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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Permitted Development Rights for Agricultural Buildings Consultation,
Planning Policy Division,
Department of the Environment,
3rd Floor,
Millennium House,
17-25 Great Victoria Street,
Belfast,
BT2 7BN.

17th January 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS CONSULTATION

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. The Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU) is the largest farming organisation in Northern Ireland representing nearly 12,000 farming families therefore we feel it is highly appropriate that we respond to this document.

The UFU welcome and accept the recommendation (paragraph 16) to extend the area limitation of agricultural buildings or extensions, which does not require planning permission, from 300m² to 500m². This is something that the UFU have been pressing for, for some time as we considered the current 300m² permitted development limit to be restrictive as we felt it was outdated and not reflective of modern, fit for purpose farm buildings. Agricultural development is necessary to allow farms to evolve to become more efficient and continue to produce goods to a high standard. We feel this proposal will help the agricultural industry expand without being unnecessarily restricted by planning rules and fees. This type of agricultural development tends to be less contentious than other types of development so raising the permitted development limit would help take some applications out of the planning system. This in turn would help reduce red tape, expense and delay. This proposal will bring Northern Ireland more in-line with the rest of the UK and will help ease planning rules.