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

**Venue:** Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin

## Date: 12th February 2004

**Present**: Professor Patrick Fottrell (Chairperson), Barbara Bent, Jackie Cahill, John Stack, Alison Hanlon, Angela McCarthy, Stephen Foley, Martin Blake, Dermot Sparrow, Mary-Anne Bartlett, Sean O’Laoide, Kevin Kinsella, Bernadette Earley, Derek Deane, Teresa O’Halloran.

**Apologies:** Tom Doyle, Colette Connor, Aidan Murray.

# 1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes with amendments under Working Group on Medicines, Working Group on Co-operation and AOB were agreed.

# 2. MATTERS ARISING

**IHWT letter:** DAF confirmed that an invitation had been issued to the IHWT however no date has been set for a meeting. DAF is to report at the next meeting on any progress made.

**Fur Farming:** It was agreed that the proposed visit should take place in June 2004. Prior to the visit it is hoped that the Council will receive presentations from a number of parties with different perspectives on fur farming.

**Consumer Affairs:** Mairead McGuinness, Chairperson of the Consumer Liaison Panel was unable to make presentation at this meeting due to diary commitments. She has agreed to address the next meeting.

**Fish Farming:** Subject to their availability, it is hoped that Mr Phil Lymbery, World Society for the Protection of Animals, Mr Richie Flynn, Irish Farmers Association and a representative from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources will be on hand to address the panel at the March meeting.

**CIWF Request**: In response to the request from CIWF for figures relating to deaths of animals on farms in Ireland, DAF confirmed that, other than for cattle, official figures for on-farm deaths were not available.

# 3. WORK PROGRAMME

**Farm Animal Welfare Education/Guidelines:** The Working Group Chair stated that they had agreed an approach to the proposed guidelines for horses, ponies and donkeys. Following equines, it is hoped to prepare similar guidelines for pigs and poultry.

**Working Group on Co-operation:** The first draft or the proposal was discussed and amended. Concern was expressed that the document is being rushed and that more time is necessary to pull together all aspects of the document particularly those concerning the commitment required from voluntary members and training. It was agreed that the Working Group would need to look at the draft document further so as to reach a compromise re. the final wording of the document. This would be followed up after this Council meeting.

The final document will require formal agreement of the IFA and ISPCA Council’s. ISPCA hope to obtain this by 13th March 2004 and IFA stated it would seek the agreement of the IFA National Council at a future date, as soon as possible. It is hoped that both parties will have formal agreement from their organisations before the March meeting of FAWAC.

Both IFA and ISPCA stated that following formal agreement and acceptance of the document by all time would be needed to put a system of operation in place.

The Chairperson expressed the view that the Co-operation programme is an important development for the Council and he is anxious that it proceeds apace. The proposal will have to go before Council for approval following which, a report will be sent to the Minister for Agriculture and Food. Issues such as launching dates will be discussed then.

**Working Group on Medicines:** The Working Group Chair stated that two meetings have taken place to date. The Chair has produced a paper listing the problem areas in relation to ‘missing’ medicines following the first meeting. At the second meeting they had received a presentation from Dr Glenn Kennedy, Surveillance Department of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland, outlining the programme in operation there for residue testing. It is planned to have a similar presentation from DAF at the next meeting which is due to take place on 10th March. The Working Group will also receive a presentation from Dr Gabriel Beechinor, Irish Medicines Board in relation to licencing of veterinary medicines at the same meeting. In relation to the matter of electrical immobilization for the restraint of animals, it was decided that this would be dealt with outside the Working Group and would be treated as a separate issue by the Council. A paper on electrical immobilization was produced by CIWF and a copy of this document was circulated to all Council members after the meeting.

DAF pointed out that the EU drives residue policy, particularly since it impacts on food safety. Veterinary Ireland commented that the EC had produced a Reflection Paper on Residues in foodstuffs of animal origin, which should help focus the minds of all concerned; the three main issues are animal welfare, food safety (which takes precedence) and competition re. pricing of veterinary medicines. All of these areas’s need to be addressed and a balance struck.

It was agreed that overall, FAWAC as a group has identified that a problem exists in this area which needs to be dealt with, not-withstanding the food safety issue.

**National Ploughing Championships:** As discussed at Council meeting of 19th November 2003, the issue of whether FAWAC should take a stand at the National Ploughing Championships was considered further. It was agreed that this was a good idea since it would help raise awareness of animal welfare and also the profile of the Council. The content of what FAWAC would present to the public was discussed, particularly why and how the Council exits, its remit, what it has achieved to date and what it proposes to do in the future. Other matters on discussed included, funding, staffing of stand, publicity, target audience. The Chair said he would contact DAF and Anna May McHugh from the National Ploughing Association as to the feasibility of this proposal. Attendance at other agricultural shows and the Open Day at Teagasc, Grange/Moorepark were also mooted.

**Visit to Marts:** It is hoped to have a Mart visit organised for a date in May.

Aspects of the Work Programme are to be listed and circulated to all Council members.

# NEXT MEETINGS

25th March 2004 and 27th May 2004

# 5. AOB

The issue of puppy farming was raised due to the number of high profile raids on puppy farms by the ISPCA. These raids have resulted in large numbers of dogs being rescued because of the dreadful conditions in which they are being kept. There are serious welfare issues to be resolved in terms of the production, transport and export of dogs. DAF is to check if it has any responsibility for any of these areas.

In general terms, Veterinary Ireland suggested that animal welfare could be best served by proper identification of animals. Micro-chipping animals would help identify both the animal and its owner and perhaps help alleviate some of the welfare problems.

Concern was also expressed about the export of horses and the fact that no statistics are available to identify how many horses are being exported. DAF pointed out that a tripartite agreement exists between Ireland, UK and France, allowing for free movement of horses between the three countries without a health certificate, however a passport was mandatory.

Reference was made to the Global Conference on Animal Welfare to be held in Paris from 23-25th February 2004. B Earley and A Hanlon are attending and both agreed to report back to the Council on the highlights of the conference.

The Chief Veterinary Officers of the EU are meeting today to discuss animal transport. DAF will update the Council on any developments at the next Council meeting.

It was agreed that the Chairperson would arrange a meeting with his counterpart on the UK Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council.