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

**Venue:** Fitzwilliam Hotel, Dublin

Date: 20th February 2007

Present: S O’Laoide, Acting Chairman (Vet. Ireland), C Connor (DARDNI),

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

D Sparrow (Vet. Ireland), M Blake (DAF), A McCarthy (ISPCA),

 B Earley (TEAGASC), L McCabe (ICMSA), M Winkelmann (DAF),

 T Doyle (ICOS), J Bryan (IFA), R Kennedy (IFA)

**Apologies:** P Fottrell (Chairman), S Foley (CILDEHS), T O’Donnell (DAF) represented

By M Winkelmann

**Secretary:** T O’Halloran

Chairman was unable to attend and proposed that S O’Laoide chair meeting in his absence. Proposal was put to Council, seconded by T Doyle. Proposal accepted by Council. Acting Chair welcomed M Winkelmann and read apologies.

# MINUTES

Minutes adopted with three amendments.

# MATTERS ARISING

***Transport***

CIWF referred to discussions at the last meeting and sought to clarify that the capsized lorry referred to was not carrying animals of Irish origin and apologized for any confusion this may have caused.

***Programme for 2007 - On-farm Emergency Slaughter***

This is listed as a priority under the programme. An animal injured on-farm is likely to be welfare compromised and must be disposed of humanely and speedily. An agreed solution on how this should be done needs to be reached between all parties involved. Following a discussion on how best to dispose of the injured animal, it was agreed that DAF and Veterinary Ireland would prioritise their discussions so as to finalise a document on how to manage such a situation, following which, they would engage with farmers and the veterinary profession. IFA agreed that they would engage with Meat Industry Ireland. CIWF expressed the view that an injured animal should be put down on-farm.

 It was also agreed that the Education Sub-group would look this item and that an IFA representative with expertise in the area would be co-opted onto the group during these discussions.

***Avian Flu***

DAF updated Council on the latest developments.

***Animal Welfare/Economic Burden***

It was agreed to invite Professor Tim Lang, Professor of Health Management and Food Policy, City University, London, to address Council.

***Welfare of Horses***

ISPCA representative advised that the Veterinary Council of Ireland was trying to arrange a seminar to focus on and discuss the problems of horse welfare. UCD representative also advised of a series of organised seminars on horses in Ireland. Council are to be kept informed.

***Veal Production***

CIWF again expressed the view that they would favour production of ‘pink’ or ‘rosy’ veal in Ireland over the export of small calves. They had some scientific data available indicating that transport of small calves is not desirable. It was agreed that they would make this data available to Council, via the Secretary.

 It was confirmed that Bord Bia and Slaney Meats are presently conducting research into the production of ‘rosy veal’ however it is at a preliminary stage. It was agreed that Council would wait until trial was at an advanced stage before issuing an invitation to Bord Bia to address Council on the outcomes of this research.

***Halal Slaughter***

It was reported that efforts to identify a meat plant willing to demonstrate the use of a Stun Assurance Monitor are progressing favourably.

#  FARM ANIMAL WELFARE EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Chair of this sub-group reported that a draft of the *Animal Welfare Guidelines for Transport of Animals* had been circulated to Council and submissions received have been taken on board. The group is now concentrating on obtaining good video footage highlighting poor driving technique by hauliers for uploading onto FAWAC webpage. This footage would serve as an education tool to highlight the impact that driving has on animals being transported.

Chair also confirmed that they had received a presentation from CIWF.

CIWF stated that they would be opposed to the use of electric goads. They are also of the view that the guidelines should include transport of calves less than one month old.

With regard to provision of training, DAF confirmed that they had received expressions of interest from three parties, ICOS, TEAGASC and RACE and that it is proposed to have training programmes implemented by the end of the year.

# WORKING GROUP ON CO-OPERATION (EWS)

DAF representative reported that a meeting of the Steering Group to review this winter is scheduled for March. The regional meetings have been very successful to date. Efforts continue to be made to bring An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive on-board.

Experience of EWS groups would indicate that there is a need to get involved with cases at a much earlier stage than is happening presently. There might be a need to publicise or promote EWS at a local level. IFA suggested that the Steering Group should decide to write to every Garda jurisdiction informing them of the existence of EWS. ICOS agreed. It was agreed that the momentum must be maintained. ISPSCA suggested that there might be a need for EWS to be established in a more formalised way. It was suggested that a poster could be designed and circulated to Social Welfare Offices, Garda Stations and offices of General Medical Practioners promoting EWS.

Chairman complimented the voluntary commitment of all those involved in EWS.

