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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Scheme)*

This Scheme provides for income support payments to be made by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to pig producers, sheep producers, and certain potato producers who have suffered a financial loss as a consequence of a disturbance to the agricultural markets caused by the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

The Scheme—

- (a) specifies the manner in which applications are to be made (article 3);
- (b) specifies the eligibility criteria and rates of payment (articles 5, 6 and 7);
- (c) specifies the maximum total amount of income support payment which may be made to a producer (article 8);
- (d) provides for the review of a decision to reject an application (article 9);
- (e) provides for the Department to withhold payment in any case where false or misleading information has been and to recover any undue payment (article 10).

Under section 4(1) of the Agriculture (Temporary Assistance) Act (Northern Ireland) 1954, any person who, being required or authorised under or by virtue of this Scheme to furnish any information, record or document, furnishes any information, record or document which, to his knowledge, is false in a material particular shall be guilty of an offence and shall, without prejudice to Article 10 of the Perjury (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (S.I. 1979/No. 1714 (N.I. 19)), be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale or to imprisonment not exceeding 12 months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

Under section 4(2) of that Act any person—

- (a) who acts in contravention of, or neglects or fails to comply with any provision contained in the Scheme; or
- (b) obstructs or impeded an authorised officer in the exerciser of any power under this Scheme, shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 of the standard scale.