

STATEMENT FROM:



BILLY ARMSTRONG MLA

ULSTER UNIONIST ASSEMBLY MEMBER FOR MID-ULSTER

- Prospect House, Coagh Rd, Stewartstown BT71 5JH. **Tel: 028 87738641**
- 20 High Street, Moneymore BT45 7PD. **Tel: 028 86748090**
- Room 308, Parliament Buildings, Stormont BT4 3XX. **Tel: 028 90520305**
- Keep up to date on www.billyarmstrong.co.uk
- Email directly to billy@billyarmstrong.co.uk
- Follow on [twitter](https://twitter.com/unionistbilly) - @unionistbilly

Monday 15 March 2010

Release: Immediate

Armstrong welcomes Assembly Report into the Dioxin Contamination Incident of December 2008

Mid Ulster MLA Billy Armstrong has welcomed the findings of an Assembly Report into the Dioxin contamination of animal feed in December 2008 which cost the Executive more than £4 million and led to a major cull of animals.

Mr Armstrong said;

“The Dioxin contamination incident was a huge blow to the agricultural sector in Northern Ireland, with a major cull of animals and a collapse in consumer confidence as pork products were withdrawn from sale.

The Report was scathing in its criticisms of the lack of communication between the authorities in the Republic of Ireland where the feed was contaminated, and the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland.

It is incredible that Northern Ireland’s Agriculture Minister learned of the impending crisis in an RTE TV news bulletin on a Saturday night, in spite of the fact that a meeting was held earlier that day involving the Republic’s Prime Minister, Agriculture Minister and other interested parties.

I therefore particularly welcome the recommendation that a strategy should be created to allow development of early warning systems for future potential contamination incidents so that action can be taken to minimise the risks for the food chain and the economic consequences for the farming and food production industries. This strategy should also ensure that the early warning systems inform other Member States and regions who may be affected.

This situation was intolerable and must never be permitted to occur again. The Northern Ireland agriculture sector has suffered more than enough as it is.”

ENDS