
Summary Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 14 July at 2pm via MS Teams

Present:

Attendees: 7, plus 1 in attendance and 10 apologies.

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2 MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Item 2: Change of project licence holder for Hospital project licence (29 June 2021 meeting)

Discussions have been held about who should take this on, but a final decision had not yet been made.

2.2 Item 4.7: Anatomy pony (29 June 2021 meeting)

The pony was being monitored now that she was back in Hawkshead. She seemed very happy and there was no reason for her not to return to teaching in Camden in the autumn.

2.3 Item 3.2: Rat playpens for improved welfare (9 June 2021 meeting)

The date for the formal sit down with the team was in the process of being arranged to discuss the potential options with regards to playpens that could be used for the teaching animals.

2.4 Item 5: ARRIVE compliance report: (9 June 2021 meeting)

A meeting had been held where it was decided that further information was needed to try and identify why insufficient detail had been provided within the papers. A one-page survey had been drafted to send to the academics whose papers had been reviewed to get an idea whether there had been any specific barriers that had prevented them from following the ARRIVE guidelines. This survey would be circulated before the end of July and then based on the responses; a decision made on the best way to take forward.

2.5 Item 6: RSPCA Questions for PPL Holders (09 June 2021 meeting)

No comments or requests for changes to the questions had been received. This document would therefore be sent as is to PPL holders that attended future AWERB meetings, to ask them for their feedback on how they had found the experience of attending.

2.6 Item 1: Discussion on DMD dogs (11 May 2021)

These monthly meetings were continuing and seemed to be going well and were helping with communication.

2.7 Item 4.6: Enrichment for the dogs (7 July 2020 meeting)

Enrichment ideas that had been suggested included climbing objects such as plastic climbing frames. Options were being investigated.

2.8 Item 9: Companion Animals query (4 June 2019)

A solution had been found to avoid having lone pigs. Two small companion pigs (10kgs) were bought in to act as companions to the study pigs, so that no study pig would be on its own. Once the companion pigs got to study weight they were transferred to the study and two new companion pigs bought in to replace them. This seemed to be working well.

3 ITEM 4: HOME OFFICE

3.1 Update on ASRU Change Programme

The new operating model to deliver regulatory services had been implemented. The main change was that there was now no dedicated Home Office Inspector or Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) allocated to individual establishments. Instead ASRU was providing regulatory delivery through three teams covering the following areas:

- Regulatory Advice Team
- Compliance Assurance Team
- Licensing Team

Initial contact was through a dedicated mailbox for each Team.

First impressions were that the system seemed to be working well (despite an initial hiccup when the Licensing Team's mailbox had not been receiving e-mails, but that had now been resolved). Two C18 forms had been submitted, both of which had been responded to quickly.

3.2 To note the Government's approach to animal welfare and the animal sentience bill

AWERB noted that the UK Government had launched the first ever action plan to improve the welfare and conversation of animals at home and abroad. They were planning on introducing a series of Bills that would focus on animal sentience, kept animals in the UK and the welfare of animals. There would also be a series of non-legislative changes to promote animal welfare over the coming months. Concern was raised that the animal sentience bill was ill constructed and it was unclear what the Animal Sentience Committee would do. AWERB were advised that the Chair of the Animal Science Group (ASG - a Special Interest Group of the Royal Society of Biology), had submitted a response to the consultation, setting out their concerns about the Animals Sentience Committee and whether it would be sufficiently independent, have the necessary expertise and how members would be appointed.

4 3RS

4.1 NC3Rs Skills and Knowledge Transfer Award

AWERB were pleased to hear about an NC3Rs Skills and Knowledge Transfer award that had been awarded to the RVC. These awards were a critical part of the NC3Rs' commitment to tackling the lag in uptake of 3Rs methods, by enabling exchange of models, tools and technologies between research groups.

5 AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

AWERB were reminded that they had agreed that at each of these meetings they would review several items from the Terms of Reference to provide opportunity to refresh themselves of their responsibilities to make sure that they were being met or consider whether changes were needed

The consensus was that AWERB were fulfilling their requirements for the terms of reference that were reviewed and that they had a good oversight of the work that was going on.

