
Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 13 June 2017 at 2pm in F82 Hawkshead videolinked to Camden Council Room

Attendees: 12 members present; 1 in attendance; 7 apologies sent

1 **RVC ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT WORKING GROUP**

The first meeting had been held on 1 June and a good mixture of technicians, animal welfare experts and PIs had attended. They had reviewed the proposed aims and objectives of the group and confirmed that their first task would be to do an audit of all the animals at the College. This would be led by the animal technicians as they had the most knowledge of the animals cared for, as well as having up to date records of which animals were kept at the College. A recording sheet was being designed so that all recordings would be standardised.

The intention was for the audit to start over the summer and for it to be finished by the end of 2017 so that the results could be evaluated in plenty of time for the next annual meeting with the Home Office Inspector.

The audit would focus on summarising the current state of enrichment, as well as seeing if there were any gaps.

The group were keen to get a webpage presence, which would initially be on the intranet, but could possibly then be transferred to the RVC internet pages where the focus would be on promoting good practice. Pages were in the process of being drafted which were focusing on what it was; general resources available and resources for specific species.

The group felt that a potential barrier was time to do the work. Support would be needed from line management to fit in the required work around existing workloads. The group were advised to prioritise any recommendations for changes for submission to AWERB so they could make recommendations to management to consider funding those with the greatest welfare impact.

AWERB discussed whether it would be beneficial to have some kind of prize or competition as a way of recognising improvements that have been made. It was agreed that it should not be a personal award, but maybe funding to go to a conference or spend on a project, so that way everyone could benefit from it. Any environmental enrichment changes would need to be evaluated to make sure that they were actually beneficial to the animals. The prize on offer could reflect that too.

The consensus was that the Working Group had got off to a very positive start.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2017 were agreed to be an accurate record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Tunnel Handling minutes

A meeting had been held on 19 May to discuss doing a two part experiment looking at both the timing and opportunity for health checks during each different procedure in how it relates to direct husbandry techniques; and also looking at the stress levels as influenced by the different types of handling. The intention was to use 2 methods; scooping handling and tunnel handling.

The intention was to acclimatise the mice so that they got used to each type of method and then to start the study on 3rd July. This acclimatisation was needed to allow for accurate representations of time taken for each method of handling, helping mitigate any novelty effects. Once the study had started, the technicians would time themselves during a routine cleaning out procedure and note down and health/welfare issues. After testing with one type of handling, the technicians would then switch to another experimental handling for the following week. The order which the methods would be tested would be balanced across technicians/racks in order to eliminate any potential bias.

The possibility of measuring salivary cortisol was suggested as that was a good way to measure stress levels. Enquiries would be made about whether this could be put forward as a potential student project.

3.2 Rodent Health Manual

Verbal comments had been received on this manual. The manual would be updated and formally adopted.

3.3 Theatre lights at Hawkshead

Quotes were being obtained to replace the ceiling lights within the theatre.

3.4 Follow up survey of owners who have rehoused dogs

The questionnaire had now been finalised and would be sent out to owners. It included questions on whether there were any areas of the socialisation that could be improved.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NAMES PERSONS

This report had been reviewed with comments being provided from an NTCO perspective of areas within the College that could be improved.

4.1 CPD

The NTCO should work with AWERB to develop and monitor an annual CPD strategy and opportunities for staff. A series of internal courses should also be set up for which CPD points could be earned. Having the College's own CPD process for people working with animals would be good to make sure that staff undertook a certain amount of professional development per year.

4.2 New personal licence holder applicants

The proposal that the NTCO should meet with new personal licence holder applicants before they submitted their licence was agreed, in order to go through the submission system.

5 PROJECT LICENCE REVIEW TEMPLATE

A draft project licence review template had been put together based on the template used by the Home Office in their Harm-Benefit analysis process advice note.

It was agreed that once these changes were made, this template should be provided to all project licence applicants as a guide for things that they should consider when writing their licence as these would be areas that the Home Office Inspector and AWERB would be looking at when assessing the application.

6 WORKING GROUPS

6.1 Efficient Breeding of Genetically Altered Animals working group

A verbal summary of figures for the tick over colonies was provided.

6.2 Sharing of resources group meeting

A meeting had been scheduled for 14 June.

7 ESTATES ISSUES

7.1 BSU Camden

As part of the redecoration, instead of having painted floors, lino had been requested as that would be better for the unit.

8 CONCORDAT ON OPENNESS SURVEY

The College would be submitting a response to the Concordat on Openness Survey.

9 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted the condition 18 reports that had been submitted to the Home Office since January 2017.

10 NVS REPORT

10.1 Camden

AWERB noted that all animals were in good health condition and the rooms were clean and tidy.

11 ASSESSORS LIST REVIEW

AWERB noted the current assessors list.

Secretary

15 June 2017