
Minutes: AWERB summary minutes: Standing Agenda items meeting

Status: Final

Meeting held: Tuesday 5 July 2022 at 2pm via MS Teams

Present:

15 plus 1 in attendance and 10 apologies.

1 MINUTES

Subject to a minor change, the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June were confirmed as an accurate record.

2 MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Item 4.1: Reviewing of research policies (21 June 2022 meeting)

There was now an excel spreadsheet on sharepoint for AWERB members to indicate which policies they were interested in reviewing.

2.2 Item 8.1: "Applying for a PIL" SOP (8 June 2022 meeting)

A separate SOP on training records had now been written which due to be issued shortly. This would replace the training records section within "Applying for a PIL" SOP.

2.3 Item 1.1: Providing standard wording for housing, husbandry and health status for zebrafish (8 June 2022 meeting)

The draft standard wording in relation to housing, husbandry and health status for zebra fish had been circulated to AWERB to review. If no comments were received by the next meeting (19th July) then it would be assumed that this wording had been approved.

2.4 Item 2.2: BSU virtual tour storyboard (8 June 2022 meeting)

A paper was being written for senior management setting out the benefits of providing a virtual tour and having it in the public domain.

2.5 Item 2.3: Goats at Camden (08 June 2022 meeting)

It had now been confirmed that goats would not be used at Camden for teaching purposes. The facilities had still been checked and confirmation received that it would not need much work to make the facilities suitable for goats if there was a change to that decision. The teaching ponies were being rehomed/returned to their original owners.

2.6 Item 2.4: Communicating the role of AWERB to PhD students (8 June 2022 meeting)

The various versions of the presentation had now been amalgamated into one. It was also noted that an introductory talk on A(SP)A and AWERB had been given to the residents

2.7 Item 5.5: AWERB Budget (08 March 2022 meeting)

A check was being done with Finance about whether a training budget had been allocated to the Ethics Sub Committees.

3 REVIEWING OF RESEARCH POLICIES

It was confirmed that any suggested changes to the research policies should be e-mailed to the AWERB Chair and Secretary.

4 3RS UPDATE

4.1 3Rs symposium

This was taking place at Camden on 6 July. There were approximately 30 people signed up from Camden with a handful also attending from Hawkshead. A Teams link had also just been set up which would be circulated to AWERB in case they were able to dip in and out of the event. As well as the presentations there was also a poster session at Camden which hopefully would encourage networking and discussions between different groups. Feedback would be requested from the attendees and a summary report provided to AWERB on how it had gone.

4.2 BBSRC/NC3Rs joint call: development of next generation non-animal technologies: closing date 8 September 2022

A total of £4m was available through a new collaboration between the BBSRC and NC3Rs which was focused on supporting alternative to *in vivo* models in bioscience research. The overall aim of this call was to support proposals that: 1) develop the next generation of non-animal technologies that mimic the physiological environment enabling a whole system/multi-system approach for discovery and translational science; 2) enhance the capacity and confidence in non-animal technologies; 3) establish partnerships between academia, the SME sector and industry.

4.3 Engaging early career researchers in the 3Rs

A suggestion would be made at the 3Rs symposium whether there was interest in setting up a 3Rs discussion group at the RVC. There were similar groups already set up elsewhere that this could be modelled on.

5 NVS REPORT

5.1 Hawkshead

5.1.1 Horses

- a horse had developed very mild clinical signs of lameness, which could be an indicator of laminitis. The horse had been withdrawn from the study and was now fine.
- Another horse on a different study had also been withdrawn following bleeding in her uterus. A condition 18 report had been submitted as the required treatment for the horse was not listed on the project licence.
- there was another pony on the same study whose behaviour had steadily worsened during the study. The pony was not very amenable to anyone going near her tail or backend. The pony did have a small lesion on her vulva which they had intended to examine the day before but even with 4 equine vets present, it had proved too dangerous to do so. This horse had therefore been removed from the study and the owner informed. The horse would undergo some behaviour therapy before being returned to the owner. The same pony also had sore feet associated with early laminitis. The feet had improved though once it had been removed from grass and a diet change implemented.

5.1.2 Sheep

An update was given on a sheep that had been intended to be used on a study and so had been bought into the barn. It had subsequently got its foot stuck in a hay feeder and twisted around. Following a review, the position of the hay feeders on the pens have been changed so that the sheep were now fed on the ground or in big ring feeders. AWERB noted that hay feeders being used were standard feeders that were used on farms throughout the UK.

