# Minutes of the Third meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

## Venue ; Buswells Hotel

## Date; 12 February 2003.

## Present ;

Professor Patrick Fottrell, David Walsh, Aidan Murray, Martin Blake, Mary-Ann Bartlett, Barbara Bent, John Stack, Sean O’Laoide, BernadetteEarley, Alison Hanlon, Tom Doyle, Didier Rebet, Olivia Hennigan, LorcanMcCabe and Fintan Conway.

## Apologies;

Dermot Sparrow, Liam Mckibben and Derek Deane.

Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed the alternates as he felt that all organisations needed to be present at each meeting in order to keep abreast of the progress made.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting were agreed following an outline of the changes made by the secretary. The chair stated that organisations rather than individuals would be named in the minutes, which was agreed by all.

2. Matters Arising

The Chair drew member’s attention to Item 4 of the minutes regarding proposals for inclusion in the work programme and briefed the members as follows;

Items 1,2 and 3 on Education, Codes of Practice and Audit Checklists were to be examined by the Working Group

Item 4 on Cooperation between bodies would be reported on at the next meeting by DAF who were coordinating the responses from the IFA and SPCA. The SPCA would be sending in their contribution after the management meeting of 12th February. The Chair thanked the IFA for their response and following a general discussion it was agreed that this was a very positive step by Council whereby all groups wanted to contribute towards achieving the one goal of putting animal welfare to the fore. This system of cooperation is already in place in some counties and is very successful. The IFA stated that it would forward to the secretary the nominees for each county very shortly. They also emphasised the fact that these names would change over the years due to committee membership changes.

Item 5 on Transport would be examined at a later date and would remain on the work programme. The Chair asked all members to send whatever material they had on transport to the secretary who would in turn distribute the executive summaries. Teagasc stated that they had recently completed a report and would forward it immediately.

Item 6 on Fur Farming would be the subject of a briefing from DAF at the meeting.

Item 7 on Fish Farming would be examined at a later stage when a representative from the Dept of the Marine would be present. It will then be decided on if it is to be included in the present work programme.

Item 8 on EU legislation would be the subject of a briefing by DAF at the meeting and would be reported on periodically.

Item 9 on Horse Exports to Italy, the Chair asked CIWF to forward any details it had to the secretary after which Council could discuss it at a later meeting.

Item 10 on Linking Support Payments to Animal Welfare, it was noted that this practice was already in place through “Good Farming Practice”.

Item 11 will be linked to items 1, 2 and 3 for examination by the working group. The Chair thanked DARD N.I. and DAF for the various Codes of Practice along with the Guidelines sent to the Council.

The Chair stated that along with having a work programme and working groups, that various animal experts would be invited to address the Council from time to time. It was agreed that DAF would invite such an expert from the EU Commission to address the next meeting.

## 3. Terms of Reference for the Working Group.

The following terms of reference were agreed;

Review of existing welfare codes of practice for sheep, dairy and beef production in ROI and UK.

Assessment of the adequacy of Irish codes.

Preparation of welfare codes to be adopted by the Council for educational purposes.

It was agreed that DAF would nominate another animal welfare expert to the group for the duration of its deliberations. It was also agreed that pigs and poultry could be added to the TOR at a later stage at which time CIWF would join the group. The group will meet in February and March as often as needed and will report to the Chair and Secretary before the next scheduled meeting in April. All publications from the group would be distributed to as wide an audience as possible and would be in a readable and clearly understandable format. Once again the Chair asked that all information and publications be forwarded directly to the working groups chair for examination.

## 4. Briefing by DAF on Fur Farming.

The salient points were as follows;

The Livestock Breeding Division covers this area in DAF.

Only mink farming is controlled by a licence, which is of a one-year duration and is covered under the 1933 and 1965 Mink Rat Acts. The fee for the licence is 250 Euro and will rise to 350 Euro in 2004.

DAF carry out inspections of the premises involved each year and at the time of the application for licence renewal. Animal Welfare inspections are carried out from time to time.

Fox and Rabbit fur farming are not covered under the Acts. A new Act would have to be introduced to have them covered under a licence regime.

Mink farmers have formed the Irish Fur Breeders Association.

The industry employs approximately 80 full time employees and 85 part time.

There are 6 licensed farms operating this year.

Approximately 153,000 pelts are produced annually with an export value of 1.56m Euro.

The UK and N.I. introduced a ban on fur farming in January 2003 with Austria the only other EU member state with a ban.

Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands are the other EU member states with fur farming.

The UK closed 13 farms and paid approx 23m Euro compensation to the fur farmers (such compensation would cost approx between 1.5 and 2m Euro in Ireland).

DAF have had a meeting with CIWF on fur farming issues ( CIWF distributed a report and video to the members of the Council).

In 1999 the EU Veterinary Standing Committee set out the animal welfare guidelines for these animals.

To date none of the 13 UK fur farmers have sought a licence here in Ireland.

Following a general discussion it was agreed that CIWF would produce a paper with suggested proposals on fur farming for the Council to consider. The Chair proposed that the EU expert on animal health and welfare could be asked to comment on this issue during their presentation. It was also agreed that a visit to a fur farm along with asking their association for comments would be looked at later in the year.

## 5. Current/Topical EU welfare issues.

A handout was distributed by DAF, which covered the following areas;

Mutual assistance on animal welfare in relation to transport

Staging posts

Proposed changes to export refunds linking the refund to animal welfare

Third country animal welfare report

Broilers

Pigs

Laying Hens

Following a general discussion on each point the Chair once again asked all Council members to forward whatever data or reports they had to the secretary for distribution. The Chair thanked DAF for the briefing and asked the representative to make this a regular briefing session at each meeting.

## 6. Guidelines for Farm Visits.

A general discussion took place on the guidelines received from DAF and DARD. These guidelines are supplemented by working papers/notes and are used on all visits to premises or farms whatever the purpose of the visit.

It was proposed and agreed that the working group look at these guidelines during their deliberations and that all members forward to the working groups Chair any data or reports they have in relation to guidelines. The Chair thanked both DAF and DARD for their contribution and cooperation is sharing their guidelines with the Council.

## 7. Work Programme/Strategy.

The Chair proposed that we proceed as outlined under “Matters Arising” which was agreed by all members.

## 8. A.O.B.

It was agreed that following the next meeting and the presentation by DAF on the issue of cooperation between all parties that the Minister be informed as this could be seen as a proactive step in striving to achieve the same mutual goal on animal welfare here in Ireland.

The secretary briefed the members on the progress of the Web page. It will be linked through DAF’s Website and is anticipated to be operational before the next meeting.

The Chair thanked all the members and alternates for a very positive and progressive meeting and looked forward to the meeting scheduled for 9th April. The working group will relate the dates and venues to the Chair and secretary at which the secretary will attend.

**Professor Patrick Fottrell**

**Chairperson.**