MINUTES OF THE SEVENTY FOURTH MEETING OF

THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Location: Midlands Park Hotel.

Date: 20th June 2019

Present: Chairperson Professor Patrick Fottrell, Niall O’Nuallain (DAFM), Sean O’Leary (IFA),) Conor Dowling (ISPCA), Gerald Quain (ICMSA) Alison Hanlon, (UCD), Sean O’Laoide (Westmeath Co Co), Angus Woods (IFA) Desmond Morrison (ICMSA)

Apologies: Andrew Kelly (ISPCA) Bernadette Earley (Teagasc)

Secretary: Paul Whelan (DAFM)

1. Review of Minutes of 72nd FAWAC Meeting

Minutes of the 73rd meeting from April 2019 were accepted, with the following updates, The CVOs attendance to the 73rd was to be recorded, along an acknowledgement of the hard work of the education subgroup and its chairman Sean O`Laoide.

2. Promotion of (FAWAC Animal Welfare Guidelines for Dairy Herds)

The benefit of having the booklets available for the upcoming Teagasc open day on July 3rd was highlighted. The Department will investigate the logistics of having the updated booklets delivered for the open day.

Bord Bia are to be contacted about having the booklets included in their packs to Dairy farmers.

DAFAM will contact Bord Bia.

Action: contact Agri aware and re-establish the link to the green school’s programme. Contact Bord Bia about inclusion of FAWAC booklets.

3. Microchipping

A general discussion took place centred around tightening up of dog ownership and registration issues.

4. Calve Welfare Guidelines

The consultant will have the draft document completed for the next FAWAC meeting.

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW) are examining once a day feeding in calves and will contribute to the booklet.

Action: education group to meet before next FAWAC

5. Public Perception and Engagement

The importance of clear scientifically informed discussion with the public was raised with the council. It was suggested that long term a citizen’s assembly would be a goal that would be desirable on the areas of welfare. The need to have the informed unbiased experts involved in any discussion was noted.

6. Dairy Labour

The work permits were of help last year in the area of farm labour on dairy farms. The farmers need to develop sustainable business models that can be managed by the labour available. The improvement in the economic situation means it is harder for farms to compete as a employer with longer term work offered elsewhere and the casual nature of employment offered is not attractive.

Action: DAFM to suggest this be raised at high level dairy meeting in DAFM

7. Equine Welfare

The regulations around the responsibilities on change of ownership could be examined (to)put the onus on the seller.

8. EWS

The profile of those farmers coming to the attention of the EWS (Early Warning System) has changed somewhat. In addition to the compromised older bachelor farmer, there are examples of younger farmers who may have over extended themselves when expanding or may become overwhelmed by setbacks e.g. fodder shortages, financial pressures etc. .

The IFA feels the area of farm assist needs to be highlighted more to farmers in difficult situations and made available to those who need it.

It was suggested that UCD Social Science Researcher Catherine Devitt could come and give a talk to the FAWAC group on the area.

Action: Alison Hanlon to ask Catherine Devitt if it would possible for her to attend a meeting in the future to give a presentation.

9. AOB

Sean O`Laoide will be attending EUROFAWC the following week. Fish Welfare, welfare labelling, stunning of animals and mobile slaughter are all on the agenda.

DAFM informed the Council that the EU Animal Welfare Platform is meeting and there have been calls for new and updated animal welfare legislation. The strategy adopted by the European Commission in recent years has been to focus on the implementation of existing animal welfare legislation rather than produce additional legislation.

Two particular topics have been prioritised by the EU Animal Welfare Platform i.e. Rearing pigs with intact tails and transport issues .

The transport issues are being examined by sub groups which include representatives from Member States, Industry and Animal Welfare N.G. O’S. and cover the following:

• Export of live animals to Third countries

• Challenges of elevated temperatures during transport

• Transport of Un-weaned calves

The Chair noted in the past there was a connection to the UK FAWAC and Christopher Watt had come over to address this Council.

Action: This connection to FAWC should be re-established.

The Next meeting is scheduled for the 12th of September