

**ULSTER FARMERS' UNION NEWS RELEASE****Date: 9 June 2010****Cyclo No: PR88/10****UFU Renewables team visit SONI HQ and University of Ulster**

The Ulster Farmers' Union has initiated a series of meetings with key players in the industry to promote its policy on renewable energy.

UFU policy representatives, including Deputy President Harry Sinclair, Chairman of Rural Enterprise Committee David McElrea, Policy Director Wesley Aston and Chris Osborne, UFU Policy Officer, this week visited the SONI (Systems Operator Northern Ireland) headquarters to discuss key issues with Robin McCormick, General Manager and Dick Lewis Grid Operations Planning Manager.

SONI is the transmission system operator responsible for the all-island transmission system in conjunction with EirGrid and jointly operates the SEM (Single Electricity Market).

David McElrea commented; "Northern Ireland is seeking to generate 40% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020. With farming producing growing amounts of renewable energy from a wide variety of sources, the UFU wanted to investigate how to further integrate this onto the grid to the benefit of our members.

"Our visit to the University of Ulster's Centre for Sustainable Technologies also proved useful and the team had the opportunity to discuss the potential role for the agricultural sector in providing inputs to the alternative built environment with Professor Neil Hewitt and Centre Director, Mark Anderson. There is positive scope for development in this area once key drivers are put in place which the Rural Enterprise Committee will now work towards."

The UFU will continue to meet with a range of key organisations over the coming months with the aim of establishing its position as the key stakeholder and driver in the renewables sector.

**ENDS//...****Media Contact: Michelle Ferguson 028 9037 0222**