

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL



BIENNIAL REPORT

2003/2004



THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE & FOOD
AN ROINN TALMHAÍOCHTA AGUS BIA

Members of the Public and Interested Parties wishing to communicate with the Council on issues relating to Farm Animal Welfare can do so by contacting the:

Secretary
Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council
Department of Agriculture and Food,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Tel. 01-6072049
Fax. 01-6767126
Email: fawac@agriculture.gov.ie

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

It gives me great pleasure to present the first biennial report of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC). This report covers the aims of the Council, the challenges it faces and the results achieved in the two-year period since its inception.



In 2002, the Minister for Agriculture and Food established the Council which brought together for the first time in Ireland, representatives of the principal stakeholders (from animal welfare organisations to farming bodies and from Government Departments - North and South - to veterinary representative bodies) in an advisory body to the Minister. It has a broad mandate and an impressive work programme. The Council provides a forum for the different interest groups to meet each other, to put forward their own particular viewpoint and, on the other hand, to hear the concerns and priorities of others.

The Council has in its relatively short life, been very successful in promoting animal welfare in a practical way and has addressed a number of important issues.

FAWAC has produced booklets on animal welfare guidelines for beef, dairy and sheep farmers. These guidelines have been developed with the intention of encouraging farmers to adopt and maintain the highest standards of husbandry.

Other areas of animal welfare which were considered by FAWAC were those concerning fur farming and fish farming. The Council heard presentations on these forms of farming from interested parties and its deliberations on the welfare issues outlined are still ongoing.

Members of the Council had expressed concern at the non-availability or lack of supply of an adequate range of veterinary medicines in Ireland and the perceived animal welfare problems caused as result. In this regard, a Working Group was established to evaluate the situation pertaining to this country. Work is at an advanced stage and it is hoped to present a Report to the Minister for Agriculture and Food in 2005.

The Council had recognised the merit of strengthening localised arrangements throughout the country, involving farming bodies, local animal welfare organisations and the Department, for identifying and alleviating welfare problems on individual farms at the earliest possible point. This led to the development of the Collaborative Early Warning/Intervention System for Animal Welfare Cases between the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Irish Farmers' Association and Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

There are a number of important issues which will feature over the coming period – the transport of live animals on which a Regulation was agreed in December 2004, various elements of which are to be implemented over the next few years. It is envisaged that a Draft Directive on the Welfare of Broilers will be published in 2005.

I would like to thank all those who supplied information or made presentations on the various welfare issues which the Council dealt with in the course of its deliberations. The work of the Council would not be possible without their invaluable help.

FAWAC has the capacity to make a positive contribution in advancing animal welfare and maintaining public and consumer confidence in the agriculture sector. The Council has made a good beginning and I have no doubt will build on that in the period ahead. I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the Council for their very constructive approach. On behalf of Council I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister and her predecessor for their support.

I would also like to thank Mr Aidan Murray of the Department, a former member of the Council, for his work in all matters relating to the establishment and operation of the Council.

Finally I would like to thank our secretariat, Mr David Walsh, Department of Agriculture and Food, former secretary to the Council, and Ms Teresa O Halloran, current secretary, for their attention to detail at all times through the first two years of the Council's existence. I would also like to acknowledge the administrative support of their colleagues.

Professor Patrick Fottrell
Chairman

September 2005



Inaugural meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council - November 2002

ORIGIN OF THE COUNCIL

The Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC) was established on foot of recommendations contained within the Agri-Food 2010 Report of March 2000, which identified animal welfare as becoming an increasingly important issue. The need to ensure proper protection for animals and the desire to maintain consumer confidence in animal products and satisfying public concerns about animal welfare issues would, it claimed, be a key task for Irish farmers in the future.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- * To identify ways in which the welfare of farm animals can be further improved and to prioritise areas requiring attention.
- * At the request of the Minister/Department, to consider and advise on proposals for EU and national legislation relating to farm animals.
- * To consider ways of increasing public awareness and development and dissemination of information relating to welfare of farm animals at home and abroad.
- * To provide any other advice relevant to the welfare of farm animals as the Minister may seek from time to time.



FAWAC Chairman Prof. Patrick Fottrell meets
Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms Mary Coughlan T.D.

CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The 17 member Council appointed by the Minister for Agriculture and Food is composed of representatives from the farming organisations, the veterinarian representative body, those involved in the transport of animals and animal welfare groups, as well from the

Departments in both Dublin and Belfast, Teagasc and UCD. It is a non-statutory body and is independently chaired. Its remit is to seek consensus amongst its members and provide advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Food on issues relating to the care and welfare of farm animals.

Chairperson

Professor Patrick Fottrell

Former President of the National University of Ireland, Galway. He is also a member of the Board of Teagasc and has chaired several other government committees.

Members

Dr Alison J Hanlon

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University College Dublin.

Mr Sean O’Laoide

Veterinary Ireland. Vice President of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe.

Mr Jackie Cahill

Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers’ Association.

Mr Dermot Sparrow

Veterinary Ireland.

Ms Colette Connor

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland.

Mr Stephen Foley

Committee for Irish Livestock, Dealers, Exporters, Hauliers and Shippers.

Ms Mary-Anne Bartlett

Compassion in World Farming.

Mr Kevin Kinsella

Irish Farmers’ Association.

Mr Tom Doyle

Irish Co-operative Society Association.

Mr John Stack

Irish Farmers’ Association.

Ms Angela McCarthy

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Mr Derek Deane

Irish Farmers’ Association.

Dr Bernadette Earley

Teagasc Research Centre.

Mr Tom O’ Donnell*

Department of Agriculture and Food.

Ms Barbara Bent

Wexford Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Mr Martin Blake

Department of Agriculture and Food.

* Mr O’Donnell replaced Mr Aidan Murray as Principal Officer of Animal Health and Welfare Division in November 2004

Secretary:

2002 – 2003

Mr David Walsh

2004 – present

Ms Teresa O’Halloran



Members of FAWAC with Minister for Agriculture and Food,
Ms Mary Coughlan T.D.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

As required to consider specific proposals and in any event at least three times a year. Following the inaugural meeting of Council in November 2002, six meetings were held in 2003 and a further six in 2004.



Ms Mary Coughlan T.D., Minister for Agriculture
and Food, addresses FAWAC meeting

QUORUM

A Quorum was established by the Council, to ensure that meetings would be properly constituted with the presence of a sufficient number of members to reflect the spectrum of interests.

Groupings represented are as follows:

- * **Departments/State:** Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF); Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland (DARDNI); Teagasc; (4 persons in all),

- * **Farm Bodies:** Irish Farmers' Association (IFA); Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association (ICMSA); Irish Co-operative Organisation Society Ltd (ICOS); Committee for Irish Livestock, Dealers, Exporters, Hauliers and Shippers; (6 persons in all),
- * **Welfare Bodies:** Compassion in World Farming (CIWF); Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA); Wexford Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (WSPCA); (3 persons in all),
- * **Veterinary Interests:** Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University College Dublin (UCD); Veterinary Ireland; (3 persons in all).

The quorum is based simply on the number of members of FAWAC present at any given meeting, taking account of the different perspectives involved. It is based on a combination of numbers of members present and groupings represented. On this basis the quorum will be **8 members**, excluding the Chair and Secretary, comprised of **no less than 2 from each of the groupings** mentioned above. **These details and minutes of all meetings held are posted on the FAWAC Website; www.agriculture.gov.ie/fawac**

ISSUES RAISED

Farm Animal Welfare Education

Following submissions from each Council Member, it was decided that the work programme should include a Sub-Committee on Education, to compile guidelines on welfare codes for sheep, dairy and beef farmers.



Some members of the Sub-Committee
with responsibility for The Education Programme

Members

Mr Sean O'Laoide - Chairperson
Ms Barbara Bent
Mr Derek Deane
Dr Bernadette Earley

Mr Dermot Sparrow
Mr John Stack
Mr Niall O Nuallain - (co-opted from DAF)
Mr Timothy O'Regan - (co-opted from IFA)

The following Education Guidelines were published by FAWAC in 2003:

- * **Animal Welfare Guidelines for Beef Farmers**
- * **Animal Welfare Guidelines for Sheep Farmers**
- * **Animal Welfare Guidelines for Dairy Farmers**

The welfare guidelines booklet for owners of Horses, Ponies and Donkeys is in its final stages with a view to publication early in 2005. It is proposed to publish similar guidelines in relation to Pig Breeding and the keeping of Poultry.

It was agreed by Council that *farm animal welfare education* should be included in the curriculum of all veterinary and agricultural colleges. It should also be included where *continuous professional development* is monitored.



