

Prosperity Agreement

NIEA

Linden Foods and Linergy

August 2014

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Between:

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

Klondyke Building, Gasworks Business Park
Lower Ormeau Road, Malone Lower Belfast BT7 2JA

and,

Linden Foods Ltd and Linergy Ltd

Granville Industrial Estate
Granville Rd, Dungannon BT70 1NJ

In which:

The parties agree to put in place a framework based on the following joint aspirations to enable Linden Foods Ltd. and Linergy Ltd. to move their business further towards long-term prosperity by:

1. Seeking opportunities to explore innovative solutions to reduce regulatory burdens on business, improve environmental outcomes and improve the profitability and sustainability of businesses in Northern Ireland.
2. Providing an open and collaborative basis to develop a better understanding of, and solutions to, industry issues and to influence public programmes.
3. Working to influence the supply chain to improve both on farm sustainability and finished product logistics.



Terry A'Hearn
Chief Executive, NIEA



Gerry Maguire
Managing Director, Linden Foods



Richard Moore
Managing Director, Linergy

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Key environment opportunities or challenges

The agreed joint aspirations encompass opportunities and challenges that both parties agree are key to developing a better way of working to improve business and environmental outcomes. These are expressed as six commitments:

1. Continual improvement in resource efficiency and better regulation through innovation and trials of new techniques.
2. Enhance biosecurity and improve practice for management of animal by-products (ABP).
3. Explore opportunities for local (Northern Ireland) solutions to use meat and bone meal (MBM).
4. Use existing forums and networks to discuss operational and policy level industry issues and support proactive engagement.
5. Develop local community engagement that builds understanding and trust.
6. Influence environmental performance in the supply chain:
 - (a) Improve environmental performance on farm, and
 - (b) Work with retail customers for better environmental outcomes.

Commitment	Action	Outcome
1. Continual improvement in resource efficiency and better regulation through innovation and trials of new techniques	1.1. Linden Foods and Linergy will seek innovative solutions to improve production efficiency and reduce environmental harm.	Enhanced production efficiency with reduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emissions to air, - decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, - reduction in water use, and - 25% reduction in CO₂ emissions from production.
	1.2. NIEA will facilitate trial new technologies that help improve environmental outcomes.	Innovation is made easier and appropriate new technologies are available for industry-wide implementation.
	1.3. Linden Foods, Linergy and NIEA will promote successes and share best practice to enhance public programmes and improve industry levels of performance.	(a) Higher environmental credentials across the sector. (b) Agri-food sector continues to reduce output of GHGs per unit of production.
	1.4 NIEA will redirect resources away from bureaucratic processes that do not add value toward proactive activities that support business and environmental improvement.	(a) Fewer resources on processes that do not add business or environmental value. (b) Enhanced 'regulator: business' relationship.
2. Enhance biosecurity and improve practice for management of animal by-products (ABP)	2.1. Linergy and Linden Foods will engage farmers on the risks associated with poor ABP management practice.	(a) Improved on farm biosecurity. (b) Reduced odours in transit. (c) Reduced operational delays at Linergy. (d) Reduced frequency of unacceptable material. (e) Improved quality of raw material leading to associated yield increase of

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	2.2. NIEA will work with other Executive departments and industry groups to encourage co-operation and to clarify enforcement options, legislation and promote best practice.	Joined up/cross-sector approach to efficient and safe ABP management.
3. Explore opportunities for local (Northern Ireland) solutions to use meat and bone meal (MBM)	3.1. Linergy and NIEA will work with other Executive Departments and relevant research organisations to explore techniques for using MBM.	(a) Reduced cost and environmental impact from shipping MBM off-shore. (b) Produce a list of commercially viable options for using MBM in Northern Ireland by December 2015.
4. Use existing forums and networks to discuss operational and policy level industry issues and support proactive engagement	4.1. NIEA will leverage its organisational links with other Executive departments to establish better, more regular communication.	Improved flow of information between NIEA, other Executive departments and Linden Foods and Linergy.
5. Develop local community engagement that builds understanding and trust	5.1. Linden Foods and Linergy will create a local stakeholder forum where key issues can be discussed in a constructive manner, (include local representatives, local authorities, other business people, and Executive departments/agencies).	(a) Stakeholder forum established in 2014 with regular meetings planned. (b) Issues of common interest are identified and addressed more easily. (b) Changes to the business can be explained in a proactive manner.
	5.2. Linden Foods and Linergy will explore other community engagement activities.	(a) Hold a stakeholder visit by end of 2014. (b) Greater community understanding about Linden Foods and Linergy operations and value to community. (c) Greater ability for Linden Foods and Linergy to understand community views.
6. Influence environmental performance in the supply chain: (a) Improve environmental performance on farm	6.1. Linden Foods will promote use of NetRegs amongst its farmers.	(a) NetRegs web link added to Linden Livestock website and other suitable media. (b) Linden Foods farmers have a good understanding about environmental regulations. (c) Fewer farm environmental compliance problems.

