# Minutes of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

**Venue:** Fitzwilliam Hotel, Dublin.

Date: 16 December 2005.

Present: P Fottrell (Chairman), T O’Donnell, M A Bartlett, S O’Laoide, A McCarthy,

D Sparrow, B Bent, A Hanlon, B Earley, S Foley,

Teresa O’Halloran (Secretary).

**Apologies:** K Kinsella, J Stack, Tom Doyle,D Deane, J Cahill, C Connor, M Blake**,**

Chairman welcomed N O’Connell, DARDNI, representing C Connor and P Brangan, DAF, representing M Blake.

# 1. MINUTES

Minutes adopted with one amendment.

# MATTERS ARISING

***Ritual Slaughter Without Stunning***

Secretary had circulated to Council, via email on 14th November, details received from the New Zealand Authorities. It is hoped that further information will be received from them in due course.

It was also reported that Professor Stafford, New Zealand, is in the process of conducting research on behalf of DEFRA and it was agreed that details of this research would be circulated to Council.

A representative group from Council is in contact with the Islamic Cultural Centre Dublin and is hoping to engage further with them in 2006.

CIWF queried if DAF had made any progress in engaging with other EU Member States or the Lebanese Authorities. DAF reported that it was trying to make progress particularly with the German Authorities however there is nothing concrete to report.

CIWF pointed out that abattoirs in Lebanon are out of date and that there are plans afoot there to build anew. Now was the time for DAF to act by providing expertise, knowledge and advice regarding building design, layout and training. There was general consensus among Council. Chairman asked DAF representatives to convey to relevant people within Department the concerns of Council.

# FARM ANIMAL WELFARE EDUCATION GUIDELINES – BROILER

# WELFARE

Chair of this Sub-group reported that one or two more meetings would provide a final document however the Broiler Welfare Directive has yet to be adopted at EU and National level and that this lack of progress will delay conclusion of their document. Chairman asked if the sub-group could look at the Programme for 2006. It was suggested that they might look at ‘Laying Hens’ and that the Northern Ireland Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Laying Hens, be circulated to Sub-group members.

# 4. RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF FAWAC PUBLICATIONS

A general discussion took place as to the impact FAWAC publications are making. As stated at the last meeting the Chairman expressed the view that it is important to get some measurement of impact of FAWAC publications. It was agreed that Secretary would circulate a draft ‘Research Brief’ to Council members seeking their views on type of questions to be asked; research framework; target audience; evaluation of webpage; suggestions for improvement etc.

# 5. WORKING GROUP ON CO-OPERATION (EWS)

Chair of this Sub-group reported that EWS has been rolled out in the North West and North East Regions as well as to the five counties in the first phase. Roll-out in the South West and South East Regions will take place on 16th December and 5th January 2006 respectively. Steering Group attended all roll-out meetings and Chair said that the response and attendance of participating organisations at meetings is very good. ISPCA stated that the main thrust is the development of trust at local level among the relevant groups. Farming representative indicated that he is not aware of any problems.

Chairman expressed his thanks and due recognition to all involved as their contribution has made EWS a great success in terms of the work of Council.

# 6. UPDATE RE. ‘REPORT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF VETERINARY

**MEDICINES IN IRELAND’**

Chairman referred to a letter dated 14th December, from Minister for Agriculture and Food, regarding the recommendations contained in the above report. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chair of the Veterinary Medicines Sub-group brought Council through each of the points addressed in the letter and agreed that progress is being made but that the issue must continue to be prioritised and progressed. Chairman also invited DAF representative to respond to points raised by Chair. A general discussion followed.

Chairman thanked both parties and stressed that Council appreciates the balance between welfare and human health/food safety. Council has been reassured that many of the recommendations contained within the report are being take on board. He noted that the Veterinary Medicines Regulations are to be revisited in the future re. *exemption criteria* and that Council can engage with DAF on an ongoing basis for updates on developments.

