# Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

**Location:** Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise

Date: 1st December 2011

Present: Chairperson Professor P Fottrell, G O’Hagan (DAFM), B Farrell (DAFM), B Earley (TEAGASC), N Griffin (ISPCA), S O’Laoide (Vet Ireland), A Hanlon (UCD), M A Bartlett (CIWF), R Doyle (ICOS), B Bent (WSPCA), T Burke (IFA), N Byers (ICMSA),

Apologies: C Connor (DARDNI), Kevin Kinsella (IFA), S Foley (CILDEHS). M Doran (IFA),

Secretary: Alan P O’Brien

1. **Presentation by Vanessa Woods**
* The Council thanked Vanessa for her presentation and it was agreed that Agri-Aware would liaise with the Education Sub-Group before the next FAWAC meeting.
1. **Minutes of the last FAWAC Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of 22nd September 2011 were adopted with changes.

1. **Matters Arising**
* CIWF asked about the status of the Transport Manual. DAFM said that this will be updated in 2012.
* CIWF asked about progress on tail docking and enrichment material. DAFM said that trials are taking place with timber beams, hanging baskets and straw.
* In response to a question from CIWF on Loose Sow Housing, DAFM said that they are working with the industry to ensure compliance by the 1st of January 2013.
1. **Education Working Group**
* Sean O’Laoide said that good progress has been made regarding the new booklet on Fairs, Marts and Markets. An issue was raised in respect of handling areas at marts being unsuitable for equines. The sub-group are examining issues relating to gradients and loading areas and are examining the possibilities of retro-fitting rubber mats to increase safety in these areas.
* ICOS offered to provide some input into the booklet. Sean O’Laoide said that a booklet would be sent to ICOS for comments before it is published.
* The ISPCA alerted the Council that there is a risk of the emergence of unregulated fairs in some counties, partly in response to the tighter controls in Smithfield. Vigilance must be maintained.
1. **Early Warning System**
* All the Regional Meetings have now taken place for the year. Reports have been positive. Animal Welfare Cases as a whole are down while co-operation between agencies is continuing to function well. The fodder situation also looks positive.
* IFA said that there is very positive feedback from EWS. The Human Welfare dimension is critical to animal welfare issues. It is important that this is dealt with. DAFM said that the At-Risk herd programme is one of the aspects dealing with this. This programme recognises the importance of human welfare as well as animal welfare. At-Risk farms are visited twice a year. The work of the HSE and Pobal is important in this.
* UCD reported on research being undertaken at MVetSc level on Welfare Cases.
1. **Equine Welfare**
* DAFM reported that engagement is continuing with Local Authorities in regard to the protocol on Control of Horses.
* Engagement is also continuing with the Gardai on Smithfield.
* DAFM said that the Equine ID legislation is in the process of implementation. DAFM hope to launch a publicity campaign in the near future.
* Sean O’Laoide reported that while sales of thoroughbred horses are up and breeding is down. It is hoped that this trend can continue.
1. **AOB**

Ex-Gratia Funding

* DAFM said that is was in the process of finalising Ex-Gratia funding for Animal Welfare organisations for 2012. A new Animal Welfare Code of Practice is been drafted for organisations in receipt of these funds which, it is hoped, will lead to improved standards of animal welfare.

Fur Farming

* DAFM said that the Minister had recently set up a Fur Farming Review Group. The purpose of this group was to examine all issues relating to Fur Farming and the industry as a whole and to make recommendations to the Minister. Submissions to the group must be made by the 31st of January 2011. The report of the group will be published in 2012.

Website

* The Secretary said that the new FAWAC Website has now gone online.

Codes of Practice

* The IFA once again raised concerns regarding any proposals to include FAWAC Codes of Practice in legislation. The Chairman re-affirmed the previous position of Council. FAWAC Codes are to be used as guides to best practice. Any use of these Codes in legislation would have to be signed off by the Council.

Acutely Injured Animals on Farm

* The IFA said that it is clear from talking to their members that this process is still not working satisfactorily. The model implemented in Mayo should be brought to other counties. The IFA also requested that FAWAC convene a meeting between IFA, DAFM, MII and LAs to deal with this issue. The Chairman agreed to this.
* Vet Ireland made the point that while domestic abattoirs can provide part of the solution to this issue, they often cannot deal with bigger animals particularly bull beef. Vet Ireland also said that while they will help in seeking a solution to this issue, it needs to be driven by the IFA.

Slaughter Without Stunning

* CIWF raised the issue of Slaughter Without Stunning. DAFM said that this issue will be examined in the context of transposing the upcoming legislation on Protection of Animals at Time of Killing.

Animal Health and Welfare Bill

* Drafting of the Bill is in an advanced stage and the Minister has indicated that he would like to publish the Bill before Christmas.
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