**Minutes of the Fifth meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council.**

Venue ; Agriculture House.

Date; 11 June 2003.

Present ; Professor Patrick Fottrell, David Walsh, Aidan Murray, Martin Blake, Mary-Anne Bartlett, Barbara Bent, John Stack, Sean O’Laoide, Tom Doyle, Bernadette Earley, Alison Hanlon, Stephen Foley, Lorcan McCabe, DermotSparrow, Kevin Kinsella, Angela McCarthy. Jer Bergin.

Apologies; Derek Deane, Liam McKibben and Jackie Cahill.

**1. Opening Comments**

The Chair stated that a letter had been received from the Irish Fur Breeders Association but as it was only being distributed at the meeting that it would not be discussed as members would need time to read the letter and the attachment. Other matters concerning Fur Farming could be taken under A.O.B.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.**

The minutes as distributed were agreed and adopted.

**3. Maters Arising.**

**Item 8 on Transport**; It was proposed that the full Teagasc Report on Transport should be sent directly by Teagasc itself to the Minister and his attention brought to the availability of other scientific reports. The meeting was informed that Teagasc had already done so and that the Minister is always briefed by Department of Agriculture and Food officials of all reports prior to any EU or National legislation being introduced or amended. It was agreed because of time constraints that the report had to be sent that afternoon by the FAWAC Secretary (issued on the afternoon, 11th June).

**Second indent of A.O.B. on IHWT letter**; The Welfare trust had yet to come back to the Departments official regarding a meeting. An update will be given at the next meeting.

**Third indent of A.O.B. re Fur Farming**; this item is scheduled under A.O.B. of this meeting.

**4. Working Group on Guidelines.**

The Groups Chairperson outlined the work carried out and stated that the group would recommend to the Council that while the guidelines be printed in a booklet format that a separate short leaflet should also be published outlining the main attributes to be found therein. The Council could afterwards decide to whom the short leaflet should be distributed along with deciding how many of the main documents should be published. He thanked all his fellow Working Group members for their contributions and for those Council members who also send them their opinions on the draft texts.

Following a general discussion it was agreed that editorial comments by Council members would be welcome prior to its submission to the Minister. These could be sent through the Working Groups Chairperson and in turn with the Secretary. The Chairperson will insert an addition comment on Calving Jacks.

The Councils Chairperson thanked all those who contributed to the Beef and Sheep Guidelines and asked the Working Group to continue with the guidelines for Dairying. The Group will meet as soon as possible in order to have the dairy draft circulated before the next meeting. He concluded by stating that the two guidelines would be submitted to the Minister and in turn would be handled by the Departments Corporate Affairs Division along with being approved by himself and the Working Groups Chairperson. The Secretary will coordinate with both the Chairperson and the Ministers office regarding a launch date in the autumn.

**5. Working Group on Cooperation.**

The Groups Chairperson reported that the group had met three times and had concentrated on the following areas, which they felt would contribute to the successful operation of the project;

* Principles surrounding the various operational aspects
* Operational structures
* Working arrangements between the parties

He also stated that all contributions had been positive and productive leading to a general consensus that the final outcome will contribute to a greater understanding of farm animal welfare by both the farming community and the public. The draft will have to be approved by the organisations represented in the group before being formally submitted to Council for approval.

It is envisaged that this groups publications will follow the format of the Beef and Sheep Guidelines and the draft will be circulated to all members for their opinions and comments.

The Councils Chairperson thanked the group for the work carried out to date and asked other members to send their contributions to the Secretary.

**6. A.O.B.**

* **CPSU strike in Departments five local offices**. Grave concern was voiced at the serious farm animal welfare situation, which has arisen resulting in the starvation and disease of some animals as a consequence of being kept in sheds for long periods. The strike was also affecting the freedom of farmers to move and trade cattle. Another aspect was the serious depletion of winter-feed. It was agreed that the Chairperson should bring these serious problems to the attention of both the Minister and the CPSU (issued on the afternoon, 11th June).
* **Fur Breeders Association correspondence**. As this letter was only received on the 10th June and distributed at the meeting, the Chairperson asked that it be put on the agenda for a later meeting. It was agreed following a general discussion that the Secretary would acknowledge the letter and contact the association with a view to organising a visit to a fur farm. A Visitors Group would be open to all Council members. The group in turn will report back to Council and circulate its report prior the meeting.
* **Live export of dogs**. While this does not come within the remit of the FAWAC concern was expressed on the manner with which this trade was being carried out. It was agreed that the Departments Veterinary Division would coordinate with the SPCA directly on this matter.

The Chairperson thanked all for the tremendous work carried out to date and stated that he would like for the Council to proceed at the same speed over the coming year. He finished by wishing all the members a good summer break and looked forward to meeting them reinvigorated in the autumn. He will coordinate with Secretary for a suitable date for the next meeting.