

IGFA News Release

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McGuinness tells IGFA on Brexit: “Prepare for change”

First Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mairead McGuinness MEP, joined the IGFA Feed Committee yesterday to discuss concerns about the impact of Brexit on the sector and the progress of negotiations between the EU and the UK. With the continued uncertainty and so many details still unclear, feed businesses across the country are struggling to plan and prepare for the potential impacts of Brexit.

Speaking at the Committee Ms McGuinness said, “Reaching a trade agreement of any real substance will be a huge challenge and time is not on our side. The EU is continuing to move things forward in good faith but we have to prepare for all outcomes. One thing is certain: there will be change on 1st January 2021, as the UK leaves the single market and customs union.”

Acknowledging the impact on businesses in Ireland she added, “The uncertainty is putting pressure on a range of businesses and it is not always easy to find the time and resources to do the scenario planning necessary for the changes that might come. However, we all must aim to prepare as much as possible to limit negative economic consequences. The European Commission has published a detailed communication on changes that will happen regardless of the outcome of negotiations, alongside over 80 sector-specific notices: I advise all businesses to study these documents carefully as they make preparations.”

Chairman of the IGFA Feed Committee John Coleman said “We are facing into another very important period on Brexit and our members want to ensure that their businesses continue to provide essential and professional services to their customers. The progress and pace of the discussions between the UK and the EU is a huge concern but our industry will need to adapt and manage trading activities in time for future changes.

Many of our members trade in Northern Ireland and throughout the UK. This trade has been frictionless and our customers rely on that efficiency. We are therefore continuing to seek clarity on a range of scenarios and talk to government about the specific challenges for our sector”.

Ms McGuinness also discussed other priorities for all members of the food chain, noting the importance of delivering on environmental goals. She said, “Tackling climate change and improving sustainability is top of the agenda for the EU and for the European Parliament. Feed companies and the whole farming sector will be asked to deliver more on these issues, which will also be a vital component of future trade agreements.”