# Minutes of the Twenty Third Meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

**Venue:** Fitzwilliam Hotel, Dublin.

Date: 14th December 2006.

Present: P Fottrell (Chairman), C Connor (DARDNI), A Hanlon (UCD),

K Kinsella (IFA), B Bent (WSPCA), M A Bartlett CIWF),

S Foley (CILDEHS), D Sparrow (Vet. Ireland), M Blake (DAF),

S O’Laoide (Vet. Ireland), B Earley (TEAGASC), L McCabe (ICMSA), T O’Donnell (DAF), T Doyle (ICOS), J Bryan (IFA), R Kennedy (IFA).

**Apologies:** A McCarthy (ISPCA).

**Secretary:** T O’Halloran.

Chairman welcomed all members and Mr Martin Farrell, Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF).

# MINUTES

Minutes adopted with three amendments.

# MATTERS ARISING

***Electro-Immobilisation (EI)***

DAF confirmed that the proposal to introduce a ban on the use of EI on 1st June 2007 remains and is being actively pursued.

***Broiler Welfare Directive***

DAF informed Council that Germany, who currently holds the EU Presidency, has it on their programme for March 2007. At present there is not a qualified majority for the adoption of the proposal in its present form. DAF to keep Council informed of developments.

***Minutes from* Euro-FAWCS *meeting***

No agreed minutes available yet - may have to wait until after their next meeting.

***Fur Farming***

Chairman confirmed that Irish Fur Breeder’s Association (IFBA) had responded directly to the Minister for Agriculture and Food and had copied the reply to Council. (Reply circulated to all members prior to meeting). DAF agreed that it would be possible to provide a report regarding on-farm slaughter at fur farms in Spring 2007. Vet. Irl. representatives stated that their organisation had conducted a visit of fur farms to observe on-farm slaughter and it is their view that IFBA appear to match on-farm practice with that specified in their correspondence. Vet. Irl. will produce a report on the visit. DAF suggested that this report be made available to the Minister.

***Avian Flu***

It was suggested that Council could invite Dr P Wall, to address them on this item. Chairman agreed that this could be done should avian flu become topical. It was also agreed that CD version of the presentation be forwarded to A Hanlon.

***Annual Report***

The 2005 Annual Report has been circulated. Chairman thanked the Secretary.

***Animal Welfare/Economic Burden***

It was agreed that an invitation to address Council should also be extended Professor Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University London. Invitation has been extended to Mr John Malone.

***Welfare of Horses***

Following on from concern expressed at the last meeting regarding abandonment of horses, it was agreed that an earlier response from the Minister for Agriculture and Food be followed up. It was also agreed that an invitation would issue to the Irish Thoroughbred Industry to attend a Council meeting to enable members to put their concerns to them. It was agreed that S O’Laoide would provide Secretary with a brief identifying the major issues of concern. It was also agreed that Irish Horse Welfare Trust could brief Council. - ISPCA representative indicated that she would identify issues for the briefing.

Council was informed that University College Dublin intended to conduct research into horses in Ireland.

***Veal Production***

CIWF expressed the view that they would favour production of pink veal in Ireland over export of small calves. A general discussion took place on pink veal production. It was noted that there is little research available, nor is there an established market for such product. It was agreed that CIWF would provide data to CILDEHS.

***Halal Slaughter***

It was reported that DAF are still trying to identify a meat plant that will accommodate demonstration of use of Stun Assurance Monitor. CIWF highlighted lack of labelling identifying meat from Halal method of slaughter.

# FARM ANIMAL WELFARE EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Chair of this sub-group reported that Mr J Terrington, DARDNI gave a presentation to the group on the proposed changes to Animal Welfare legislation in Northern Ireland which includes exotic/wildlife. He suggested that the Minister for Agriculture and Food could write to her colleague in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, advocating similar proposals. It was agreed that Chair would draft a letter for Chairman for issue to Minister.

Regarding drafting of Animal Welfare Guidelines for Transport of Animals, Chair reported that he hoped to have a draft document circulated to Council before the next meeting. It was agreed that guidelines should include a section to help identify fitness of animal to travel.

# WORKING GROUP ON CO-OPERATION (EWS)

Chair of this sub-group reported that four regional meetings had been held since mid-November with good attendance at all meetings. The scheme appears to be operating very well. There is however, a need to encourage increased communication between the organisations at local level. It was suggested that DAF representative on each group could initiate more regular contact. Other agencies that could be helpful on an informal basis, e.g. Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána, are being pursued with the aim that they feed into the system. A meeting of the Steering Group to include representative from these two agencies is scheduled for January 2007. Inclusion of Private Veterinary Practioners and possibly Teagasc is also being discussed. Overstocking is of major concern together with the possible non-availability of fodder over the coming winter.

It was agreed that EWS would continually review the availability of fodder.

It was also agreed that Chair would review the making available of EWS members contact details, to bodies outside of EWS group.

It was also agreed that Chair would raise with the Steering Group the possibility of providing a report on the types of welfare cases dealt with.

# TRANSPORT

Members received a presentation from Mr M Farrell, DAF, on the PROTECTION OF ANIMALS DURING TRANSPORT AND RELATED OPERATIONS (Council Regulation (EC) 1 of 2005

A question and answer session followed. Copy of power-point presentation supplied to all members. CIWF to engage directly with M Farrell regarding a query they have relating to transport of live animals via France. CIWF to engage with M Blake regarding definition of ‘suitable’ sailing conditions. DARDNI stated they and DAF are working closely on the enforcement of these regulations.

# PROGRAMME FOR 2007

Chairman said that there is a need for Council to set priorities and deliver on these.

**Priorities**

* Animal Transport – Delivery of good guidelines, education and training. Guidelines to include horse transport. It was agreed that DAF would look at the guidelines to see how it can be incorporated. Farm organisation members of Council expressed the view that farmers would look to DAF for guidance.
* Broiler Welfare Guidelines - to include stocking densities.
* Pig Welfare Guidelines – CIWF to look at science of tail-docking/identification of alternatives to it. It was agreed that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare could look at this issue – D Sparrow to draft document to be put to FAWAC.
* On-farm Emergency Slaughter - Vet. Irl. are in discussions with DAF regarding drafting of Protocol to allow this practice. A national awareness programme, to include industry and owners of slaughtering premises, will be necessary,.
* Electro-immobilisation – need to encourage early disbudding. It was agreed that DAF would provide information to Council regarding provision of local anaesthetics to farmers. It was also agreed to keep polled cattle on the agenda as a medium-long term aspiration.
* Fur Farming – to remain on programme until reply received from Minsiter for Agriculture and Food.

**Reserve Priorities**

* Halal Slaughter
* Avian Flu
* Longevity of Dairy Cows (4 lactations) – A Hanlon to provide data to Council. A Hanlon to consult with B Earley with a view to drafting letters to Mr Donnchadh Barry, Teagasc, inviting him to address Council on the matter of genetics and breeding and also to Dr Laura Boyle, Teagasc, who is an expert in dairy cow welfare. It was also suggested that the Chief Veterinary Officer of DAF also be invited to address Council.

# SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

It was agreed that Secretary would circulate schedule of meeting dates as soon as possible. It was also agreed to invite Minister for Agriculture and Food and Mr S Healy, DAF, to join Council for lunch. Some meeting are to be held outside Dublin.

# AOB

CIWF advised Council of Oxford Farm Initiative which members could attend. Weblink to be provided by CIWF for circulation to all members.

Chairman expressed his gratitude to every member of Council paying tribute to their good spirit of reaching consensus and compromise. He also thanked the contributions of DAF and the Secretary.