec. E20).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
F11. By 2005, DARD should seek to raise awareness of & training in woodland management (see Rec. E21).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
F12. Consider the further development of appropriate funding mechanisms to promote broad-leaved afforestation (see Rec. E23).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
F13. Development of agro-forestry in appropriate areas should also be addressed (see Rec. E24).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.
F14. Opportunities for growing of crops to provide alternative energy sources should be reviewed (see Rec. E25).	Recommendation being considered as part of the DARD Forest Policy Review.  See also response to F15 below.
F15. DARD should develop, in association with DETI and the DOE, a strategic approach to development of sustainable energy systems at rural community level (see Rec. E9).	Renewable energy policies are under review within DARD and DETI, the lead NI Department on energy issues. While DETI will take the lead in energy strategy and policy,

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
	<p>DARD could potentially play an important complementary role in encouraging and supporting rural diversification. Factors to be taken into consideration include the outcome of the Forest Policy Review and DETI's proposed Energy Bill. DARD will continue to liaise closely with DETI, and other interested parties, on developments in this important area.</p>
<p>F16. Efforts should be made to maximise the use within Northern Ireland of monies raised from "Green" taxes, such as the Climate Change Levy (CCL) (see Rec. E10).</p>	<p>Taxation is a matter for HM Treasury. CCL funds are recycled principally through a reduction in Employers National Insurance contributions. The bulk of the remaining funds are used by Invest NI to promote energy efficiency and low carbon innovation. Invest NI maximises the benefit derived from these funds by working with the Carbon Trust. Both DETI and DARD are also eligible to bid for a proportion of CCL funds. DARD will, as part of its development of a policy on renewable energy, examine funding mechanisms and particularly the accessing of monies raised from "Green" taxes such as the CCL.</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>G1. <u>Part A</u> - The first key challenge will be to promote 'Lifelong Learning' (continuous personal development) to improve the attitudes, values and competencies of people already in the industry.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - By 2010, all farmers and managers under 50 years of age in the agri-food industry should have an appropriate business qualification.</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation accepted in principle but it is unrealistic to assume a vastly increased uptake of training leading to validated qualifications.</p>
<p>G2. Competence development programmes must be easily accessible, address business needs and deliver immediate business advantage. These programmes should be technology based &amp; develop managers by supporting them to apply best practice in their own businesses.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.</p>
<p>G3. A suite of 'Challenge Programmes' covering all on-farm enterprises should be created for producers.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.</p>
<p>G4. Distance learning programmes should be made available for all sectors of the industry (see also Rec.I3).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.</p>
<p>G5. Building on existing initiatives, by 2005/6, at least 7,500 agri-food businesses should be routinely using Benchmarking Programmes (see also Recs. B7 &amp; I6). DARD should broker consultations with industry and service interests to identify standard methodology &amp; indicators, including environmental indicators.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget to support an increase in the number of businesses actively benchmarking by 1000 to 2500.</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>G6. By 2003/04, at least 100 'model units' covering all key farm production &amp; diversification areas should be identified and farmers trained and supported financially to demonstrate best practice and provide mentoring to at least 3,000 other farmers (see also Recs. B7, C9, C29, D5 &amp; H5).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002.</p>
<p>G7. Group-based learning approaches should be adopted where possible (see also Recs. G23 &amp; I14).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002.</p>
<p>G8. <u>Part A</u> - A substantial investment in ICT training and infrastructure development is needed to improve dramatically the industry's ability to exploit ICT for management, supply chain communication, marketing and competence development.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - Priority must be given to developing the competence and confidence of farmers to utilise ICT effectively (see Rec. I1 for targets).</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation involving ICT training accepted and currently being implemented through existing Education &amp; Training programmes and resources allocated in the Draft Budget. However, the reference to substantial investment in infrastructure development will require input from DETI and is also for the industry to discuss.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation accepted and being implemented through one of the Early Initiative PEACE II measures announced in March 2002.</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
G9. The DARD Minister should actively encourage the participation of industry Chief Executives in the activities of the Task Forces (proposed in Rec. B5). This on-the-job training should be prestigious, practical and non-threatening.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
G10. The needs of food businesses should be addressed via innovative, flexible support programmes. DARD should make in-house training and consultancy more accessible and affordable.	Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through existing DARD Education and Training programmes.
G11. DARD should encourage the exposure of Chief Executives & senior managers to international training and events.	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
G12. DARD should work with other Departments to ensure that all training available to the agri-food industry is of the highest calibre and driven by training needs rather than access to funding.	DARD believes its training programmes are of a high calibre.
G13. DARD should work with other Departments to ensure that all locally educated entrants to the food industry are literate and numerate.	This is a matter for DEL.
G14. DARD should work with other Departments to ensure free movement of labour into Northern Ireland, including returnees. Many returnees will have gained valuable experience and skills. It would be useful to have an organisation or database equipped to match them with local companies.	This is a matter for the Home Office and in any case there is freedom of movement within the EU.



## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>G15. The second key challenge will be to attract young people into the industry &amp; equip them to deal with the challenges they will face. Every young person entering the industry should have an appropriate qualification compatible with his or her needs &amp; abilities. A full suite of full-time and part-time courses must continue to be available for new entrants.</p>	<p>Challenge being met through existing DARD Education and Training programmes. DARD is also developing a new entrants scheme.</p>
<p>G16. Future and established managers within production and food processing companies must aspire to be world class by developing themselves to the highest level commensurate with their abilities. The optimum qualification for management is an appropriate technology/management Degree or Higher National Diploma (NVQ Level 4 equivalent). All others should seek to be qualified to at least NVQ Level 2.</p>	<p>Although DARD facilitates the achievement of the relevant vocational qualifications, the recommendation is for industry to implement.</p>
<p>G17. All sectors of the agri-food industry need to work together to promote career opportunities within the agri-food sector.</p>	<p>Recommendation for industry to implement.</p>
<p>G18. All education/training programmes arising from Competitiveness Strategy (proposed in Rec. J6) must take account of the concerns of consumers and society for food safety &amp; traceability, animal welfare and the environment (see also Rec. D23).</p>	<p>Recommendation under consideration with DETI.</p>
<p>G19. Measures should be introduced to encourage an enterprise culture. (see also Recommendation H13)</p>	<p>A change in entrepreneurial culture will require embedding entrepreneurship into all aspects of</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
	the education and life long learning system. This will be addressed in part through the Programme for Government's Entrepreneurship and Education Action Plan, which has been developed by DETI in conjunction with Invest NI, DEL and DE.
G20. DARD should continue to fund education and training programmes to meet needs of the agri-food industry. A strategic review of the programmes should be carried out periodically (see Rec. E18). Account should be taken of the work of other organisations, which promote people development initiatives. Unnecessary overlap should be avoided. DARD should take account of the requirements of the ancillary industry, the service sector and public bodies for highly skilled staff.	Recommendation accepted in principle and the O'Hare Report on Education and R&D in Agriculture and Food Science will inform this process.
G21. By 2003/03, DARD, DEL, the FE Colleges, T&EA and DETI should agree, develop and implement a strategic partnership to meet the re-skilling and employability needs of the rural community and, subsequently, implement agreed programmes of education and training (see Rec. E16).	Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through one of the Early Initiative measures announced in March 2002 (reskilling). DARD will build on existing good links with DETI, DEL and the FE sector in taking forward action on this recommendation
G22. A 'Multi-skilling' Programme to facilitate pluriactivity should be delivered on a collaborative basis.	Being facilitated through existing DARD Education and Training programmes.

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Recommendations	Response
G23. Agencies delivering EU programmes should seek to engage farming families on small and pluriactive farms in farm business development groups and promote ICT training (see Recs. G7 and I14).	Recommendation accepted and being implemented through two of the Early Initiative PEACE II measures announced in March 2002.
H1. A major independent review of research & development related to agri-food sector should be undertaken. An Advisory Group should be established to identify priorities for research & development and associated technology transfer and the Minister should commission a study entitled “Profitable R&D – Making it Happen”.	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H2. In the meantime, DARD should ensure that the R&D programme of DARD’s Science Service is sufficiently aligned with industry, educational and environmental needs (see Rec. E11).	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H3. The potential benefits that might accrue from biotechnology research should be assessed as part of the study proposed in Recommendation H1 (see also Rec. A17).	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H4. DARD, with the support of its R&D Advisory Group, should seek to develop greater collaboration with the ROI authorities to identify R&D priorities and implement an R&D programme on an all-Ireland basis.	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H5. Changes in dairying should be stimulated and supported through R&D on low cost production systems, grass breeding and	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on

