**Minutes of the Sixth meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council.**

Venue ; Stakis Hilton Hotel.

Date; 8 October 2003.

Present ; Professor Patrick Fottrell, David Walsh, Aidan Murray, Martin Blake, Mary-Anne Bartlett, Barbara Bent, John Stack, Tom Doyle, Bernadette Earley, Alison Hanlon, Stephen Foley, Jackie Cahill, Peadar OScannail, Kevin Kinsella, Angela McCarthy.

Apologies; Derek Deane, Liam McKibben , Sean O’Laoide and Dermot Sparrow.

**1. Opening Comments**

The Chair welcomed the replacement and stated that it was in the interest of the Council that such replacements continue to attend.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.**

Following agreement the draft minutes were amended to include comments made during discussions in the following areas;

Under Item 3, Matters Arising, referring to Transport, “ That the full Teagasc Report on Transport should be sent directly by Teagasc itself to the Minister and his attention brought to the availability of other scientific reports on transport. The meeting was informed that Teagasc had already done so and that the Minister is always briefed by Department of Agriculture and Food officials of all reports prior to any EU or National legislation being introduced or amended. It was agreed because of time constraints that the report had to be sent that afternoon by the FAWAC Secretary.”

Under Item 6, A.O.B. , second bullet point, that the paragraph be amended to read that the visitors group would be open to all Council members.

**3. Maters Arising.**

**Transport;** Several working group meetings have taken place between the EU Commission and Member States since the launch of the draft directive. The Department of Agriculture are consulting all interested groups who will be afforded an opportunity to make a submission. The principle points raised by groups to date have been on Stocking/Density, Staging Posts, Journey Times and Registration of Exporters. The Department will update the Council at the next meeting.

**Irish Horse Welfare Trust**; The Department will make contact with the Trust and report back at the next meeting.

**Live Export of Horses and Dogs**; The Department were asked to report back at the next meeting regarding export data and the end use of both Irish horses and dogs exported.

**Fur Farming**; The Chair will contact the Fur Breeders Association regarding a visit and report back at the next meeting. CIWF’s comments on the Fur Breeders letters of 9th June were distributed both by e-mail and at the meeting. The Chair asked that Council members read these comments and a summary of a scientific report on fur farming which will be distributed by CIWF to all Council members. 4. **Working Group on Cooperation**.

This group have met and agreed a modus operandi as outlined at the last meeting. The agreement has to be endorsed by the SPCA and IFA Councils following which it will be presented to the FAWAC Council.

5. **Review of Work Programme**.

The Chair opened the debate by stating that Council had achieved considerable progress since its inaugural meeting in November 2002. Consensus had been reached in all areas debated and he wished to convey his appreciation and thanks to all the representative groups in the manner they had worked together to achieve that consensus. He also thanked the two Working Groups on Guidelines and Cooperation and added that their adopted workings will be viewed positively by all when launched shortly. He finished by stating that while a considerable workload had been achieved that the Council had to look ahead and take cognisance of what the stakeholders, consumers and public in general wanted regarding the welfare of farm animals.

**a) Farm Animal Welfare Education**;

It was agreed that this was an important area, which should be compulsory included in the curriculum of all veterinary and agriculture colleges as it may be omitted in some colleges at the moment. It should also be included where Continuous Professional Development is monitored. While the Department of Agricultures website outlines all legislative changes it was proposed that the FAWAC website should also draw peoples attention to changes when introduced. The Secretary will contact Padraig Browne of Teagasc and members of the Veterinary and Agriculture Science Faculties with a view to addressing the Council on this issue.

**b) Consumer Affairs;**

The Chair stated that this was a very important issue, which has a direct impact on farm animal welfare, and consequently consumers would be looking to the Council for an opinion on various problems, which arise from time to time. It was agreed that while there are many traceability and accountability schemes in operation within the EU, it beholds the Council to keep itself up to date on welfare and consumer regulations not alone within the EU but also within the countries from where we import foodstuffs. It was agreed that John Webster (Bristol University), Cathal Cowan ( Nat Food Centre) and Mairead McGuinness (Chair Consumer Panel) would be invited to address the Council. Contact will also be made with the “Multiples” and the “Hospitality Trade” following these presentations.

**c) Pig Farming;**

Here it was agreed to await the return of the Chair of the Working Group on Guidelines before adding it to the programme.

**d) Fish Farming;**

It was agreed that a representative from the Department of the Marine should address the Council. Dr Grant Stentiford (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science UK) will also be asked to address the Council. CIWF will in the meantime distribute a summary of a report they have on aquaculture and proposed Phil Lymbery to give a talk to the Council.

**e) Poultry;**

It was agreed that this is a very important issue for the Council and that it should include both Broiler Chickens and Laying Hens. John Webster would be asked to address the Council on this topic also. At the moment DAF are having consultative meetings with interested parties to discuss the EU Directive and all members of Council were asked to inform their representative bodies of these meetings. DAF will report back to Council at the next meeting.

**F) Visit to Marts;**

These visits will take place next year and cover all farm animals. The question of cattle been rejected at marts because of secondary re-growth of horns was discussed. It was agreed that dehorning involving secondary growth should only be carried out in exceptional circumstances where the horns are sharp or a danger to other animals. In the meantime representative bodies on Council were invited to contact DAF for a bilateral if they deemed it necessary for this particular issue.

**g) Medicines and the Non-Availability of Certain Medicines;**

DAF informed the Council that a major review is taking place at the moment and that a report will be available in the coming months. It was agreed that the non-availability and the cost of some medicines was having a direct impact on the welfare of farm animals in some cases. Council members were asked to submit their views and observations to the Secretary who in turn will pass them on to the review body. DAF will brief the Council at the next meeting.

**h) Fur Farming;**

It was agreed that this would continue to be on the work programme. CIWF have proposed Professor Donald Broom to give a talk to the Council.

**i) Abattoirs;**

Veterinary Ireland agreed to report back to Council at the next meeting as they have been in contact with various religious leaders regarding the slaughter of farm animal in Irish abattoirs. CIWF circulated a letter it had sent to the Minister for Agriculture and Food on the matter. It was agreed that a decision whether to include this topic will be made at the next meeting. **The Chair thanked members for the debate on next years work programme and added that the Council would be open to other issues being investigated should they require urgent attention. He concluded that these topics would be prioritised at the next meeting, as resources will play a part on their completion.**

**6. Report from the Working Group on Guidelines.**

In the absence of the Groups Chair the Secretary briefed the meeting on the up to date situation of the printing of both the Beef and Sheep Guideline booklets.

The group will meet on Monday 20 October to discuss the draft Dairy guidelines following which all members would be circulated. The Chair asked all members to respond immediately with their observations or opinions in order that the dairy guidelines can be printed in time for the launch, which will be in November and will be dependant on the Ministers diary. The Chair thanked the group for the work they had carried out and added that theses guidelines will contribute to Irelands reputation regarding farm animal welfare.

**7. A.O.B.**

It was agreed that the dates for next year’s meetings would be set out at the next meeting along with the venues.

The Chair thanked the Secretary for the tremendous work carried out in the inaugural year and all Council members supported this.