

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2006



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

STATEMENT FROM CHAIRMAN

It gives me great pleasure to present this review of Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC) activities in 2006. Established in 2002, the Council has been very successful in promoting animal welfare in a practical way and continues to explore ways of enhancing the well-being of farm animals in the face of future challenges.



This year was eventful for FAWAC. Following consultation with the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW), this Council made recommendations to Ms Mary Coughlan TD, Minister for Agriculture and Food, advocating a ban on the use of electro-immobilisation on live farm animals. I am happy to report that, following consultation with stakeholders, she has agreed to introduce legislation in 2007 banning its use.

The Early Warning System / Intervention System (EWS) continues to operate on a nationwide basis and is having a positive impact on farm animal welfare. Its success is dependant on good communication and co-operation between the three representative groups who provide their services on a mostly voluntary basis, and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all of those involved in its successful operation.

It is envisaged that the proposed Broiler Welfare Directive will be adopted early in 2007. Pending this, FAWAC will publish a *Code for the Welfare of Broiler Chickens*, which is at an advanced stage of preparation. The code is intended to encourage all those who care for farm animals, to adopt the highest standards of animal husbandry. Without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected. Adherence to these recommendations will help flock-keepers to attain the highest welfare standards.

I would also like to thank on behalf of Council, Professor Christopher Wathes, Chairman of the Farm Animal Welfare Council, United Kingdom, for accepting my invitation to address Council, and who in July 2006, provided a very interesting presentation on the work of FAWC UK.

It is always interesting to learn about the work of other farm animal welfare councils and in this context, FAWAC was happy to accept an invitation to attend a meeting convened in Berlin, Germany, in September 2006, of the European Forum of Animal Welfare Councils (Euro FAWC).

The role of agriculture is changing along with the expectations of a modern society in relation to issues such as food safety, the environment, and animal welfare standards. Council continues to highlight public awareness on animal welfare issues. To effectively deliver our programme, we rely on the support of many individuals and organisations in the public sector and agri-food industry.

As Chairman, I look forward to continuing to work with all of the Council, building on past achievements and facing future challenges with regard to animal health and welfare. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to articulate the support and encouragement I have received from all members of Council, and I am grateful for their continued support and co-operation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to those people who made presentations to Council throughout the year. There is no doubt that such contributions greatly enhance the work of Council.

Again, I wish to acknowledge the continued support received from the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms Mary Coughlan TD, and to her officials in the Department. I also wish to record my appreciation of the Secretary to Council, Ms Teresa O'Halloran, and her colleagues, Ms Irene Dunne, Ms Lorraine Hickey and Mr Peter Fallon, for their continuing commitment and support.

Professor Patrick Fottrell
Chairman

December 2007

MEMBERSHIP OF THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Chairman:

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 (UCD).

Mr Lorcan McCabe*

Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA).

Ms Colette Connor

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland (DARDNI).

Ms Mary-Anne Bartlett

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF).

Mr Tom Doyle

Irish Co-operative Society Association (ICOS).

Ms Angela McCarthy

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPICA).

Dr Bernadette Earley

TEAGASC – the national Agriculture and Food Development Authority.

Ms Barbara Bent

Wexford Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (WSPCA).

Mr Sean O’Laoide

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

Mr Dermot Sparrow

Veterinary Ireland.

Mr Stephen Foley

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

Mr Kevin Kinsella

Irish Farmers Association (IFA).

Mr Richard Kennedy

Irish Farmers Association (IFA).

Mr John Bryan

Irish Farmers Association (IFA).

Mr Tom O’ Donnell

Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF).

Mr Martin Blake

Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF).

Secretary:

Ms Teresa O’Halloran.

* Mr Lorcan McCabe replaced Mr Jackie Cahill on Council. Mr Cahill was elected President of the ICMSA. Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Cahill for his contribution and wish him success in his new position.

