

Minutes

MEETING OF THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAWAC)

Date: 21st November 2022

Venue: DAFM Backweston Campus, Seminar Room 3

Meeting Time: 10.30am – 1.00pm

Attendees:

Ciara Feeney-Reid (Chair), June Fanning DAFM, Eoin Ryan DAFM, Sean Murray DAFM, Catherine Lawler DAFM, Stephanie Ronan DAFM, Aiden Maguire DAFM, Des Morrison ICMSA, Noel Murphy ICMSA, Bernie Earley Teagasc, Michael Gottstein Teagasc, Stephen Arthur IFA, Brendan Golden IFA, Michael Kilcoyne Cllr Mayo CoCo, Conor Dowling ISPCA, Ray Doyle ICOS, Liz O'Flynn Veterinary Ire, Conor Geraghty Veterinary Ire, Siobhan Mullan UCD.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The Chair noted minutes of previous meeting were accepted and actions to be discussed further in today's agenda.

2. FAWN update

The meeting was advised that the four regional meetings are scheduled for the 28th and 29th November.

Following initial contact with the Chair, An Garda Síochána were contacted regarding participation at FAWN meetings going forward. DAFM will provide an update on discussions.

There was an update on the On Feirm Ground initiative that includes both a physical and online training session for DAFM VIs, PVPs and ISPCA officers. These are pilot training sessions with plans for tailored training going forward. DAFM plan on rolling out this initiative to a range of stakeholders in the new year.

Action: DAFM to circulate updated IFA and ISPCA contact lists to FAWN members.

Action: DAFM to report back on communications with AGS.

3. Painful Procedures update

The Subgroup will have their final meeting before year end and will report back at the next FAWAC meeting in early 2023.

4. Dairy cow lameness

The meeting was advised that the updated draft document was circulated to all members for comment following the previous meeting; no comments had been received.

The meeting was informed that the current version is based on Teagasc research which is published and available publicly.

Action: It was agreed to send the final draft to the Minister before Christmas.

5. Sheep lameness

A presentation on Sheep Lameness was provided by Michael Gottstein, Head of Sheep KT, Teagasc. The presentation was discussed and some of the key points were:

- Lameness is a significant issue.
- Significant antibiotic use in treating lame sheep.
- Need to continue to raise awareness.
- Need for better handling facilities for sheep on farms.
- New foot rot vaccines show promising results.

The lack of appropriate facilities at farm level was discussed. The group were advised that Teagasc activity in this area of sheep lameness includes conferences, agriculture colleges, adviser professional training, sheep events, workshops along with monthly newsletters, podcasts, videos, and media articles.

Teagasc are also carrying out future research which includes survey of farmers, scoring of lame sheep and a sociology element for farmers, vets, and advisers.

A further presentation was given by Conor Geraghty, Veterinary Ireland, some of the key areas covered were:

- Cost of lameness – Treatment, Control and Productivity
- Cost Modelling from Reading University 2014
- Targets – Scanning rate, Weaning, Ewe Mortality, Lamb Growth and Lameness
- Flock Types – Breeding, Store lamb to finish and Feedlot finishing
- Prevalence – First step to establish flock status, Ewes/Lambs/Rams and is there an issue?
- Epidemiology – Patterns, Peak risk, History and Practice records
- Diagnosis – Foot Scald, Virulent Foot rot, CODD, Toe Granuloma, Foot Abscess and Shelly Hoof

A five-point plan model was discussed:

1. Quarantine for incoming animals
2. Avoid spread of infection
3. Treat clinical cases quickly
4. Culling badly affected/repeatedly affected animals
5. Vaccinate biannually

The rationale behind the Five Point Plan model was discussed with statistics showing positive benefits within six months. The key issue is to treat cases in good time and have the control measures in place.

The Chair outlined the next step for the group was to look at all the information we discussed with a view to developing advice for the Minister.

AOB

- DAFM provided an update on equines with several projects ongoing around the country including Dunsink with the assistance of the DSPA, Fingal CoCo and AGS.

Details were also provided of successful urban horse projects in Leitrim, Longford, and Mayo

- The meeting was advised of Psoroptes ovis outbreak in Ireland.
- Renewing FAWAC representation from DAERA was discussed.

Action: DAFM to contact the DAERA CVO to see if they would like to nominate an attendee.

- Synergy with the work of AHI was discussed, with similarities and areas for cooperation highlighted between two AHI working groups and the work of the FAWAC. The possibility of representation for AHI on FAWAC was proposed. It was noted that membership of the group is decided by the Minister, but in the past members had had the opportunity to share reflections on membership.

Action: Members to consider and revert by email with any reflections.

- Concerns regarding electro-immobilization for dehorning were discussed among the group. The meeting was advised that DAFM is following up on incidents reported through the RVOs. UCD is preparing a submission to the Veterinary Council in relation to elctroimmobilisation.

The benefits of updating some of the FAWAC guidelines on various species in line with legislative changes and practices, was discussed and it was agreed to look at revising these documents in the new year along with updating the FAWAC website.

Action: Both presentations to be circulated by DAFM.

- Next meeting 10-1pm on 30/01/2023 at DAFM Backweston Campus, Seminar Room 3