# Minutes

# FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAWAC)

**Date:** 22 October, 2020

**Venue:** Via Webex

**Meeting Time:**  10.30am

**Attendee’s:**

Sean O’Laoide (Chair), Kevin Kinsella IFA, Brendan Golden IFA, Tom Phelan IFA Gerald Quain ICMSA Alison Hanlon UCD, Andrew Kelly ISPCA, Conor Dowling ISPCA, Sean Murray DAFM, Rob Doyle DAFM, James Maher DAFM, Aine O’Connell IFA, Bernie Early, Jane Piggott, Siobhan Luff (Pigs Ireland), Andrew Cromie (ICBF)

**1. Minutes of previous meeting were agreed.**

**2. Calf Welfare**

Andrew Cromie of the ICBF provided an update on breeding trends and the Integrated Dairy Beef Programme. Andrew reported that the use of beef on dairy herd is growing rapidly.

Due to the positive impact of DBI genetic trends for beef traits have improved greatly for beef sires. The Integrated Dairy Beef project with ICOS marts continues to deliver valuable insights on how to build a more sustainable and integrated beef from dairy model. The meeting was informed that genotyping and genetic are key aspects of this program. The intention is to expand the programme in 2021 based on DAFM and industry feedback and support.

The Chair congratulated Andrew and the ICBF on their work adding that the FAWAC was an important stakeholder. The IFA offered support for the work undertaken and encouraged work on polled breeds. Adding that they were looking forward to continued improvement on the beef side. The IFA also noted the increase in farm management apps and requested the ICBF to engage with these. The ISPCA welcomed the progress adding that additional participation and engagement from civil society would be positive for progression.

James Maher presented on 2 consumer research surveys. The research identified an opportunity for the dairy industry to address the current disconnect between dairy farming and its different publics through improved communication, marketing, or changes to farming systems.

The Chair discussed the challenges of dairy beef integration, with sexed semen being an important driver of change. The IFA noted that price is the main issue and stressed the need for a better market price for all animals. The IFA stated that they would welcome a food ombudsman to ensure fair pricing.

UCD informed the meeting that there has been a project on consumer related welfare and that the findings will be available next June adding that Germany has been targeting high welfare poultry products. UCD informed of two further study’s, a sexed semen pilot study and

Rob Doyle of DAFM thanked James for the work and informed the meeting of the work of the Calf Stakeholder Forum which has a broad stakeholder approach to an industry wide challenge. In relation to consumer attitudes we need to develop the market for high welfare markets.

On calf exports, DAFM informed the meeting that the numbers were low this year and that Teagasc were continuing work with other member states on how these journeys are undertaken.

IFA added that 85% of dairy calves are finished by beef farmers and that stronger dairy calves moving to beef farms is a positive.

**3. Pig Welfare**

Siobhan Luff presented on the High Welfare Pig Project. Siobhan requested that FAWAC produce documentation on meeting standards on farm and for non intensive outdoor pigs and advice on pig keeping. The Chair thanked Siobhan for the presentation advising the FAWAC documentation would be considered

DAFM informed the meeting on the significant uptake on the targeted advisory scheme with 140 herds having engaged with risk assessment. DAFM informed of the positive work of the AHI dedicated Pig Program. DAFM advised of an upcoming SANTE F audit in November focussing on welfare indicators for pigs, broilers and cattle.

DAFM informed the meeting that the new national Animal Welfare Strategy was close to completion and that a new dedicated Animal Welfare Division is to be established within the Department.

**4. Equine Welfare**

DAFM presented on horse seizures reporting that to date in 2020 there have been 586 equines seized with 66 reclaimed and 36 still remaining in pounds. DAFM noted that there had been a high level of seizures in Limerick and Kilkenny in quarter 1 of 2020, however, these figures had reduced to more normal levels for quarter 2.

The ISPCA reported that figures for 2020 have shown a 4% decrease in calls and a 19% reduction in complaints overall, however, equine related calls are up about 4%.

Figures were down 25% on dogs and 33% on cats seized. There was an increase in Equines seized in Q1 but that has been quieter later in the year. The ISPCA added that 16 files have been submitted with 5 finalised via courts.

ISPCA added that he re-homing of horses is very challenging. Sean Murray agreed to circulate a document showing a breakdown of equines re-homed for discussion at the next meeting.

**AOB.**

* UCD noted that there is need to get calf welfare guidelines proof read.
* ISPCA suggested that poultry welfare be added to the FAWAC agenda. Issues re end of life for broiler breeder. The Chair agreed that it would be useful to add it to the agenda.
* Chair suggested that we might have someone from the industry to present on poultry.
* UCD suggested that the Early Warning Systems be put on the agenda for next meeting.
* Date for next meeting provisionally 2nd December.