# Minutes of the Twelfth Meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

**Venue:** Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin.

Date: 7th September 2004.

Present: P Fottrell (Chairman), K Kinsella, B Early, D Sparrow, B Bent, A Murray, J Stack, MA Bartlett, A McCarthy, S Foley, C Connor, J Cahill, T Doyle, S O’Laoide, T O’Halloran (Secretary).

**Apologies:** AJ Hanlon, D Deane, M Blake.

# 1. PRESENTATION ON FUR FARMING

The meeting began with the Chairman welcoming all invited speakers from whom the Council received the following presentations: -

* **Irish Fur Breeders’ Association**
  + European Fur Farming by Mr W Verhagen
  + Irish Fur Farming by Ms R Andersson
  + Fur Farmed Animals, Make Good Welfare Better by Prof. LL Jeppessen
* **Prof. Donald M Broom, Dept. of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge, UK and member of the EU Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare**
  + The Needs of Animals Kept For Fur Production And How Housing Affects Their Welfare
* Ms Emer McGeough, Livestock Breeding Unit, Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF)
  + Licensing of Fur Farms in Ireland
* Mr Mark Glover assisted by Ms N Brooks, Respect for Animals UK,
  + Briefing on Fur Farming which included a Presentation Pack

Each presentation was followed by a question and answer session. The Chairman thanked all of the parties concerned.

Copies of all presentations circulated to members via email on 9th September. Hard copies posted to absent Council members on the same date.

Following discussion, the Chairman said that Council could not take an absolute position on fur farming; the presentations formed part of a process to help identify the way forward. The Chairman invited DAF to address Council again at its next meeting regarding current status of EU legislation/what aspects of fur legislation could be improved. DAF agreed to this request. DAF is also to respond to a number of other questions regarding fur farming in Ireland as raised by Council.

**2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes were agreed however one item is to be clarified for CIWF by Secretary.

**3. WORK PROGRAMME**

**Farm Animal Welfare Education/Guidelines:** Some Council members expressed the view that following submissions to Council from the Irish Horse Welfare Trust (IHWT), it was DAF’s policy to state that Ireland does not export horses for slaughter. They felt that this statement should be included in the proposed guidelines for equine farmers. The Chair of this group was of the opinion that previous guidelines did not make policy statements and he sought guidance from Council on the matter. DAF stated that it has scheduled a meeting with the Irish Horse Welfare Trust later this month to discuss issues raised by them and would revert to Council at the next meeting.

The Chair of this group wanted it noted that old horses would soon not be eligible for the food chain and he felt that there is a need for Council to discuss this matter further.

**Working Group on Co-operation:** The Chair of this group informed Council that all the parties and their respective organisations involved in formulating the Framework Document are now in agreement and recommended it to Council for adoption. Council endorsed the final document and P Fottrell confirmed that he would commend it to Minister Joe Walsh TD, recommending its adoption and implementation nationwide, with roll-out on a phased basis. He would also suggest the appointment of a joint Steering Group to oversee and co-ordinate its implementation.

It was agreed by Council that the document be publicly launched by Minister Walsh TD before he leaves office on 29th September.

P Fottrell expressed his appreciation to all parties concerned.

**Working Group on Medicines:** The Chairof this group expressed the view that there still existed a conflict between food safety and farm animal welfare. His group are determined to define what medicines are missing and also what system can be used to relieve availability. He also confirmed that the group should be finished the technical list before Christmas.

**4. ELECTRO-IMMOBILISATION**

DAF stated that a meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare is scheduled to take place before the next meeting of Council and that it would report back the outcome of discussions on this matter.

**5. PROGRAMME FOR 2004**

**14th October** - it is anticipated that Council will meet on this date and receive presentations on ritual slaughter without stunning from a number of parties.

**11th November** – it is hoped that a visit to a livestock mart will be arranged for this date to be followed by a meeting of Council. Council discussed what it hoped to achieve from a mart visit. Some members felt that these places were crucial in terms of animal welfare particularly in terms of loading and unloading animals.

**6. AOB**

CIWF said it was unacceptable that the final letter from the Chairman to Minister Walsh TD regarding fish farming was not seen and agreed by all Council members before issue. The Chairman stated that he had looked at all of the submissions received from Council members and had made a decision. He had endeavoured to strike a balance between all views expressed in the submissions.