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SAVE OUR INDUSTRY

Plea to Gildernew as Europe passes buck

DUAL CUP WINNER: KATHRYN IS AT EASE WITH PUBLIC SPEAKING



■ **CUP WINNER:** Kathryn Taylor from Coleraine YFC won the County Londonderry Cup for prepared public speaking at the YFCU County Londonderry committee annual awards dinner. She also picked up another cup for impromptu public speaking. (FW48-312CM)

PICTURE: Chris McCullough

EXCLUSIVE

By Chris McCullough



THE onus on saving Northern Ireland's ailing dairy industry from the brink of collapse lies firmly at the feet of Minister of Agriculture, Michelle Gildernew, according to Brussels.

Following compromises agreed as part of the Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), new provisions have been made under Article 68 that a Member State can assist sectors of the industry that are facing ruin.

It also appears that newly modulated Rural Development money can be directed as aid to help the farmers in need. However, it is unclear how much money is available or when it is available.

FarmWeek contacted Brussels and DARD this week in order to try and clarify the situation on the back of yet another poor milk auction by United Dairy Farmers.

An EU spokesman said: "We cannot comment directly on the outcome of individual auctions in individual countries or regions. However, in general we can say that we continue to keep a close eye on the market."

"We will take any measures we feel to be justified, such as we did recently when we introduced private storage aid for butter. We have no intention at the present time

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New bluetongue strain in England

MINISTER Michelle Gildernew has reinforced her message to importers to think carefully before they import any cattle and sheep that may potentially have been exposed to the bluetongue virus.

The Minister's message comes after it was confirmed that five cattle legally imported to England from France have tested positive for BTv1. This is the first time the BTv1 strain has been found in animals imported to England. A further animal from the same consignment was culled as it also tested positive for bluetongue although tests were unable to confirm the strain.

Following confirmation from Defra that these animals would be slaughtered with no compensation, Minister Gildernew said: "I continually urge those involved in the importation of cattle and sheep to think carefully and consider the potential consequences of bringing bluetongue here."

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