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Recommendations	Response
livestock breeding/selection, as well as vigorous technology transfer and competence development programmes utilising ICT, benchmarking and model units (see Rec. C28 and Rec. G6).	R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H6. Consideration should be given to research aimed at developing low cost sexed embryo transplants to improve beef quality (see also Recs. C28).	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H7. DARD should also assist the beef sector to move forward by adopting ICT and other forms of new technology. In addition, DARD should facilitate technology transfer to ensure that individual businesses improve as a result of R&D (see Recs. C18 & I10).	Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through an Early Initiative measure and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.
H8. A DARD or EU funded programme, is urgently required to help the beef sector undertake sustained action to stimulate the production and retention of top quality female replacements from within the suckler herd and to improve the output of Northern Ireland pedigree herds (see Rec. C16 for targets).	Accepted and currently being implemented through the Beef Quality Initiative.
H9. A further priority for research should be the development of low-cost, grass-based systems for calf rearing and finishing (see Rec.C17).	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H10. Appropriate R&D is required to help the sheep sector undertake action to stimulate production & retention of top quality female	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
replacements and to improve the output of Northern Ireland pedigree flocks (see Rec. C23).	R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H11. Appropriate R&D is required to help sheep sector undertake action to develop and adopt/optimise low-cost, low labour input, environmentally sustainable, grass-based systems of production (see Rec. C24).	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H12. Moist grain for use by local ruminant enterprises and biomass production and utilisation should be early priorities for research and development and technology transfer (see Rec. C33).	Recommendation requires further study. It is proposed to introduce an Advisory Board on R&D with Rural Stakeholder representation.
H13. A study should be undertaken to identify the characteristics that underpin business acumen, willingness to change and entrepreneurial flair among successful owners & managers of farms & small food businesses (see also Rec. G19).	Recommendation for industry to implement.
H14. Steps should be taken to close the gap between global research and technology transfer at a local level. Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland (ARINI) should have the role of facilitating this transfer of global research to Northern Ireland.	Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.
I1. DARD should introduce measures to increase the level of farmer access to, and encourage greater use by farmers of, ICT. Expand by a further 3,000 the number of primary producers routinely and	Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the existing Education and Training</li> </ul>

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Recommendations	Response
effectively utilising ICT in their businesses within three years, with a medium-term target of a further 2,500 primary producers within the following two years. By 2010, all businesses will need to be utilising ICT (see Rec. G8).	<p>programmes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an Early Initiative PEACE II measure, and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.</li> </ul> <p>The targets set within this Recommendation are challenging.</p>
I2. DARD should provide appropriate, high quality, applied training to help businesses fully utilise effective ICT systems.	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the existing Education and Training programmes;</li> <li>• an Early Initiative PEACE II measure, and resources allocated in the draft Budget.</li> </ul>
I3. Adoption of IT programmes should underpin appropriate education and training programmes for rural communities. Information & communications technology-based distance learning must be exploited to meet the special needs of those in remote areas (see also Rec. G4).	<p>Recommendation accepted and resources allocated in the draft Budget</p>
I4. DARD & DETI should build on the existing work of the latter in promoting the uptake and exploitation of ICT by companies in the food processing sector & supply chain. This should be geared towards stimulating & supporting a more rapid development of e-commerce.	<p>Accepted and resources allocated in the Draft Budget. Further opportunities for promoting the use of ICT may be explored through the inter-departmental steering group established to oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Small Business Strategy.</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>I5. DARD should minimise bureaucracy &amp; regulation (see also Rec. E4) and introduce efficient ICT-based systems to help industry comply with regulatory requirements and access Government forms, information and services.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted in principle. It is envisaged that the ongoing introduction of efficient ICT-based systems (such as those involved in the e-Government initiative including further development of the DARD Rural Portal) will assist in meeting many of the requests within this recommendation.</p>
<p>I6. DARD should seek to promote the use of benchmarking facilitated by ICT (see also Recs. B7 &amp; G5).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through existing Lifelong Learning programmes and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.</p>
<p>I7. APHIS should be developed as a service to the Northern Ireland livestock industry as a whole (see also Recs. B10, C18, D19 and C21).</p>	<p>Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full consultation with key industry stakeholders.</p>
<p>I8. There should be total ICT linkage from producer to processor within a target time of two to three years to facilitate creation of Lifetime Quality Assurance for all animals born, reared &amp; processed in Northern Ireland within an overall Unified Farm Quality Assurance Scheme for Northern Ireland (see Recs. A27, B8 &amp; D4).</p>	<p>Recommendation requires further study. A DARD Working Group will consider the Unified Farm Quality Assurance recommendations and those relating to accelerating development of the APHIS system together. There will be full</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
	consultation with key industry stakeholders.
<p>I9. <u>Part A</u> - Northern Ireland should aim to regain &amp; maintain a marketing advantage in terms of livestock traceability. DARD should introduce a system of electronic individual identification of livestock in NI as soon as the EU has agreed a common approach.</p> <p><u>Part B</u> - DARD should progress a traceability system based on genetic finger printing or any alternative technology which delivers similar advantages (see also Recs. C11, D16 &amp; D18).</p>	<p>Sub-recommendation accepted in principle.</p> <p>Sub-recommendation accepted and resources allocated for an R&amp;D project in the Draft Budget.</p>
<p>I10. DARD should also assist the beef sector to move forward by adopting ICT and other forms of new technology (see Recs. C18 &amp; H7).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and currently being implemented through an Early Initiative PEACE II measure and resources allocated in the Draft Budget.</p>
<p>I11. Producers and processors selling niche products could have a global market available. DARD should support those interested in exploiting the opportunities through provision of effective information &amp; training.</p>	<p>Need being met by existing Lifelong Learning programmes.</p>



