

Minutes

MEETING OF THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAWAC)

Date: 26th June 2023

Venue: DAFM Backweston Campus, Seminar Room 3

Meeting Time: 10.30am – 1.00pm

Attendees:

Eoin Ryan (DAFM) (acting chair), Sean Murray (DAFM), Catherine Lawler (DAFM), Stephanie Ronan (DAFM), Des Morrison (ICMSA), Bernie Earley (Teagasc), Michael Kilcoyne (Cllr Mayo CoCo), Conor Dowling (ISPCA), Liz O’Flynn (Veterinary Ire), Siobhan Mullan UCD, Catherine McAloon (AHI), TJ Maher (IFA), Ray Doyle (ICOS), Alan Walsh (DAFM).

Apologies: Ciara Feeney-Reid.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The acting chair noted minutes of previous meeting were accepted.

2. FAWN update

DAFM informed the meeting that three in-person FAWN meetings took place over the course of May 2023 in Athlone, Thurles and Gorey. As agreed at FAWAC the meetings have been expanded to include a Garda representative with a background in crime prevention and community policing.

DAFM added that the meetings were well attended and received, enhancing existing communication channels and fostering engagement. The group discussed expanding FAWN membership to include one veterinary practitioner representative and possible one local authority veterinary representative per regional meeting.

On Feirm Ground initiative update: DAFM advised that the course provider is in the final stages of updating the content following feedback from three focus groups in late 2022.

Action: DAFM and Liz O’Flynn (Vet Ire) to discuss with Local Authority vets and Vet Ireland the possibility of expanding FAWN membership to include one attendee per group at future regional meetings.

3. Website update

The FAWAC website is part of a suite of online initiatives currently being work on by Animal Welfare Division of DAFM. Work is ongoing and members will be informed of changes

4. EuroFAWC

An update on latest EuroFAWC meeting, held in the Netherlands in May 2023, was provided by Siobhan Mullan, who will circulate notes on same to group.

Points of discussion included the possibility of conducting a survey to gauge public opinion on animal welfare and a call for the group to consider different forms of human/animal interaction. FAWAC considered a proposal to conduct such a survey in Ireland. It was agreed among members that more details would be required.

Action: Siobhan Mullan to draft and circulate a note in advance of the next meeting on what might be involved in a survey of public opinion on animal welfare in Ireland and the potential benefits of such a survey.

Action: Siobhan Mullan to circulate notes on the EuroFAWC meeting to group.

5. Codes of Practice under the Animal Health and Welfare Act, 2013

FAWAC agreed to undertake the drafting of codes of practice, beginning with the beef sector. It was agreed among member that a sub-group will be formed to consider same.

The following agreed to membership of the sub-group:

Siobhan Mullan (UCD), Des Morission (ICMSA), TJ Maher (IFA), Bernie Earley (Teagasc), Catherine McAloon (AHI), Stephanie Ronan (DAFM), Liz O'Flynn (Vet Ire). DAFM to provide secretariat.

Action: Sub-group to draft a code of practice for the beef sector, noting that the issue of whether to have one large one or several more narrowly focused ones is to be considered, and report back to FAWAC.

AOB

- Calf weaning review due to be published on Eurocaw website shortly.
- DAFM are looking to expand the number of Urban Horse Projects and will hold seminar in Autumn to advance this objective.