# Minutes of the Thirty-first Meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

**Venue:** Portlaoise Heritage Hotel, Town Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

Date: 16th July 2008.

Present: Professor Patrick Fottrell (Chairman), Brid Farrell (DAFF), Sean O’Laoide (Vet Ireland), Stephen Foley (CILDEHS), Alison Hanlon (UCD), Barbara Bent (WSPCA), Mary-Anne Bartlett (CIWF), Martin McMahon (ICMSA), Colette Connor (DARDNI), Michael Doran (IFA), Mark Beazley (ISPCA), Dermot Sparrow (Vet. Ireland), Richard Kennedy (IFA), Dr. Bernadette Earley (TEAGASC), Garry O’Hagan (DAFF).

**Apologies:** Kevin Kinsella (IFA), Tom Doyle (ICOS), Martin Blake (DAFF).

**Secretary:** Tom Farrell.

Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Mark Beazley (ISPCA) who is replacing Angela McCarthy as a Council member. Chairman also wished Dermot Ryan (DAFF) well in his new role, as advisor to the new Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Mr. Brendan Smith T.D. Council members paid tribute to Dermot Ryan and Angela McCarthy, for their contributions to the Council.

1. **MINUTES**

Council adopted the minutes, with one amendment as outlined below, of the meeting on the 30th April 2008.

Under Item 4, of the Agenda

The issue of tail docking was discussed, and figures were requested, this issue will be addressed.

1. **MATTERS ARISING**

Joe Collins from The Veterinary Faculty in UCD, along with Joe Shortall and Michael Sheahan from DAFF, gave presentations to the Council in relation to current issues in Equine Welfare.

Joe Collins (UCD) gave his presentation on a project, he is presently working on “The UCD Review of Horse Welfare in Ireland 2007-2009, sponsored by “World Horse Welfare”.

The project has four main aims:

* The Equine Industry
* Perception of Equine Welfare
* Recorded Equine Welfare
* In Depth study of solutions

Joe Shortall (DAFF) gave his presentation on current and future legislation, governing Equines.

Michael Sheahan (DAFF) gave his presentation on the Department’s role on the control of the movement of equines, as in sales, ports and fairs, he also spoke about slaughter, disease and transport of equines.

At the end of the presentations, DAFF and UCD answered questions from the Council.

The Council expressed their gratitude to both parties for their presentations.

1. **ON-FARM SLAUGHTER**

Council agreed that all Organisations represented should make their respective members aware of the content of the document. The document is ready for printing, however national legislation will need updating to give effect to the new arrangements and once legislation is in place, the document will be distributed.

DAFF undertook to look into the issue of male progency from Friesian herds crossed with Jerseys, as a view was expressed that these animals have limited market value.

1. **EDUCATION SUB-GROUP**

The first proof of the “Code of Practice for the Welfare of Broiler Chickens” booklet was received from the printers. It is intended to present the booklet, at the next Council meeting in September. The Council will extend an invitation to Minister Brendan Smith T.D to launch the booklet at the next Council meeting.

The Education Sub-group has begun to collate information on a draft Pig Welfare Booklet, and work will commence on this shortly.

1. **EQUINE WELFARE LIAISON GROUP**

Council agreed to add to the present members on the Equine Welfare Liaison Sub-group.

Members presently on the working-group are:

Sean O’Laoide – Veterinary Ireland and Barbara Bent – WSPCA

The additional members suggested are:

Michael Sheahan – DAFF or Niall O’Nuallain – DAFF,

and Tom Farrell as Secretary to the group.

Council has asked when the Sub-group meet, that they could look into some of the issues, that was presented by DAFF and UCD.

1. **REPORT FROM RITUAL SLAUGHTER GROUP and from the Sub-group of the SACAHW committee**

Veterinary Ireland gave a report on the proposed Slaughter Plant scheduled to facilitate the demonstration of the Stun Assurance Monitor (SAM). Unfortunately, the Plant closed before the demonstration could be facilitated.

There is another owner thinking of taking over the business, and has given indications that they may facilitate a demonstration of the SAM.

The SACAHW Committee are awaiting the Fur Farming Working-group to complete its report, and intend to make changes to the members, personnel with more expertise in this area shall be drafted on to the working-group replacing them.

 **WORKING GROUP ON CO-OPERATION (EWS)**

DAFF reported on the present workings of the EWS.

* Garda Liaison Officer’s have been nominated from almost every Garda division in the country
* Meetings to be arranged with the HSE, to establish on an informal basis some sort of contact system with HSE representatives particularly for our Department Veterinary Inspectors.
* A review of the EWS, to be initiated.

Council stated that they feel EWS is a huge success.

1. **FUR FARMING**

The Secretary stated there was no further development on the report, due mainly to key members of the working-group being on holidays.

The report is at a very advanced stage.

It is envisaged that the report will be made available for the September meeting.

**9. AOB**

**Animal Health and Welfare Bill**

DAFF reported on the Animal Health and Welfare Bill.

The main points were:

* The closing date for submissions was 11th July.
* A large number of submissions with wide ranging views received from organisations and individuals.
* It is proposed to engage with organisations on their respective submissions
* Government will have to approve the Heads of the Bill before going forward.
* Stakeholder engagement will continue until the draft is finalised.

# Humane Slaughter of Pigs

In relation to the humane slaughter of pigs in Waterford, CIWF inquired to what legislation it took place under.

DAFF will establish and revert at the September meeting.

**RCS Group**

DAFF reported that the “Farm Animal Welfare Research and Coordination Sup-group” had their inaugural meeting, on 26th June. The group includes members from a wide range of organisations, such as: Teagasc, UCD, DAFF and Veterinary Ireland.

It will provide a greater coordination of Research projects among all organisations.

**Research Study**

DAFF reported on initiatives; they are working on with UCD.

The following is the research projects:

* Investigate underlying causes leading to unusual patterns of on-farm deaths.
* Evaluate the welfare ‘benefit’ of the Suckler Cow Welfare scheme.

UCD stated that they would have students commencing research in September.

**Calf Transport**

CIWF raised concerns that they have with some hauliers not stopping at lairage points.

They will contact DAFF directly on this matter**.**

 **Next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled, for the 17th September 2008.

## Conclusion

Chairman thanked the Council Members for their attendance, and adjourned the meeting.

## END