
Minutes: AWERB minutes: PPL meeting

Status: Final

Meeting held: Tuesday 3rd May 2022 at 2pm via MS Teams

Present:

13 plus 1 in attendance and 11 apologies

1 3RS UPDATE

1.1 Training sessions for the robust and reliable reporting workshops:

Three sessions were held, with about 70% of the project licence holders attending (plus members of their groups), so most of the people that the training had been aimed at, had attended.

The aim of the sessions had been to address under-reported areas in accordance with the ARRIVE guidelines, in order to improve the robustness and reliability of animal research reporting output from the RVC. Formal feedback had not been requested but anecdotal feedback had been obtained.

The videos that were produced for this training were available for internal users. Discussions were also underway about making the videos available to early career researchers. The videos were nice and short and very tailored.

As part of the workshop, standard wording for housing, husbandry and health status for rodents had been developed. There had been requests received to expand this to cover different species, in particular zebrafish.

There had also been discussions about when to repeat the audit of papers to see if reporting had improved following the training. It had been agreed that this should be done late 2023 in order to give time for new papers to be written and published.

1.2 New NC3Rs online resource on mouse aggression

This resource provided recommendations on different approaches that could be taken to minimise laboratory mouse aggression. This guidance was based upon the findings of the NC3Rs data crowdsourcing project on this topic, in combination with other published literature:

www.nc3rs.org.uk/mouse-aggression

1.3 New NC3Rs funded e learning modules on pain assessment and alleviation:

Two new e-learning modules fulfilling training requirements under Directive 2010/63/EU had been developed by Research Animal Training with the support of the NC3Rs. Module EU21.7 provided detailed practical information on choosing and using analgesics, including issues that might be encountered when managing pain following surgery. Module EU21.8 focused on how to assess post-operative pain, including opportunities to assess and score pain levels and receive feedback on performance. See: [NC3Rs Supported Resources](#)

1.4 Webinar – Food restriction in rodent studies – is it necessary and how could it affect your data and animal welfare?

This webinar was taking place on 4th May. Details would be circulated in case of interest. The webinar would be recorded so should be available after the event.

1.5 Rodent surgery symposium – 12 June 2022, Marseille France

This one-day symposium would offer practical guidance from international experts on solutions for state-of-the-art rodent surgery.

1.6 Breeding and Colony Management Discussion Group update

AWERB were reminded that they had instigated a workshop that took place in April 2021 to review breeding and colony and management practices at the RVC. A productive discussion had been held promoting general awareness of best practice and suggestions of what could be implemented. Several actions had come out of that meeting including:

- investigating actual costs for archiving strains and potential costs for backcrossing a strain so that information was readily available for when required;
- establishing a working group within BSU to decide on a strategy to try and implement these intermittent breeding practices as standard for colonies that were not being used to generate experimental animals.

Since that meeting there had been the following progress:

- There was continuing management of the wastage in terms of excessive animals from BSU perspective by ensuring there was no constant mating (however that had not really been a common practice within the BSU in the first place);
- there had been cryopreservation on one line but that had not been an optimised process, so there was room for improvement in this area. Potentially AWERB might want to consider having a policy around this area to ensure that if cryopreservation was needed, this requirement was picked up earlier.

Remaining areas to pick up on included:

- extending these good practices to ensure all users reviewed their colonies for potential wastage? Was there any information that we could provide to help review colonies? It had been flagged that there were new lines coming in that might be good candidates for looking at these intermittent breeding practices, as they would not be high volume, but would be colonies kept in house.
- Researchers should be provided with guidance to consider what they would do if the funding they had for their work ran out and what work should be prioritised. Some of this could be tackled internally with costing and funding guidance being provided to researchers before they applied for funding. There were significant ethical issues about going ahead with research when there was insufficient funding or reasonable mitigation for further down the line.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th April had only been circulated that day for comment so would be put on the agenda for the 24th May meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Item 6.2: Tissue sharing requests (08 March 2022 meeting)

Confirmation of ethical approval for studies was now requested for any tissue sharing requests that were received.

3.2 Item 6.3: BSU Virtual Tour storyboard (26 April 2022 meeting)

The meeting had not yet been arranged.

3.3 Item 6.4: Goats at Camden (26 April 2022 meeting)

A reminder would be sent to see if any decision had been made.

4 RESEARCH POLICIES

It was reported that under the Terms of Reference for the Ethics and Welfare Committee, they had responsibility for maintaining an oversight of the relevant research policies of the College. A list of these policies had therefore been requested along with recommendations of how they should be reviewed and by whom. This had resulted in a paper that had some actions for AWERB. These would be circulated to AWERB so there was a formal record of them.

5 NVS REPORTS

5.1 Hawkshead

- Dog unit: Two of the bitches had lost male puppies either immediately after birth or within 24 hours due to respiratory issues. Pathology post mortems were being conducted and condition 18 reports submitted. This was an ongoing topic of investigation with the NVS and the project licence holder.
- Horse studies: two different horse studies were happening. In one of the studies, two of the horses had experienced some minor skin issues but these were being dealt with in liaison with the dermatologists.
- Chickens: Following a condition 18 report that had been submitted in spring, husbandry protocols had been reviewed and no further problems had been experienced with the new batch of chicks taking part in the current studies.

5.2 Camden

Most of the input at Camden from the NVS team was in relation to training and assessment of competency. There had been some issues with aseptic techniques so aseptic training was being provided.

The NVS Team were also now teaching on the PIL course.

6 NACWO REPORTS

6.1 Camden

- Aseptic technique improvements: there had been some wounds on surgical rats that had required further investigation in relation to asepsis and wound care. The wounds were being dealt with by the NACWOs and seemed to be healing. The group had been receptive to improvements and there had been good open communication lines.
- Tumour models: it had been noted that for one of the clients' tumour models, the tumours were growing and ulcerating quite rapidly. This would be raised with the NVS team to see how to combat this going forward. The NACWOs and the technicians were liaising with the clients who were being very proactive in dealing with the animals quickly.

- Calves: It was reported that following a head butting incident between a calf and a technician who had required medical treatment, the calf had since hurt another experienced large animal handling technician. It had been decided not to return that calf to Camden. This had happened two days before they were due to go back to Camden. Due to the short notice, the farm only had three calves that could be used for teaching. These were very young calves though that were not at the stage where they were halter trained as it was possible to still manhandle them. The calves would be able to stay in the stable over the weekend at Camden, rather than having to go into the yard.
- BMS reports and humidity: this issue was still ongoing with the situation being monitored and reports being logged.

7 ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE AMENDMENT

AWERB noted that the Establishment Licence had been amended to remove an NVS and to add a NACWO.

8 NEW PROJECT LICENCE GRANTED

AWERB noted that one project licence had been approved by the Home Office on 04 April 2022.

9 STUDY REQUESTS

AWERB noted that a study request for collection of muscle cell populations from up to 6 broiler chickens, as well as one piglet and one calf (with the potential for another calf and piglet) had been approved.

10 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted that two standard condition 18 reports had been submitted to the Home Office.

For the first condition 18 report, a post-mortem had been carried out on a mouse that was found dead at about 5 weeks old and histological analysis of lung and kidney tissue undertaken. The Home Office had confirmed that they had closed this case and classed it as an unexplained death.

The 2nd condition 18 report related to the protocol where the mouse pups were given a carotid artery ligation and then kept in a hypoxic chamber for about 65 minutes. One of the pups had died during this process. It had been a replacement water bath but the use of this water bath had been stopped, and it would not be used again for any *in vivo* work done under this licence.

AWERB asked what lessons could be learnt from this incident to ensure that it did not happen again. Was any testing done when new equipment was purchased before animals were used in it? What discussions were held with the project licence holders to consider potential issues that might occur? It was confirmed that where possible it was recommended that a dry run be initially done using cadavers. During the pre-study meetings, techniques were discussed and if any were unique then DOPs and Standard Operating Procedures were requested, so that as much detail could be obtained in advance. Input would also be requested from the NVS team or other researchers. However in future, questions would also be asked about any new/replacement equipment, whether there were any variables or things that could have been done differently that needed to be considered.

11 AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Strategy and Planning element of terms of reference were reviewed. It was suggested that they were more operational elements and the section should be changed accordingly.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was scheduled for 24 May 2022 and would be a PPL review meeting. [Secretary note: meeting was subsequently cancelled].