Mr Joe Walsh, former Minister for Agriculture & Food
with Prof. Patrick Fottrell at the launch of
the Education Guidelines

Veterinary Medicines

It was agreed that the non-availability of certain medicines was having a negative impact on the welfare of farm animals in some cases. The Working Group on Veterinary Medicines was established to discuss this matter and report to the Council.



Some members of Working Group on Veterinary Medicines

Its work is ongoing, with a view to completing a final Report in early 2005. There are still some fundamental differences of opinion between members of the Group. The Chairman of FAWAC acknowledged that there is always the possibility of conflict between animal welfare needs and food safety requirements. It was noted that the EC had produced a Reflection Paper on Residues in foodstuffs of animal origin, the three main issues of which were animal welfare, food safety (which takes precedence) and competition regarding pricing of veterinary medicines.

Members

Mr Dermot Sparrow - Chairperson
Ms Colette Connor
Mr Tom Doyle
Mr Sean O'Laoide
Mr John Stack
Dr Thomas Barragry - (co-opted from UCD)
Mr Pat Brangan - (co-opted from DAF)
Mr Philip Kirwan - (co-opted from DAF)
Mr Lorcan McCabe - (co-opted from ICMSA)

Liaison between Department of Agriculture and Food, Irish Farmers' Association and local Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals [Collaborative Early Warning/Intervention System for Animal Welfare Cases (EWS)]

A Working Group on Co-operation was established to organise a structure between the different groups liaising together. The main aim of the group is to put together a more formal structure on a county-by-county basis to deal with cruelty cases at a local/county level and to acknowledge the need for a voluntary alarm system that could get the ethos across e.g. if there are social problems, it may lead to animals being neglected. Following on this in September 2004 the Working Group launched the *Principles and Structure for DAF/IFA/ISPCA Collaborative Early Warning/Intervention System for Animal Welfare Cases (EWS)*.



Mr Joe Walsh, former Minister of Agriculture and Food, with Ms A. McCarthy, ISPCA, Mr M.Flynn, IFA and Mr S. O'Laoide, Veterinary Ireland, at the launch of the Collaborative Early Warning Intervention System - September 2004

The objective of this system is to provide a framework within which animal welfare problems can be spotted before they become critical or overwhelming. This will in turn facilitate timely, effective and sensitive intervention or the provision of assistance by, as appropriate, public agencies, neighbours, farming bodies and welfare groups. The new system will allow for concerned individuals to approach their local IFA representatives, their local SPCA or DAF in the knowledge that the matter will thereafter be dealt with in the most effective, timely and sensitive manner. Two meetings have taken place since the launch of EWS. The first meeting took place in October 2004. Another meeting took place in November 2004, which included nominees from each of the organisations representing the five counties involved in Phase I of the rollout. These groups had met each other at county level and reported back to the Working Group. It was identified that communication with each other was the key to success. The five counties, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Donegal and Roscommon, are now up and running and it is proposed that the rollout of the other Phases will follow in 2005. A review of the system is proposed to take place in 2005.

Steering Group on Co-Operation

Members

Mr Michael Flynn, IFA

Mr Pat Murray, IFA

Mr Sean O' Leary, IFA

Ms Elizabeth Tilson, IFA

Ms Barbara Bent, WSPCA

Ms Angela McCarthy, ISPCA

Ms Irene Bergin, ISPCA

Mr Niall O' Nuallain, DAF

Mr Michael Fallon, DAF

Mr Martin Blake, DAF

Mr Tom O' Donnell, DAF

Live Export of Dogs

Whilst this issue is not within the remit of FAWAC, it was agreed that the Department's Veterinary Division would liaise with SPCA's directly about this matter. In 2004, FAWAC wrote to the Minister for Agriculture and Food about the feasibility of discussing with the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, whose Department has responsibility for the control of dogs, on the need for an inter-Departmental or inter-Agency approach with a view to seeking a review of current legislation with regard to puppy farming. In September 2004, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government established a Working Group to review the management of Dog Breeding Establishments. The terms of reference of the Group was *"to examine the current position regarding management of kennels and to make recommendations for such improvements, including better regulation, as it considers necessary in this area"*. The Department of Agriculture and Food is represented on the Working Group. This Group's report is expected in 2005. When this report is available it is hoped that a clearer picture will emerge as to the current situation regarding these establishments.