RAISON D'ÊTRE

The Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC) was established in 2002 as a non-statutory body. It is an independent advisory body consisting of representatives of the principal stakeholders from other government Departments – North and South – to veterinary representatives, in an advisory body to the Minister. Its term of reference is to identify ways in which the welfare of farm animals can be further improved and to prioritise areas requiring attention, to consider and advise on proposals for EU and national legislation relating to farm animals at the request of the Minister/Department, and to consider ways of increasing public awareness and development and dissemination of information relating to welfare of farm animals as the Minister may seek from time to time.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

In 2006 the Council held five meetings. The Sub-groups met on seventeen occasions during the course of the year.

PUBLICATIONS 2006

FAWAC Annual Report 2005

This report is available on our website: www.fawac.ie

CONTACT US

If you would like to find out any further information about the Council please contact:

The Secretary
Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council
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Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

Tel: 00 353 1 6072049

Fax: 00 353 1 6767126

Email: fawac@agriculture.gov.ie

Website: www.fawac.ie

The minutes and publications are posted on the FAWAC Website.

WORKING GROUPS

The Council carries out detailed reviews in small sub / working groups comprising a cross section of members. They are responsible for providing detailed research and advice for discussion and endorsement by Council. These groups carefully consider written advice and take verbal evidence from those with specific expertise to assist Council in its role in promoting animal welfare issues. Council would like to acknowledge the contribution of Mr J Terrington, DARDNI, who gave a presentation entitled '*Consultation Paper on Proposed Changes to Animal Welfare Legislation in Northern Ireland*', to the Education Sub-group.

Farm Animal Welfare Education Sub-group

The work programme includes a Sub-group on Education, to compile guidelines on welfare codes for farmers. Five meetings were held during the year. The group discussed a number of issues.



FAWAC Education Sub-group

Disbudding Calves

The Sub-group are looking at ways of encouraging farmers to disbud calves at a very early stage and also at the possible introduction of a ban on the practice of de-horning mature animals. It is agreed that current legislation needs to be looked at with regard to prohibition on sale of horned animals at livestock marts and proposes to bring recommendations to Council for consideration.

Following the announcement by the Minister for Agriculture and Food to introduce a ban on the use of electro-immobilisation on live farm animals with effect from June 2007, DAF, on the advise of Council, will undertake an information campaign on the necessity and importance of early intervention in relation to procedures such as dehorning/disbudding and castration of animals. It is proposed to undertake this campaign in the very near future. Council will continue to monitor developments in this area.

Protocol for on-Farm slaughter

Following discussion by Council, there was a view that there is a need to produce guidelines for on-farm emergency and casual slaughter of animals. In order for a Protocol for on-farm slaughter to be drafted, it is proposed to engage in a national awareness programme to include industry and owners of slaughtering premises.

Broiler Welfare

Following a report from the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare in March 2000, and on the basis of these considerations, the EU Commission has prepared a proposal for a Council Directive laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production (presented by the Commission 30.05.2005). As a result of this proposed Directive, the Education Sub-group has decided to produce a *Code for the Welfare of Broiler Chickens* aimed at those working in the industry. The guidelines will be made available after the proposed Directive is adopted.

Members of the Education Sub-group

Mr Sean O'Laoide - Chairperson, (Veterinary Ireland)
Ms Barbara Bent - (WSPCA)
Dr Bernadette Earley - (Teagasc)
Mr Dermot Sparrow - (Veterinary Ireland)
Mr Michael Flynn - (IFA)
Mr Niall O'Nuallain - (co-opted from DAF)
Mr John Stack - (IFA)*
Mr Richard Kennedy - (IFA)

*replaced during the year by Mr Richard Kennedy.

DAF/IFA/ISPCA Collaborative Early Warning/Intervention System for Animal Welfare Cases (EWS)

In 2004, FAWAC introduced an Early Warning/Intervention System (EWS) for animal welfare cases. This system involves enhanced collaboration between the DAF, IFA and the ISPCA in identifying and addressing real or potential cases in which the welfare of farm animals is compromised. EWS is now operating throughout the country. There were twelve meetings held in 2006.