5.1.3 Dog Unit

- there had been a diarrhoea outbreak in a group of puppies which had progressed clinically over the following 24 to 48 hours with some bloating and vomiting. Tests had revealed a high presence of coccidia parasites, Giardia and also overgrowth of campylobacter. Coccidia and Giardia had been found in the unit previously. The assumption was that the older dogs were sub clinically carrying coccidia and this could show in young animals when they were stressed. It wasn't typically seen in individual pet dogs but could be seen in large kennels. The campylobacter was a bacteria which was normally found in dogs GI tracts. The dogs have been treated with supported and targeted treatment of the parasites. The dogs were recovering however they were still experiencing symptoms of bloating and diarrhoea but this was to be expected as the intestinal lining needed to recover which would take time.
- Separately, two days later, over the weekend, a group of GM puppies in the isolation area had also developed diarrhoea. As it had not been possible to get the puppies tested over the weekend, these puppies had been treated in the same way as if they had also got the parasites and were now much improved. Subsequent tests had come back negative.
- The environmental cleaning was being looked at. Routine disinfectants would not kill coccidia, however there were various methods that should work which were being employed. The dogs in the group were a mixture of study dogs and dogs that were due to be rehomed and dogs that were due to be spayed and vaccinated. Vaccination, spaying and rehoming had been put on hold for now. The dogs in the study were well enough to continue on the study but needed to remain in isolation.
- A bitch that had whelped 10 weeks previously had developed bilateral perianal lesions associated with anal sacs fistulae. She had a similar problem about a year ago but that had been a lot less severe and had been on one side only and had responded to treatment. The dog was being treated and was due to be evaluated the following day.

5.2 Camden

- **Fighting mice** There had been an issue of fighting male mice. It was thought that this was due to the age of the animals. This line of mice had not been kept this long previously and was not a familiar model. All the fighting older males were now singly housed to prevent fighting. A query was raised about how long was left on the study as it was not ideal to move the mice to single housing part way through a study though it was recognized why it had to be done. It was thought that there was a month left but a check would be done.
- **Ferret ear infection:** A ferret with an ear infection had been treated systemically with 2 different antibiotics. It had initially seemed to respond to the course of second antibiotics, but the ear had been re-infected one week later. On 10th of June topical treatment was started and the treatment finished a few days ago. The topical treatment efficacy would be assessed on Friday. Initial indications though was that it looked good. The ear infection was possibly related to the head implant. If there was no response to the topical treatment, other options would be considered.
- **Refinement of bone loading procedure:** the lab had bought a heat pad and would start using it in their next experiments.
- **Mice export to supplier:** this needed to be arranged. RVC was registered with EHC online as an exporter, but it was not known who the account owner was. This information needed to be found out so that an application for the EHC could be submitted.

6 NACWO REPORT

6.1 Camden

- **BMS system:** this was still proving problematic. Accessing the system inhouse was proving difficult as it was currently set up on an Internet Explorer browser. IT have been asked if it could be moved onto Google Chrome as Internet Explorer was rarely supported these days.
- **BMS system:** estate jobs have been logged as several rooms have been affected with high humidity over weekends. During the week the technicians were monitoring the air handling units that were servicing the caging and the animal racking rather than being able to use the values that were appearing on the system.

6.2 Hawkshead

- **Temperature and humidity:** problems were also being experienced in Hawkshead, in that the temperature and humidity had been all over the place during the past couple of days. Maintenance were aware of the problems. Fortunately, there had been no animals in the affected room when the temperatures had been out of range.
- **Chickens:** the autoclaves were working again.
- **Chicken studies:** The majority of the chicken studies had now finished.

7 NTCO REPORT

7.1 Camden Schedule 1 Register

- This register listed Camden's active schedule 1 users.
- This had recently been reviewed and previous users that have recently left the establishment have been moved to the archive section.
- **Fish facility:** there had been an issue previously in being kept updated about fish users, in terms of who they were and whether they have been inducted, as the fish facility was in a separate building. This situation should improve though with the transfer of the fish facility into the main BSU building. An updated list of fish users that were able to schedule 1 had been requested.

7.1.1 Schedule 1 reviews and reassessments

- There were several schedule 1 reviews and reassessments required as they had not been carried out for a while as there had been no requirement to do so.
- At Hawkshead, experience of schedule 1 of chickens, sheep and pigs was quite easy to obtain through the work that was carried out. However, it was a similar difficult experience with other animals such as dogs and horses as generally only emergency euthanasias' were carried out.
- A query was raised whether training or experience be gained through the hospitals? It was explained that because of Covid and also the nursing and intern training that they have to accommodate, it was proving difficult to add the technicians to the list too.
- Several alternative suggestions of areas to approach for training were suggested, such as for putting in catheters.

8 PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that there had been:

- one secondary project licence granted by the Home Office since the previous meeting.
- Five amendments approved by the Home Office

9 END OF PPL REVIEW

AWERB reviewed the end of PPL review that had been submitted. There had not been much to report as the project had stopped early as the preliminary results indicated mainly negative results. The reasons for stopping the project seemed straight forward.

10 STUDY REQUESTS

The study and tissue requests that had been approved since the previous AWERB meeting were noted.

11 AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

AWERB reviewed the “Delivery” section of the Terms of Reference and confirmed that no changes were required.

12 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted that 3 condition 18 reports had been submitted in the past 2 months. They were all classed as unexplained deaths and no further action had been requested by the Home Office.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was scheduled for 19th July and would be a PPL review meeting. [NB: meeting subsequently postponed to August].