# 7. EU REVIEW OF SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS LEGISLATION

Some members of Council expressed concern that a draft SI entitled European Communities (Feed and Food Hygiene) Regulations 2005, proposed to repeal the Slaughter of Animals Act 1935 and 1988. Particular reference was made to the requirement for a slaughterman’s licence under the 1935 Act and the prospect of this Act being repealed with nothing to replace it would be undesirable. DAF stated that the draft Regulation is at a very preliminary stage and that there is no intention of repealing any legislation at present. The focus within DAF is to get the hygiene package in place.

Chairman referred to response received from Minister for Agriculture and Food re. on-farm slaughter of 4,000 pigs and in particular to paragraph three which suggested that FAWAC, in developing further issues of its excellent series of welfare guidelines, might consider including relevant advice for the on-farm slaughter of ill or injured animals, particularly where more intensive productions systems apply. Chair of the Education Sub-group suggested that his group could look at documents currently in place to deal with these types of situations and develop something appropriate. Reference was made to similar documents produced by the British Pig Association and the British Cattle Veterinary Association. DAF could advise what is legal in these situations.

DAF suggested that there is a need to progress a routine contingency despatch protocol for the on-farm slaughters of individual animals, particularly in situations were it is not viable to transport the animal to a slaughterhouse. This could be followed-up with the development of a protocol for the mass slaughter of animals on-farm. It was suggested that Council should also look at situations, from a welfare perspective, where animals are locked up by the State whilst its investigations are ongoing.

CIWF asked DAF to clarify the circumstances under which captive bolt pistols can be used on the farm, and it was said that DAF would do this at the next meeting.

CIWF asked Council to seek clarification as to whether the report from the internal investigation by DAF into the slaughter of the 4,000 pigs is to be made available to Council?

# 8. ELECTRO-IMMOBILISATION (EI)

DAF stated that a consultation of stakeholders had taken place and that views submitted were under consideration by the Minister. It is expected that a decision will be made in the near future. A general discussion took place and the following were mentioned – an improvement in the veterinary medicines situation re. sedatives; risks associated with administering veterinary medicines to feral animals; the need for an awareness campaign for the dis-budding of calves and finally that New Zealand are considering a voluntary ban.

# TRANSPORT

DAF gave an overview of current position re. Regulation 1/2005, referring to documents supplied in meeting folder. Stakeholders are being consulted and the consultation period is extended until the end of December 2005. The need to address the provision of training early in 2006 was highlighted. TEAGASC stated that they are prepared to put a training course/package in place. CIWF said that it is important that this legislation be enforced properly.

Chairman suggested that Council set itself attainable goals and requested feedback from members for discussion at the next meeting, keeping in mind the more pertinent priorities.

# AOB

Chairman expressed his appreciation and thanks to all members of Council for their hard work in 2005 and stated that he is looking forward to working with them in 2006. He also acknowledged contribution of DAF, thanking S Healy, T O’Donnell, M Blake, P Brangan and Secretary.

It was agreed that meetings should be held outside Dublin.

***Slaughter of Mink***

CIWF raised concerns about the mass on-farm slaughter of mink in Ireland and gave a short oral presentation to Council. Reference was made to a recent video taken on an Irish fur farm. CIWF requested to show this film to the Council.Concerns raised include the following: -

* Use of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide as a means of slaughter and the fact that this is legal. The use of carbon dioxide is banned in the Netherlands,
* No veterinary presence on mink farms at time of slaughter,
* Number of animals that are placed in a killing chamber,
* Duration time to death is unknown.

Reference was made to the possible use of pento-barbitone. Chairman stated that many members of Council shared CIWF concerns and suggested that Council could prepare a set of guidelines/best practice booklet for the industry. It was agreed that CIWF would put in writing to Council what information is required. Chairman requested DAF to respond to these questions. Item is for discussion at next meeting.

Passport for Horses

ISPCA raised concerns that the passport for horses requirements are not being enforced particularly between Irish and UK ports and were critical of DAF as the enforcement agency.

All members present agreed that letter drafted by S O’Laoide on behalf of Chairman regarding humane disposal of horses could be issued.