The scheme is operating very well. A need to encourage increased communication between EWS and groups operating at local level, such as Private Veterinary Practitioners, An Garda Síochána and the Local Authority Veterinary Services, was identified. The problem of overstocking is a major concern together with the possible non-availability of fodder over the coming winter. It was agreed that EWS continually review the availability of winter fodder. The group also discussed the need to improve the education of farmers with regard to on-farm welfare and to promote greater public inter-action and awareness. It is proposed in the future to carry out a review of the progress made to date.

Members of Steering Group on Co-Operation

Mr Tom O'Donnell - Chairman (DAF)	Mr Michael Flynn - (IFA)
Mr Pat Murray - (IFA)	Mr Sean O'Leary - (IFA)
Ms Elizabeth Tilson - (IFA)	Ms Barbara Bent - (Wexford SPCA)
Ms Angela McCarthy - (ISPCA)	Ms Irene Bergin - (ISPCA)
Mr Niall O'Nuallain - (DAF)	Mr Michael Fallon - (DAF)
Mr Martin Blake - (DAF)	



North East Region EWS Team



North West Region EWS Team

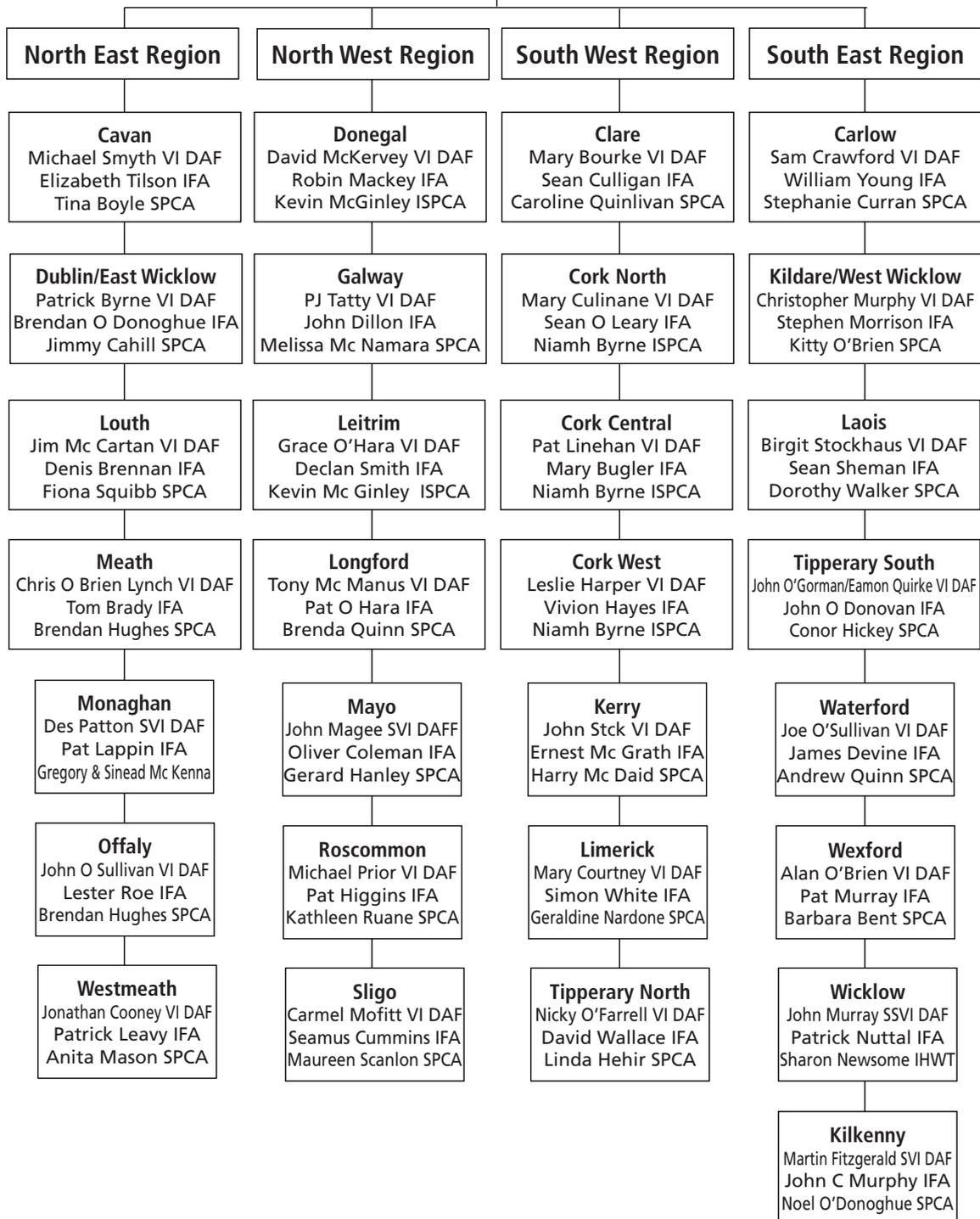


South East Region EWS Team



South West Region EWS Team

Early Warning System 2006



Use of Electro-Immobilisation on Live Farm Animals in Ireland (EI)

Following recommendations by Council and taking into consideration the views of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare, Minister Mary Coughlan TD, stated that, following examination by her, there was broad agreement that the practice should be prohibited, DAF engaged in a consultation process with interested stakeholders, and having considered all views, she accepted the recommendations to introduce legislation to prohibit the use of any electrical equipment or other instrument that applies a sustained electric current or impulse directly to a live animal.

The Minister announced the ban on 13th April 2006, which was to come into effect on 1st June 2007, however, the ban was deferred to 1st September 2007, so as to allow a further period of time for farmers and veterinarians to carry out procedures on animals that are already on farms where interventions may be necessary and where these could otherwise prove difficult.

