

STATEMENT FROM:



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## **Armstrong welcomes Thailand Vets on visit to Stormont**

Mid Ulster MLA Billy Armstrong has welcomed two senior vets from Thailand to Stormont as part of their visit to the United Kingdom to meet with key stakeholders in the pig industry, such as the Pig exporters and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Vets, both from the Thai Department of Livestock Development were in Northern Ireland to examine the facilities operated by Northern Ireland pig-producers and to verify that they are approved by the Thai authorities to export to Thailand.

Mr Armstrong said;

“The pig-breeding industry here is a mainstay of our rural economy and one of Northern Ireland’s major export earners. I was therefore delighted to facilitate this visit to Parliament Buildings by such important visitors from Thailand. Dr Lamai Nammongkol, Veterinary Officer, Bureau of disease control and veterinary services, and Dr Chatsuda Choomkasian, Chachoengsao provincial livestock office, were accompanied by Chris Jackson, Export Manager from the British Pig Association and Robert Overend, Chairman of the Ulster Pork & Bacon Forum, and also met with Mrs Sandra Overend, the Conservative & Unionist Candidate for Mid-Ulster in the forthcoming Westminster Election.

Any company wishing to export live animals or A.I. to Thailand needs to gain prior approval from the Thai Government, and this must be renewed every two years. The two Vets have been meeting with the local pig exporting farmers and local vets as well as DARD Veterinary Officials as part of their UK visit, and will be visiting one of the AI Centres that have previously supplied pig genetics to Thailand.

I am confident that approval will continue to be granted and that Northern Ireland pig producers will continue to export their excellent genetics to Thailand in addition to other overseas markets.”

ENDS