

**ULSTER FARMERS' UNION NEWS RELEASE****Date: 2 April 2015****Cyclo: 61/2015****UFU welcome Commissioner announcement on EU Renewables Policy**

The Ulster Farmers' Union has welcomed a speech given recently by the EU's Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy about the new Renewable Energy Union.

UFU Rural Enterprise Committee Chairman Gary Hawkes said: "As the Union's Rural Enterprise Committee continues in its efforts to address the issues facing the small scale renewables land based sector in Northern Ireland, it is very encouraging that EU Commissioner, Arias Canete delivered a powerful speech at the 'EU leading on renewable energy policy' Conference in Brussels on how renewables fit into his vision for a sustainable energy and climate future. Mr Canete in his speech said that 'energy markets and grids have to be fit for renewables, not vice versa'. This will have struck a nerve with many of our members, who have experienced considerable on-going frustrations connecting to the grid here in Northern Ireland. Over the last 5 years, the UFU has identified grid connection as the single largest barrier in the uptake of small scale renewable energy in Northern Ireland and it is significant that at an EU level Mr Canete has stressed that this has to be improved as a matter of urgency."

In his speech he also identified five main areas which will need to be addressed in meeting the key renewable and climate change targets which include: decarbonising our economy with renewables; investing in renewable research and innovation; designing an internal energy market that works for renewables; making energy efficiency and renewables work together; and lastly, a secure supply of renewable energy.

Gary concluded: "The message from the Commissioner was distinctly summed up by his comment 'good intentions count for nothing if we don't get the policies right'. This is the very point that the UFU identified some considerable time ago as the major failing in terms of small scale renewable development in the land-based sector in Northern Ireland. Several key policies are not working and action is needed if smaller scale renewables are going have a sustainable future in local agriculture. We have been greatly encouraged by what the Commissioner has said and we will now be acting to ensure that he delivers by getting the policies right."

**//ENDS****Media Contacts**

Taryn McHenry m:

Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry

Deborah Quinn m:

Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry