
Minutes: **AWERB held on 26 January 2016 at 10am in Hawkshead Council room
videolinked to Camden Council Room**

Status: **Chair approved**

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2 PRESENTATION FROM PPL HOLDER

A presentation was received from a project licence holder who was doing work at the College.

The aim was to demonstrate that they had a viable model of infection in which to demonstrate activity of a sustained release product. Before any product could be used in the clinic, it had to be demonstrated that the sustained-release product is able to treat an infection (and /or prevent establishment of infection) as this was how the product would be used in the clinic.

These studies were still very much considered to be in the pilot study phase of the model development and as such only a small number of animals were being used. Once the model design had been finalised they would look to run larger studies to produce statistically significant data (informed by power calculations from these pilot studies).

AWERB noted that this project involved developmental work. AWERB decided that in future those projects that involved model development should be monitored more frequently than just having a midterm project licence review, so that they could assess how the project was going and whether it was moving in the right direction.

3 MUSCLE-ACTUATED LOCOMOTOR TASKS

A report was received detailing the fundamental limits on muscle-actuated locomotor tasks and the challenges of powering intermittent weight support. The report gave details of experimental procedure and how animal welfare had been monitored.

4 EFFICIENT BREEDING OF GENETICALLY ALTERED ANIMALS

There had been a meeting to discuss the efficient breeding of genetically altered animals and to see how the College's current practices matched with what was advised by the Home Office as best practice.

The main discussion points were:

- Archiving/re-derivation of rodent lines: the following were being looked into: pricing for obtaining in-house freezing down procedures; the possibility of having mouse passports which would be used to track animal movements and provide background information of strains and husbandry information.
- Providing a list of expected characteristics/phenotype descriptions of each strain: a one page document for each strain outlining the important things to observe and to expect from each strain to be put together; the NVS to be supplied with strain characters for new strains.
- Database: A database to be set up for everyone to be able to source spare animals/tissues.

- Financial arrangements encouraging efficiency and disincentives of poor GA breeding practices, whilst supporting good science: weaning charges to reviewed
- ARMIS: training sessions on ARMIS to be offered so that researchers were more aware of the benefits of using this system.
- Potential Scientist talks: regular talks by individual labs would be beneficial. AWERB suggested that these talks could be given by the postdocs and PhD students involved in the labs.
- CPD targets: technicians and users to be encouraged to consider attending training courses such as the ones offered by NC3Rs.

The Committee were very supportive of the proposal that technicians and users be encouraged to have CPD targets and asked that the Group come forward with suggestions for CPD training that could be organised.

5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON GOOD PRACTICE FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODIES

At the November AWERB meeting it had been agreed that the RSPCA/LASA handbook on “guiding principles on good practice for animal welfare and ethical review bodies” should be reviewed to see how the College matched up with the suggestions made by the document and whether any changes were needed. The handbook had therefore been divided into sections with members of AWERB tasked to review their sections and report back.

It was agreed that AWERB needed to be more proactive on the “Advise on the application of the 3Rs and keep the AWERB informed of relevant technical and scientific developments” point. It was important to remind PPL Holders that this was something they should be regularly doing as experts in their fields and communicating this to both AWERB and others.

6 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AWERB AND MEMBERSHIP

AWERB reviewed the current terms of reference for AWERB. It was agreed that the second item should be amended to include DEFRA legislation as the College also had to follow their legislation, in particular transferring animals between campuses.

When AWERB had originally been set up, the focus had been on ensuring that there was a good representation from the animal units in terms of NACWOs and NVS; plus representatives from the Animal Welfare group and an external lay panel member. Apart from the Establishment Licence Holder, AWERB did not have any representation from the scientific researchers though. It was agreed that rather than extend the membership to a lot of scientists, a group of scientists would be identified who would be willing to attend meetings as and when required when their specific expertise would be helpful in reviewing project licences and contributing to discussions.

7 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

7.1 Sharing of resources group meeting

This group had held their first meeting. Everyone who had attended had been keen to get involved and help organise avenues for resource sharing. The group felt that the most effective way to do this would be to come up with a secure database that could be used to share tissues etc.

7.2 Rehoming of animals working group

Discussions about involving more staff and students in the dog socialisation programme were being held.

7.3 Rodent Handling Group

The first meeting would be scheduled shortly.

8 BSU USERS MEETINGS

There had been two meetings held during December. The main discussion points were:

- Study request forms: each study now needed a study request form.
- AWERB Working Groups: request for volunteers to get involved in these groups
- Press coverage of work with Muscular Dystrophy dogs had been discussed
- Case studies for the intranet: more case studies needed
- Bridging licences: Home Office Inspector had indicated bridging licences would not be issued. If applying for a replacement project licence, this needed to be done in plenty of time, to make sure that the old one did not expire before the new one was in place.
- If applying for a new project licence, or a major amendment to a project licence, this needed to be discussed with an NVS first before it would be submitted to AWERB.
- Training records: important to ensure they were up to date. The Home Office Inspector was looking at these as part of her regular inspections

9 NVS REPORTS

AWERB noted the Camden and Hawkshead NVS reports.

10 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

Condition 18 reports were submitted to the Home Office when a procedure exceeded severity or there was an unexpected death. AWERB noted that 3 reports had been submitted.

11 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that one new project licence had been granted.

12 AMENDED PROJECT LICENCES APPROVED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that one project licence had been amended.

13 PPL END OF PROJECT LICENCE REPORT FOR AWERB

AWERB noted the end of project licence report.

14 HUMIDITY REPORTS

AWERB noted the humidity reports for both Camden and Hawkshead.

15 ANIMAL AID PRESS RELEASE AND OUR RESPONSE

AWERB noted that Animal Aid had issued a press release in relation to the research that the College was doing on muscular dystrophy dogs. The RVC had provided a response on the College's website advising that the press release from Animal Aid was misleading. Being a veterinary school, the College was the right place to do this type of research, as the dogs have access to expert care and treatments that would not be as readily available in many other research facilities.