# AVAILABILITY OF LOCAL ANAESTHETICS

Council was advised there is only one local anaesthetic capable of meeting the Animal Remedies Act - Procaine. DAF advised Council that the Chief Veterinary Officer of the Department has written to the Irish Medicines Board with regard to the non-availability of certain veterinary medicines.

DAF confirmed that the proposed ban on the use of electro-immobilisation is going ahead and outlined how the matter is being advanced. A general discussion followed. Availability of veterinary medicines is crucial to promoting good animal welfare on-farm. In response to improving handling facilities, DAF confirmed that applications for grant aid could be made under the Farm Investment Schemes. With regard to disbudding, it was noted that the legal time frame within the Protection of Animals Act 1965, needs be revised to take account of the types of breeds on-farm now, and that the two week period in the Act was arbitrary and not actually based on any scientific research. It was also noted that early disbudding would be promoted under the proposed Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme.

#  FUR FARMING

DAF confirmed that a report on the previous killing season should be available to Council before the next meeting. It was agreed that the report on a visit to observe slaughter on-farm by Veterinary Ireland would also be made available to Council. It was agreed that both reports could be referred to the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW) for a view on methods of slaughter used, based on available scientific studies.

 It was also noted that the EU Commission is undertaking a review of the slaughter of animals generally, and that proposals would be coming down the line as a result of this. Council could study these and form a view, referring it to the SACAHW if necessary.

# PROGRAMME FOR 2007

***Broiler Welfare***

DAF reported that there is no further progress to date. The German presidency may put in on the agenda for March.

***Pig Welfare***

It was agreed that the Education Sub-group would begin work on a ‘Best Practice’ booklet, which would update the current DAF brochure. It is to concentrate on environment enrichment, dry sows, stress and detailing techniques.

It was agreed that tail-biting would be looked at separately. Tail-biting is to remain on the agenda. D Sparrow circulated three documents on tail-biting, followed by a short presentation from him.

***On-farm Emergency Slaughter***

As discussed at 2 above.

#  AOB

***Animal Welfare Cases On-farm – mass slaughter of animals***

Concern was expressed by Vet. Irl. representative about the amount of animals being slaughtered as a result of breaches of animal welfare legislation by farmers. DAF replied that in all instances, a legal process is followed and that in some cases, the commercial reality comes into play, whereby animals have to be sold on. CIWF enquired if the numbers slaughtered could be quantified? It was agreed that DAF would provide figures for the past two years, if available, for the number of animals disposed of in this way.

***Series of Animal Welfare Lectures in UCD***

A Hanlon invited Council to attend. She is to provide details to Secretary for circulation to all members.

***Exports of Live Cattle to Egypt***

CIWF sought clarification as to whether the live export trade to Egypt is going to be re-opened? CIWF expressed concern at the way animals are treated at time of slaughter in some of these export destinations.

 IFA stated that it is a commercial reality that demand existed for live animals in these countries. Animal welfare groups had, in their view, halted the live export trade as a result of lobbying of the EU. This has had a negative impact on welfare as the EU has no influence now over welfare in destinations such as these.

 Some Council members enquired if the answer was to promote religious slaughter at home? It was also suggested that exporting countries such as Ireland, could offer to provide technical assistance to these destinations.

It was agreed that CIWF would circulate Council, via the Secretary, with any information they have on this item. It was also agreed that IFA would provide Council with information on trade displacement and welfare compromise – also to be circulated via the Secretary.

***Next Meeting***

Chairman thanked all members for their contribution today. He advised Council that there may be a problem with the date of the next meeting – Wednesday, 18th April. Secretary to advise members of new date as soon as possible.

**POINTS FOR ACTION FROM THIS MEETING**

* IFA to engage with Meat Industry Ireland re. emergency slaughter.
* IFA to circulate Council, via Secretary, information on trade displacement/welfare.
* CIWF to provide ‘rosy veal’ documentation for circulation to Council via Secretary.
* CIWF to circulate Council, via Secretary, information on live exports.
* DAF and Veterinary Ireland to finalise *Emergency Slaughter* document.
* DAF to provide report re. on-farm slaughter at fur farms via Secretary.
* DAF to provide figures for numbers of animals disposed of, if available, as a result of farm welfare cases.
* Veterinary Ireland to make available report of their fur farm visit to Council via Secretary.
* A Hanlon to provide details of UCD seminars to Secretary for circulation
* Secretary to issue invitation to Prof. Tim Lang
* **POINTS FOR ACTION FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**
* It was suggested at the meeting of 14-12-06 that the Irish Thoroughbred Industry and the Irish Horse Welfare Trust be invited to address Council. S O’Laoide and B Bent to prepare a brief identifying the issues of concern. It was also agreed to follow up letter issued to Minister for Agriculture and Food on 27th January 2006 following identification of issues of concern