EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Bovine Genetics Genotyping Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland)

S.R. 2026 No.14

1. Introduction

1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ('the Department') to accompany this Statutory Rule which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.2. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by section 9(1) of the Agriculture Act (Northern Ireland) 1949, Articles 52(9) and 70(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 and section 48 of, and paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the Agriculture Act 2020.

2. Purpose

2.1. The Statutory Rule will give legal effect to the Bovine Genetics Genotyping Scheme which will come into effect within 2026.

3. Background

3.1. The Bovine Genetics Genotyping scheme sits within the Bovine Genetics Project. The Bovine Genetics Project forms part of the Sustainable Agriculture Programme. The project will provide a package of support for farmers to help increase individual animal productivity and environmental sustainability and provide benchmarking services.

3.2. The Bovine Genetics Genotyping Scheme provides for payments to be made by the Department to eligible farm businesses in relation to undertaking the genotyping of eligible bovines within their herds.

4. Consultation

4.1. The Department consulted from 21 December 2021 to 15 February 2022 on proposals to introduce a Bovine Genetics Project (previously referred to as Ruminant Genetics Programme) as part of the Future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland. Stakeholder responses received in respect of these proposals were considered and included in the analysis for the Future Agricultural Policy Decisions in Northern Ireland published on 22 March 2022.

4.2. The Agricultural Policy Stakeholder Group (APSG) was established by the Department to ensure that stakeholder views are understood and properly considered during the development of the DAERA Sustainable Agriculture Programme. In addition, industry established Sustainable Ruminant Genetics (SRG) in May 2022, comprising of stakeholders from a wide range of agricultural organisations. Several

meetings have been held with both these groups to present and discuss the Bovine Genetics Project proposals and SRG is working collectively with DAERA to deliver several key functions, including the supply of industry data and the promotion and marketing of the Project to producers and other stakeholders.

5. Equality Impact

5.1. In accordance with the Department's obligations under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, a screening exercise for the Bovine Genetics Project was completed with the screening decision to not conduct a full equality impact assessment.

5.2. At Northern Ireland level, the Bovine Genetics Project will not have an identifiable differential impact on the main equality categories.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1. Regulatory impact screening was carried out with the decision that a full impact assessment was not required as is anticipated that there will be no additional compliance or administrative burdens placed on farm business over and above those required in existing regimes.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. The main source of funding for the Bovine Genetics Genotyping scheme is from DAERA's Capital DEL. The total Capital DEL cost for the Genotyping scheme is estimated at £16.6m commencing in 2026/2027.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. The Regulations do not have any human rights implications, nor are they incompatible with EU law. The Regulations are therefore deemed to comply with the requirements of section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

9. EU Implications

9.1. There are no EU implications associated with this statutory rule.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1 **GB**

There are no direct comparisons in GB.

ROI

The Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) has developed a world leading genetic improvement infrastructure, for the dairy and beef sectors, over the last 20 years. The ICBF system uses a centrally managed database to collate and analyse data from a wide range of sources, e.g. milk and dairy processors, livestock markets, breeding companies and farmers. This system has driven significant improvements in genetic gain for ROI farmers through the provision of genetic evaluation and benchmarking services for dairy and beef cattle. In addition, the National Genotyping Programme in ROI is a

collaborative initiative enabling Ireland to take the first step in achieving a fully genotyped national herd. Genotyping the national herd will provide a huge opportunity for both the Dairy and Beef industry to accelerate the rates of gain of the ROI national breeding indexes (e.g. EBI, Eurostar & DBI), which will enhance farm sustainability & reduce carbon emissions.

11. Additional Information

11.1 For further information contact Francis Breen, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (francis.breen@daera-ni.gov.uk)