PRESENTATIONS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

Fur Farming

Presentations were made to FAWAC by the following: -

- * Irish Fur Breeders' Association - Mr Wim Verhagen, Ms Rose Andersson, and Prof. Leif Lau Jeppessen;
- * EU Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare - Prof. Donald Broom;
- * Livestock Breeding Unit, Department of Agriculture and Food - Ms Eimer McGeough;
- * Respect for Animals animal welfare group - Mr Mark Glover.

Compassion in World Farming circulated its own summary of the European Commission's Scientific Committee's report on fur farming to Council members. In its presentation the Livestock Breeding Unit of the Department stated that all fur farms in Ireland are regulated from a welfare perspective by EU Regulation 98/58 (SI 127 of 2000), Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes. These set out conditions for keeping animals and provide for authorised officers of the Department with powers of entry. They also outline conditions regarding good animal husbandry, record keeping, free movement, and breeding procedures. The Department also notified FAWAC that it was unaware of any rabbit farms in Ireland either for meat or fur. FAWAC expressed concern about the fact that fox and rabbit farms remain unlicensed and the question was raised about the need to look for registration of all premises to include rabbit farms, pet shops etc.

Fish Farming

From presentations given on fish farming, it was noted that the main welfare issues were those concerning the starving of fish for seven to ten days before slaughter in compliance with food safety controls, and, some methods of slaughter, which were considered to be inhumane. It was agreed that FAWAC would identify and communicate any concerns regarding fish farming in Ireland to the Minister for Agriculture and Food and suggested that the Department convey these concerns to the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

Presentations were made in 2004 to the Council on the following: -

- * Welfare of Farmed Fish by Mr Peter Stevenson from the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA);
- * Maintaining and Enhancing The Welfare of Stock – the Fish Farmers' Role by Mr. Richie Flynn, Executive Secretary, Fish Farming Section, Irish Farmers' Association assisted by Dr Hamish Roger;
- * Irish Quality Salmon and Fish Welfare by Ms Catherine Morrison, Bord Iascaigh Mhara.

Other Presentations received by Council:

- * Mr Denis Simonin who was representing DG SANCO, Unit E2 Animal Health and Welfare, Zootechnics.
- * Mr Cathal Cowan and Ms Hillary Meehan from Teagasc National Food Centre.
- * Ms Mairead McGuinness, former Chairperson of the Consumer Liaison Panel, (DAF).

Animal Transport

FAWAC was informed by the Department of Agriculture and Food that the EU Transport Regulations put forward during the Irish Presidency had been progressed by the Dutch Presidency by setting aside the contentious issues i.e. travel times/stocking densities. The EU Commission is to report to EU Council within the next four years in relation to the contentious issues taking cognisance of EU enlargement and the greater distances this involves. The main points of this new legislation are checks and audits, training of operators and drivers, mandatory satellite tracking for long distances, increased co-operation between Member States regarding tracking of route crossing, specific definitions regarding responsibility along transport chain. The Regulation will come into full effect in January 2007.

Electro-Immobilisation

In relation to the use of electro-immobilisation, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW), DAF, at the request of FAWAC, agreed to: -

- * review psychological and physical effects
- * look at the legislative position governing its use in Ireland
- * look at legislative position, regarding its use in other jurisdictions (insofar as can be determined)
- * come up with a recommendation on whether it should be used in Ireland and if so, under what conditions.

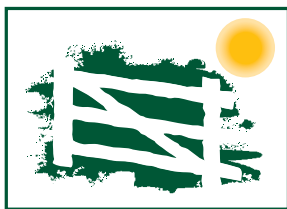
It is hoped that a completed report on electro-immobilisation will be available in early 2005.

Compassion in World Farming circulated its own summary of scientific research on the welfare aspects of electro-immobilisation to Council Members.

FUTURE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

- * Publication of Education Guidelines for owners of Horses, Ponies and Donkeys,
- * Education Guidelines will be compiled for Pig Breeders and keepers of Poultry,

- * Possible review of current legislation with regard to puppy farming (after the report of the Working Group to review the management of Dog Breeding Establishments has been received),
- * The Working Group on Veterinary Medicines aims to complete its Report in early 2005. This will be presented to the Minister for Agriculture and Food,
- * Ritual slaughter without stunning: It is proposed to address this issue in 2005 with a view to improving animal welfare,
- * Look at recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare regarding use of electro-immobilisation on live farm animals in Ireland.



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