6 TRAINING LICENCES REVIEW

AWERB reviewed two training licence records: one record was for a relatively new personal licence holder and one was for an experienced licence holder. AWERB were very impressed with the level of detail that was provided.

Having paper training records was a challenge in keeping them up to date and collecting the relevant signatures. Ideally an electronic system was needed, but this needed research to find a suitable one.

7 NACWO REPORT - CAMDEN

- Ferrets: they were still having issues with monitoring the ferrets for signs of ECE complications as they had unusually coloured faeces. The ferrets were being closely monitored with preventative steps taken as well as keeping in close contact with the NVS.
- Rodents: as some of the licensees were unable to get on site due to having to self-isolate, the technicians were being very supportive and helping with their studies where they could, such as with tissue collection.
- Handling rabbits: these were being monitored as some of them were behaving unusually but it was not known why. They have had vaccinations for myxomatosis.
- Humidity: temperatures was maintaining well. Jobs were being raised if errors were spotted.

8 NVS REPORT

- Anaesthetic death: there had been a death of a ferret during induction. The protocol had been reviewed but no issues had been identified and the process had been carried out appropriately. The post-mortem had not identified anything, so it was possibly an underlying cardiac issue that the ferret had. This was the first ferret death for this group during anaesthesia whilst at the RVC. The situation would be monitored for upcoming ferrets.
- Condition 18 report: A mouse had been discovered dead out of hours. The clinical signs reported did not match up with the actions that had been taken prior to the animals having been found dead. A meeting had been arranged about when it was appropriate to contact the NACWO and NVS and a clinical signs workshop would be arranged so everyone was aware of what they were looking out for.
- Cage Labelling: issues of cage labelling had been raised with one of the external groups. This would be monitored to ensure that animals were well identified with details of what had happened to them as required under A(SP)A.
- Discussions had been held with anatomy in Camden about the flooring in the stables. There was also concern that some of the anatomy ponies were getting on a bit so really needed to be replaced as issues were being seen from a veterinary point of view. However, there was currently a shortage of appropriate replacement horses and ponies.
- New anatomy horse: Hawkshead: the new anatomy horse would be transferring to Hawkshead late July. Compared to other teaching horses, he was a reasonably large horse with a presence about him, that might be challenging to some. He had been visited in a muddy field, where there had been other horses running around, and he had been happy to be examined. He would be tested with different scenarios whilst at Hawkshead to see how he handled them (such as being with cows and people) before being moved to Camden a week before the student teaching was due to start.
- Squeezing of zebrafish: The NACWOs were having discussions with the zebrafish users about using squeezing to alleviate problems with egg bound fish. There was a debate about whether this was a painful process and if it achieved its purpose. The NACWOs and the technicians were discussing whether this should actually be a process that they were trained in. The NVS advised that this was generally a short term fix in certain situations rather than a long term management

plan. A meeting had been arranged with the zebrafish users to discuss further. The NACWOs were keen that less invasive methods should be used to tackle the problem that were less painful and stressful to the fish and that steps were taken to identify at an earlier point those fish that were not breeding so well in order to monitor them on their embryo production and fish performance. AWERB suggested seeking external opinion on this, such as from experts on fish pain, who might be able to provide advice.

9 NEW PROJECT LICENCE GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that one project licence had been granted by the Home Office since the previous standard agenda items meeting in June.

10 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

10.1 Guidance document for Condition 18 reports

At a recent BSU Users meeting a query had been raised whether it was possible to have a guidance document of what to include in a condition 18 report, that identified common stumbling blocks and what information needed to be included. A document was therefore being put together.

10.2 Condition 18 reports

Three condition 18 reports had been submitted to the Home Office. These reports set out the investigations that had taken place and the mitigating steps that had been put in place to improve aspects of the procedures.

11 END OF PROJECT LICENCE REPORTS: NOT RECEIVED

It was noted that two end of project licence reports that had been due to be submitted in 2020 had still not been received. Final reminders would be sent and if still not received then the Establishment Licence Holder would be asked to write.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was scheduled for Tuesday 27th July at 2pm.

Secretary
19 July 2021