The Report on *The Use of Electro-Immobilisation on Live Farm Animals in Ireland* is available on the FAWAC website: www.fawac.ie

TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS

During the year, Council received a number of presentations on the transportation of animals. Two presentations were received from Dr Bernadette Earley, TEAGASC and member of Council in relation to the 'Live shipping of animals' and 'Animal Welfare Index'. Her reports found that live animals shipped from Ireland showed no adverse effects and had in fact gained weight. FAWAC continually review the transport of live animals for export and therefore welcome these findings.

DAF submitted a presentation on Protection of Animals During the Transport and Related Operations (Council Regulation (EC) 1 of 2005). This Regulation comes into effect on 1st January 2007. Consultation with stakeholders took place and submissions received evaluated. The matter of training is also being addressed. Both DAF and DARDNI are working closely on the enforcement of these regulations with positive outcomes.

The Sub-group on Education intends to look at the transport of animals in general with a possibility of producing a 'Best Practice for Transport of Animals' - to be published in 2007.

Avian Flu

During the year the threat of avian flu has been highlighted to Council and procedures were discussed for the humane killing of poultry should an outbreak occur in Ireland.

Minister Mary Coughlan TD, announced that her Department was continuing to ensure that it was fully prepared and equipped to deal with any case or outbreak. The Minister said that there had been no outbreaks of avian flu in the EU and the immediate risk to Ireland was therefore low. Nonetheless, the Department was maintaining its vigilant approach. The Minister emphasised the need for continued vigilance and said that her Department was keeping its contingency arrangements. A presentation was received from the Department of Agriculture and Food on the 'Real – Time Exercise in the "Whole House" Carbon Dioxide Gassing Technique for the Humane Killing of Poultry in a Disease Emergency'. Council will continue to monitor and protect the welfare of poultry in the face of increased disease risk.

