# Minutes of the Forty-First Meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

**Location:** Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise

Date: 25th November 2010

Present: Chairperson Professor P Fottrell, M Blake (DAFF), B Carpenter (DAFF), S O’Laoide (Vet Ireland), L O’Flynn (Vet Ireland), A Hanlon (UCD), N Griffin (ISPCA), M A Bartlett (CIWF), M Doran (IFA), B Earley (TEAGASC), S Foley (CILDEHS), Kevin Kinsella (IFA).

Apologies: C Connor (DARDNI), N Byers (ICMSA), B Bent (WSPCA)

Secretary: Alan P O’Brien

1. **Minutes of the last FAWAC Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of 30th September 2010 were adopted with changes.

1. **Matters Arising**

* CIWF raised the issue of a speaker from Austria who could come and give a talk on beak trimming. The Chairman asked CIWF to submit the information to the Secretary.
* CIWF raised the issue of tail docking. The IFA said that having consulted with farmers, the feedback would indicate that this is not a common practice. DAFF said that this problem had not been encountered. The Chairman noted CIWF’s comments and agreed to pass them to DAFF.

1. **Report from the Education Sub-Group**

* The new booklet on welfare of Laying Hens is nearing completion. Any final comments from members must be submitted to the Secretary within two weeks.
* The IFA said that it is concerned that these guideline booklets are now taking on a new role legislatively and this must be dealt with appropriately.

1. **Early Warning System**

* DAFF said that three Regional Meetings have been held since the last meeting. EWS is working well. Welfare cases have decreased in number and fodder yields have been very good. The IFA agreed with this assessment.
* The IFA asked how EWS is dealing with the human aspect.
  + The Pobal/HSE initiative is working well. Staff training is being provided to DAFF staff.
* Vet Ireland said that DEFRA have carried out a review of its Animal Health and Welfare Bill. This report is due in December.
* UCD mentioned that Patricia Kelly’s research on animal welfare should be published in the New Year. The Chairman suggested that this could be circulated to the council.

1. **Equine Welfare Liaison Group**

* Sean O’Laoide said that the equine industry’s response to the UCD report on equine welfare should be due shortly. Another meeting of the Liaison Group should take place to bring the different stakeholders together.
* DAFF said that the urban horse population is the main issue that needs to be dealt with. DAFF is to meet with the Dublin Local Authorities to discuss the implementation of the Control of Horses Act.
* Vet Ireland said that the industry needs to be reminded of its responsibilities as many horses are still unregistered by their owners.
* UCD said that there is a concern that medicines administered are not being recorded properly.

1. **Pig Tail Biting Survey conducted by Teagasc, UCD and AFBI/QUB**

* UCD gave an overview of this Document
  + Carcass condemnation data is still being analysed
  + 99.1% of pigs had docked tails
  + Both docked and undocked pigs were found to have tail damage.
  + Once the data is fully analysed either Laura Boyle or Niamh O’Connell could be invited to present it.
* CIWF was concerned at the percentage of tail docking. What enrichment materials are being used?
  + DAFF said that toys are the predominant materials. The onus now rests with industry to find suitable materials.
  + UCD said that 90% of undocked tails were bitten. Stocking density can be a cause as well as enrichment.
* UCD applied for Walsh Fellowship funding to pursue research on environment enrichment but the application was unsuccessful.

**EFSA Broiler Chickens**

* This report was circulated for information.

**FVO General Audit**

* CIWF raised some concerns about issues highlighted in this report
  + Extended cage fronts for Laying Hens (bay windows)
  + Problem with live exports of overbooking at rest stops
* DAFF gave assurances on both of these
  + Bay Windows will not be acceptable on Enriched Cages
  + DAFF has a detailed pre-booking system for rest-stops during live export. A return fax is required from the French lairage confirming that they can fulfil the order.
* DAFF said that there is a more up to date FVO report from 2010.

**On-Farm Slaughter**

* Sean O’Laoide explained that a meeting had taken place between stakeholders on this issue. However, there is still no consensus on a solution to this issue.
* The IFA voiced their appreciation of the efforts made by Veterinary Ireland to try and resolve this issue. However they added that this initiative is still not working in practice.
* DAFF said that the solution will need to be a local one where farmers can identify a meat plant that is willing to co-operate on this.
* The IFA identified the special stamp that differentiates this meat from meat destined for export market as one of the major stumbling blocks. DAFF advised that the requirement for the ‘domestic’ stamp is a European legislative requirement and cannot be changed at a national level.

1. **AOB**

* Professor Monaghan has indicated that he is stepping down as Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Council on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW). Professor Fottrell extended his best wishes and thanks to Professor Monaghan. A new Chairperson will be required to be appointed by the Minister.
* CIWF raised the issue of Slaughter Without Stunning. The Chairman said that this had been referred to the SACAHW for an opinion. Sean O’Laoide said that it would be best to try and move the industry along on this rather than just condemn. UCD agreed, citing the backlash to condemnation in the UK.
* CIWF voiced concerns about Live Exports to Morocco over the length of journey time and the slaughter standards etc. DAFF agreed to make enquiries within the Department.
* CIWF said that they believe the Council’s recommendations on Fur Farming are not being acted upon. The Council agreed to remind the Minister of these recommendations.
* The Council congratulated Liz O’Flynn on receiving the Blue Cross Award for Animal Welfare for 2010.
* **END**