

ULSTER FARMERS' UNION NEWS RELEASE**Date: 30 January 2013****Cyclo No: 20/2013****UFU meet with NIE to discuss grid connection of small scale renewables**

A delegation from the Ulster Farmers' Union has met with senior staff from NIE including Chief Executive Joe O'Mahony to discuss issues affecting small scale generators of renewable electricity.

Speaking after the meeting, Rural Enterprise Chairman Gary Hawkes said; "We covered many topics in what was a very productive meeting, and we continue to evolve and develop our working relationship with NIE. The main focus at the meeting was on the pricing of grid connections for small scale rural developers. Considerable variations in quotes will only be addressed by looking at capacity on the lower voltage 11kV network and this will only be possible by NIE being permitted to invest in the 11kV network. This decision has been referred to the Competition Commission and a decision is expected this year."

The UFU also raised the issue of earthing complications which affected many of our members connecting to the grid last year. The Union was encouraged to hear that NIE had made significant progress in rectifying many of these problems.

Mr Hawkes concluded "The UFU will continue to lobby for the upgrade and investment in the 11kV network. However, only after a positive decision is made by the relevant authorities will farmers be able to move forward and have access to a robust and reliable electricity supply for their businesses."

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