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(b) Work with retail customers for better environmental outcomes	6.2. NIEA will work with Executive departments and Linden Foods on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - carbon reduction/feed efficiency research, - encourage take up of existing good farm practice schemes, - promote participation in biodiversity initiatives, - provide advice and awareness about waste reduction and resource efficiency, and - promote use of on farm carbon calculators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Reduction in carbon emissions from the sector. (b) Enhanced on-farm biodiversity and increase understanding about biodiversity initiatives. (c) Better understanding of waste issues and reduction and improved resource efficiency.
	6.3. Linden Foods will work with retail customers to review packaging technologies and freight to optimise food haulage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) More efficient food haulage. (b) Reduced carbon emissions from Linden Foods supply chain.

Parties to the Agreement

Linden Foods

Linden Foods form part of the Linden Food Group. Located in Dungannon. Linden Foods process top quality cattle and lamb. In their modern processing plant they can slaughter and process approximately 1800 cattle and 4000 lambs per week. The company's retail packing facility produces a wide range of products to meet customers' specifications. They currently manufacture various ranges of branded and own label products for a number of well known high street retailers, together with convenience food manufacturers.

Linden Foods acknowledge that good environmental stewardship goes hand in hand with their activities, and understand that operations may have a significant impact on the environment. As such practical concern for the environment is an integral and fundamental part of their activities and is of importance to customers and the communities served.

Linergy

Developing innovative solutions to industry problems is the bedrock of any dynamic and robust economy. Anyone familiar with the agri-food industry will be well aware of the challenges faced by companies in a fiercely competitive environment. Businesses hit by soaring energy prices, waste disposal costs, and a changing legislative framework have been forced to rethink how they operate.

In 2005 Linergy was established with shareholdings by three companies to provide an innovative solution to

what was an increasingly onerous problem. Operating from a state-of-the-art rendering facility in Granville Industrial Estate in Dungannon, Linergy uses animal by-products and fallen farm animals to produce renewable biomass fuels, tallow oil and meat and bone meal.

NIEA

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is an Agency within the Department of Environment (DoE) with approximately 650 staff. The Agency is part of the wider Environment and Marine Group (EMG) in DoE. The NIEA implements the Executive's environmental policy and strategy in Northern Ireland. Divisions within the NIEA undertake a range of activities that promote the key themes of sustainable development, biodiversity and climate change.

The Strategic Objective of the NIEA is, 'To create prosperity and well-being through environment and heritage excellence.' The Operating Principles are:

1. We will make it easy for people to do good business and difficult for people to do bad business.
2. We will help create a resource efficient Northern Ireland.
3. We will help people see our environment and heritage as an opportunity, not a barrier.
4. We will be a customer-focused and people-centred organisation.

Background information

Prosperity Agreements are voluntary agreements through which the NIEA and an organisation or a group of organisations can explore new creative ways of

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reducing environment and heritage impacts in ways that create prosperity and well-being.

The agri-food sector is a significant contributor to the Northern Ireland economy. The high quality of produce and level of customer trust, in addition to the excellent growing conditions means there are opportunities to increase productivity. To reinforce these market advantages and be profitable in the long-term, this must be managed in a sustainable manner. This Prosperity Agreement is between the NIEA and Linden Foods Ltd and Linergy Ltd. Linden Foods and Linergy are significant agri-food companies in Northern Ireland; they have a history of good environmental performance and a focus on innovation. This Prosperity Agreement aims to, through a stronger partnership between the parties, tackle environmental and economic problems facing Northern Ireland and capitalise on opportunities.

Governance arrangements

Life of the Agreement

The parties have agreed that this Prosperity Agreement will operate for a period of three years from the date of this Agreement.

Party stakeholders

For the purpose of this Agreement, stakeholders of this Agreement include Linden Foods and Linergy employees, Linden Foods supply chain (farmers and retail businesses), trade associations (e.g. Ulster Farmers Union, NI Food and Drink Association), NGOs (e.g. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Ulster Wildlife, Business in the Community NI), the Northern Ireland community, NIEA, and other Executive agencies, such as Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)/ Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)/Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI).

Management of the Agreement

The following framework for decision making and management of the agreement has been approved by the two signature parties. The Prosperity Agreement working group will include a NIEA Director, the Linden Foods and Linergy Client Manager, relevant staff from both parties, Linden Foods Director, Linergy Director and Environment Managers from Linden Foods and Linergy.

The working group is responsible for:

- Endorsing and directing implementation action,
- Reviewing implementation progress,

- Ensuring appropriate resourcing and support for resourcing,
- Interacting with their respective organisations and party stakeholders, and
- Reporting and making recommendations on the progress of the agreement to both parties.

This Agreement and progress reports will be made available to the public on the NIEA website. Both parties are accountable and responsible for the commitments made in this Agreement.

Both parties reserve the right to withdraw from this Prosperity Agreement if they believe the Agreement is no longer effectively promoting the joint aspirations, or if significant compliance issues arise at Linden Foods or Linergy. In the event that a withdrawal or termination looks likely, both parties agree to initiate discussions about why this might occur.

Review and reporting

The parties have agreed to the following review and reporting framework. The working group will meet on a quarterly basis for the first year to review progress on implementing commitments. The following years will operate on a bi-annual meeting schedule.

The working group will assess progress against commitments and outcomes agreed annually. This review will also identify areas of focus for the following year and possible amendments to the Agreement. Progress and results will be reported to the Linden Foods and Linergy Boards and NIEA Board and made available through the NIEA website. At the end of this Agreement the working group will undertake a full review of the outcomes. This review will assess the success of the Prosperity Agreement and measure deliverables against those identified.

Contact details

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