

Minutes

MEETING OF THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAWAC)

Date: 28th May 2025

Venue: IFA, Farm Centre, Bluebell

Meeting Time: 10.30am – 13.45pm

Attendees:

Joseph O’Flaherty (Chair), Stephanie Ronan (DAFM), Liam Devine (DAFM), Laurence Shalloo (Teagasc), Emer Kennedy (Teagasc), Muirean Connelly (Teagasc), Donal Callaghan (IFA), TJ Maher (IFA), Declan Hanrahan (IFA), Michael O’Connell (ICMSA), Elizabeth O’Flynn (Vet Ireland), Ray Doyle (ICOS), Patrick Wall (UCD), Aidan Cahill (DAFM), Ultan Waldron (DAFM), Niall Kilrane (ICBF), Alan Walsh (DAFM).

Apologies: Siobhan Mullan (UCD, Catherine McAloon (UCD), Martin McElearney (IFA), Bernadette Earley (Teagasc).

1. Action points and minutes

Previous minutes agreed.

Action point review:

Codes of Practice: Agreed to firstly scope out process, then begin work on developing the code of practice, for calf rearing. A subgroup will be formed to progress same. Given DAFM staff commitments with an upcoming follow-on audit on pig welfare, development of the first CoP is unlikely to be able to commence until autumn.

Website design discussions have taken place, with structural changes close to being agreed. The Chair undertook to circulate an outline of the proposed redesign, to give Council members an opportunity to comment.

The issue of contingency planning, in relation to the possible risk of cessation of calf exports, was clarified, with DAFM informing the Council that responsibility of same rests with industry, a position articulated by the Chief Veterinary Officer at a recent meeting of the Calf Stakeholder Group.

All the other existing action points were dealt with by the Chair, with the following new action points arising from the discussion:

- **Action Point:** Form subgroup at next meeting, to scope process and progress development of Codes of Practice.
- **Action Point:** Chair to develop background document on codes of practice and circulate to group, preparatory to discussion at the next FAWAC meeting.

- **Action Point:** Circulate draft website design for review by members.

2. Conduct of FAWAC meetings

Attendance: Chair requested organisations nominate up to two representatives, to ensure consistent attendance and also ensure the quorum is upheld.

Meeting frequency: Chair informed, from 2026, there will be four FAWAC meetings per annum, held quarterly.

Meeting location: Chair informed of his preference to alternate the location of future FAWAC meetings, between member organisations with the capacity to host.

Bilateral meetings: Chair restated intention to meet with FAWAC member representatives, bilaterally, outside of FAWAC meetings.

Chair stated his intention to produce an end-of-year statement, summarising the activities of the Council during the year.

- **Action Point:** DAFM to raise the issue of the absence of recorded minutes during FAWN meetings, with the FAWN Chair.
- **Action Point:** ICOS to host next FAWAC meeting.
- **Action Point:** Circulate presentations to group.

3. Update on EU transport rules

Following an update by DAFM on developments in livestock transport and the EU transport regulation legislative process, the group discussed the potential impact of the proposed new EU Regulation.

4. Effect of transportation on calf welfare

Teagasc presented research it has been carrying out on the effect of transportation on calf welfare. This was followed by a group discussion on this research, as well as related issues around calf transport and journey times.

5. Dairy calf to beef action plan

DAFM, ICBF and Teagasc presented to the group in relation to progress on the implementation of the Dairy to Beef action plan. In the discussion that followed, the good progress that is being made in relation to the adoption of sexed semen and the Commercial Beef Value index was noted.

6. Equine welfare

Professor Patrick Wall presented on equine welfare and also covered the recently published report for the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, which he authored, on equine identification, registration and traceability in Ireland.

The group discussed the action plan for implementing Professor Wall's report and the case for a horse slaughter facility in Ireland. It was noted that responsibility for implementation of the action plan has been assigned by DAFM to the AIM Division.

7. AOB

Next meeting: 22/10/25.

The Chair undertook to circulate proposed meeting dates, once he had established from DAFM the likely timeline for commencement of work on the initial Code of Practice.