Fur Farming

Concerns were raised following a video shown at a Council meeting on the slaughter of fur animals in Ireland. Following this, Council brought this matter to the attention of Minister Mary Coughlan TD, who had agreed for DAF to undertake a study regarding the slaughter of mink on fur farms. Veterinary Ireland confirmed that they are presently engaging with the fur industry regarding welfare. Both parties have agreed to submit their findings to Council in 2006/2007. It is agreed that both reports could be referred to the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW) for a view on methods of slaughter used, based on available scientific studies. It is also noted that the EU Commission is undertaking a review of the slaughter of animals. Council welcomes this development.

VISIT BY CHAIRMAN TO FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL, UNITED KINGDOM

Professor Christopher Wathes, Chairman, FAWC UK, addressed a council meeting in July. During his presentation he discussed the current work, strategies and priorities of FAWC UK. He complimented FAWAC on its good work to date in promoting farm animal welfare issues.



Professor Christopher Wathes, Chairman, FAWC UK

EUROPEAN FORUM OF FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCILS (Euro-FAWCS)

Council was represented at the forum on 8th & 9th September 2006, in Berlin, Germany. It is proposed that Euro-FAWCS meet again in Sweden in May 2007. Ireland has been asked to present a paper on our methodologies in relation to animal welfare at the next meeting.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF FAWAC

Council is monitoring the impact of FAWAC publications generally and is keen to communicate directly and more effectively with farmers and consumers. Discussions took place proposing a consultation process with relevant stakeholders. Council will follow up this matter with DAF.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION DURING 2006

Horse Welfare

Council continues to monitor the welfare of horses. Micro-chipping as a means of identification was discussed as a means of identifying animals as well proving useful in identifying and tracing owners of equines. The establishment of a database with micro-chip information stored on it was also discussed. It is felt that there is also a role for the thoroughbred horse industry when dealing with matters relating to equine welfare and it is hoped to engage with representatives of this industry in 2007.

Ritual Slaughter Without Stunning

One of the issues currently being looked at from an animal welfare perspective is the practice of ritual slaughter without stunning. In this regard, Council and The Islamic Cultural Centre Dublin are engaged in discussions to explore the possibility of reaching a compromise regarding ritual slaughter without stunning. Following a meeting with the Islamic Cultural Centre Dublin, it is agreed to visit a lamb slaughtering plant to observe the use of a Stunning Assurance Monitor.

Pig Welfare

Council are looking at current practices in the pig industry particularly with regard to poor environment enrichment and other practices such as teeth clipping and tail docking. The Department has produced a booklet for pig farmers entitled 'Pig Welfare Requirements' and are also providing grant aid towards provision of housing and are running training courses recently through TEAGASC, to allow farmers and handlers to meet their regulatory obligations. Regular welfare inspections of pig rearing systems are carried out by DAF. Council will continue to monitor this and hope to publish an updated version of the 'Pig Welfare Requirements' booklet.

Puppy Farming

Although not strictly a farm animal issue, discussions took place regarding the huge numbers of farmers diverting into puppy farming and the welfare of these animals. This matter is under consideration by a Working Group established by the Minister for Environment, Heritage, and Local Government.

Pink Veal

Calves between the ages of 6 to 12 months old are called baby beef and have flesh that is coarser, stronger flavoured, and is pink to red in colour. The production of pink veal was raised during the year. Council agreed that more research is needed into the production of 'pink' or 'rosy' veal as it is sometimes referred to. It is proposed to engage with the main stakeholders on this matter in the near future. Council will continue to take an active role in protecting the welfare of young calves.

FAWAC FRAMEWORK COMMITMENTS

Produce broiler welfare guidelines



Continue to monitor on-farm slaughter of animals



Monitor developments re. ban on use of electro-immobilisation



Promote higher welfare standards of Irish cattle



Pursue the early disbudding of calves



Implement an animal transport programme to include transport of calves



Examine structures of animal welfare at marts and markets



Monitor fur farming



Continue to promote animal health and welfare by raising public awareness



Initiate and deliver animal transport guidelines



Promote maximum participation at EU level on animal health and welfare



Produce pig welfare guidelines



A satisfactory reform of exotic animal legislation



Continue to engage with EuroFAWC

