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

**Location:** Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise

Date: 13th June 2012

Present: Chairperson Professor P Fottrell, N O’Nuallain (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), C Connor (DARDNI), Kevin Kinsella (IFA),

Apologies: S Foley (CILDEHS), N Byers (ICMSA), M Doran (IFA)

Secretary: Alan P O’Brien

## Presentation from Catherine Devitt (UCD) regarding on-farm welfare incidents

* The Council thanked Ms Devitt for her presentation. Members commented on the need to address social and societal issues particularly relating to rural isolation.
* The IFA drew attention to the fact that this study involved 30 veterinarians and only 13 farmers. UCD pointed out that 82 farmers had been invited to participate but only 13 agreed.

1. **Video from CIWF on animal welfare problems at slaughter in Third Countries**

* The Council agreed to make a recommendation to DAFM to support the OIE guidelines.
* Vet Ireland warned that there is a lack of leverage for the OIE in many of these situations as they relate to local markets and internal trading.

1. **Minutes of last Meeting**

* The Minutes of the previous meeting 2nd April 2012 were adopted with changes.

1. **Matters Arising**

* DAFM reported that the Fur Farming Review Group has submitted its report to the Minister.

1. **Education Working Group**

* Sean O’Laoide said that the Working Group would convene a meeting in the near future to progress its work on the Code of Practice for Equine Marts, Markets and Fairs.
* UCD said that the Norwegian Welfare literature for children is excellent. The Chairman advised that it be sent on to Agri-Aware for info.

1. **EWS**

* An EWS Steering Group Meeting will be organised in advance of the next Council Meeting.
* Vet Ireland raised the issue of predators taking advantage of elderly farmers, particularly due to the high price of cattle.

DAFM said co-operation continues to be positive between all parties with DAFM continuing to monitor ‘at-risk herds’. DAFM reported that it has received a small number of calls to its dedicated e-mail address and helpline reporting suspicions of unacceptable animal husbandry practices.

1. **Equine Welfare**

* DAFM said that there has been a lot of progress in this area with number of cases of abandoned equines down and the Protocol on ‘Control of Horse’s Act’ agreed between Local Authorities and the Department circulated to all Local Authorities.
* ISPCA complimented the Department in the work carried out but said that there are still problems with Sulky Racing on roads and on issues of non-castrated colts and on transport of horses within the country.
* UCD said that the Irish Equine Centre has published its demographic survey of unwanted horses in Ireland 2005–2010 and one it the issues identified was the need for accurate welfare data. DAFM reported that it is actively engaged in progressing equine identification and equine premises registration.
* **AOB**
* Transposition of Regulation 1099/2009 on the Protection of Animals at time of Killing – Slaughter Without Stunning

DAFM said that it is progressing the transposition into national law of the Regulation. CIWF asked that it be included in any FAWAC meetings with Meat Industry Ireland on this issue. Vet Ireland said that MII could be consulted on this issue. DARD said that it has a consultation process in place. The Chairman agreed that this could represent an opportunity for Ireland to advance this issue.

* Acutely Injured Animals

The proposal for an ‘animal ambulance’ for transporting injured animals is being explored with UCD, Vet Ireland and DAFM. A further meeting to advance the initiative will be organised. All agree that the welfare of the animal is paramount.

* Welfare Economics

Regarding the proposal to consult an expert to speak with the Council on the economic aspect of Animal Welfare, the IFA spoke with some people on this issue. However it is a difficult area to deal with as there is little data available. UCD said that a MVM student is currently examining the issue of financial losses due to condemnation of animals.

* Slaughter Without Stunning

CIWF asked for a copy of the DAFM SOP on Slaughter Without Stunning. DAFM said that these manuals are drawn up for operational reasons and are subject to external audit by the relevant authorities.

* Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare

The Chairman asked that this be examined before the next meeting.

* Codes of Practice

The IFA reiterated its opposition to the adoption of Codes of Practice in legislation. The IFA has serious concerns about the Animal Health and Welfare Bill which, in its view, attempts to deal with all animal owners collectively and legislation for owners of animals kept as pet and for other non-farming purposes may not be appropriate for owners of farmed animals.

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