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Recommendations	Response
I12. An internet trading platform for Northern Ireland producers & processors should be developed. (see Rec. B11).	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
I13. The internet should be used creatively, where appropriate, to generate a positive image for Northern Ireland agri-food products. Hyperlinks should be built into sites of Northern Ireland producers & processors. Where appropriate, this should co-ordinate with a complementary project being undertaken by the Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association & funded by the Information Age Initiative (see Rec. A10).	Food Body Working Group Report out to consultation. Decisions will be taken after consultation.
I14. Agencies delivering EU programmes should seek to engage farming families on small and pluriactive farms in farm business development groups and promote ICT training (see Recs. G7 & G23).	Recommendation accepted and being implemented through two of the Early Initiative PEACE II measures announced in March 2002.
J1. The Northern Ireland Assembly Executive Committee should have an objective of developing a competitive, sustainable agricultural industry in Northern Ireland that is dedicated to high quality, consumer-led production, that encourages all farmers who are willing & able to play their part, underpins the existing family farm structures, provides environmental, conservation and other benefits to society & contributes in full to the rural economy & social infrastructure (see E1).	The Government remains committed to the maintenance and development of an industry which contributes significantly to the regional economy, produces safe and wholesome food and provides public goods, such as the landscape and the countryside.

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
<p>J2. Public representatives at all levels &amp; industry representatives must make stronger alliances and exert greater influence in furthering the interests of the Northern Ireland agri-food industry and rural communities. In particular, there must be greater influence exerted in the framing of EU, national &amp; Northern Ireland policies and programmes &amp; a stronger voice regarding the devastating effects of a weak euro/sterling rate.</p>	<p>Recommendation for industry to implement.</p>
<p>J3. There should be more long-term secondments of DARD and, DETI officials and industry representatives to offices &amp; agencies in Brussels &amp; Westminster to lobby, to improve feedback and to secure a reduction in red tape &amp; bureaucracy.</p>	<p>Recommendation partly accepted and an agri-food representative will be appointed to the Brussels office shortly.</p>
<p>J4. The Minister and others should lobby for the full payment of all remaining agri-money compensation. They should also seek to retain, the agri-money system or its equivalent (including any necessary transitional compensation following the UK's entry to the EMU).</p>	<p>The Government, while not making full use of the agri-monetary system because of the costs to the UK Exchequer, did claim £77 million in respect of Northern Ireland over the period 1997 to 2001. The agri-monetary system is no longer in existence. It would be almost impossible to re-introduce it given that most EU member states no longer have any interest in such a system.</p>
<p>J5. One of the highest priorities must be to secure a relaxation of the [beef] export restrictions. (see Rec. C14).</p>	<p>Changes have been negotiated to the detailed rules of the Date Based Export Scheme (DBES)</p>

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
	to allow plants to part-dedicate their facilities to slaughtering cattle for export and DARD will be reviewing the scope for further relaxation of the Beef Export Ban subject to the outcome of ongoing surveillance testing.
J6. The Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Investment and a Steering Group comprising key industry leaders should agree and commit to a Strategic Plan for the Development of Competitiveness (see also Rec. G18).	Recommendation under consideration with DETI.
J7. The Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development should act jointly with the Republic of Ireland Agriculture Minister to try to ensure that any outcome of negotiations relating to major external issues does not distort trade on the island of Ireland or result in a comparative disadvantage to Northern Ireland.	The Minister with responsibility for Agriculture & Rural Development will keep these issues under review with his counterpart in the ROI.
J8. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development should conduct a review of animal and plant disease controls (see also Recs.C30, D1 and D25) & should act jointly with her Republic of Ireland counterpart to consider stricter controls on an island of Ireland basis where possible (see Rec. D2).	Recommendation accepted. An all-island approach to animal health controls is an integral part of the all-island animal health strategy currently being developed. There is also cross-border co-operation on plant health. In both cases the approach on controls is within the context of EU requirements.

## VISION REPORT: Response to Recommendations

Recommendations	Response
J9. Industry organisations should formally liaise with their GB, ROI & European counterparts to ensure that NI views are reflected in the activities of all relevant lobby groups.	Recommendation for the industry to implement.
J10. The Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development should conduct and publish on the internet an annual review of all Government support measures for the NI agri-food industry to ensure that local support measures offered in NI are broadly comparable with those offered in GB, ROI, and each mainland EU country. Unused funding allocations should also be highlighted.	An annual review of all Government support measures available in Northern Ireland (J10) will be conducted and published. However, making comparisons with other areas is very difficult and DARD will have to consider how far it can go in this. Certainly it is likely to be limited to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.
J11. DARD should regularly publicise the results of all relevant economic modelling analyses.	The results of all relevant economic modelling analyses will be made available.