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**Minutes:** AWERB summary minutes

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**Status:** Chair approved

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**Meeting held:** 25 August 2020 at 2pm by MS Teams

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**Present**

Attendees: 9 plus 1 in attendance, 4 by invitation and 7 apologies.

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**1 PPL PRESENTATION: AMENDMENT TO PROJECT LICENCE**

The project licence holder was welcomed to the meeting. She was attending to discuss the following proposed amendments to her project licence.

**1.1 Addition of protocol:**

The project licence holder was seeking to add a new protocol to her licence to enable blood sampling to be done. The project that was to be carried out under this protocol, had originally been submitted for review under a clinical study, however although the reviewers had been content with the proposed study as the benefits were clear, they had recommended that it be carried out under A(SP)A as it involved residual blood being used from blood samples taken both at the beginning and the end of the clinical trials. It was their view that the second blood sample was only being taken for the benefit of the project and not for the benefit of the client owned animal.

The following queries were raised by AWERB:

- Could there be any potential adverse effects from adding the essential amino acid as a dietary supplement such as accidental overdosing? The Committee were reassured that there were no published side effects.
- The protocol included an additional 20 animals to allow for any blood sampling handling errors – this seemed very high though? It was explained that studies that were carried out under this project licence, were carried out on client owned animals that had been diagnosed with the disease. A call wasn't put out looking for these animals. The blood samples that were taken therefore had to be stored before being analysed in bulk. It wasn't the analysis that was the problem but the storage and transportation of these samples that could lead to sample loss. There was no harm to the animals if their sample was lost as they were residual samples and the animals were returned to their owners to be cared for. However, it was necessary to include the increased numbers to allow for this potential loss in samples.
- It was confirmed that the consent form made it clear to clients that the recheck visit was being carried out under A(SP)A and that a record of their details would be kept.

**1.2 Amendment to protocol name**

As this study also involved the collection of blood from horses, this had been added to the title to make that clear.

**1.3 Protocol 8 – change of title**

This had been changed so that it more accurately reflected the aim of the study.

**1.4 Project discussion summary**

The project licence holder was thanked for attending the meeting. After she had left, AWERB confirmed that they were happy with the proposed project licence amendments and the additional protocol. Taking extra blood samples was right on the threshold of being required to be done under A(SP)A and whilst the needle prick could cause some discomfort to the dogs, the discomfort was no more than a sharp scratch and very brief. The aims of this study outweighed the potential discomfort that the animals might briefly feel. AWERB therefore approved that this amendment should be submitted to the Home Office.

**2 REVIEW OF THE USE OF TEACHING ANIMALS AND HOW MUCH THEY WILL BE USED UNDER THE EXTRA-ORDINARY PRACTICAL TEACHING CONTINGENCIES SITE**

A lecturer was welcomed to the meeting. She had been invited to attend to set out the proposed arrangements for how the teaching animals would be used for the live animal practical classes during October to December 2020, whilst ensuring that social distancing was adhered to.

Classes had been adjusted so that there would be 2 students per animal at any one time (instead of the previous six students per pair of animals). Teaching would also only be carried out in the animals' outside yard space rather than in the Demonstration Theatre as well. Improvements to the outside space are currently in process of being negotiated/discussed, but not yet confirmed.

Further proposed changes that were being discussed/agreed included:

- The health and safety inductions would be carried out online rather than in person
- BVetMed 2 students would not be on site until January 2021.
- It had been arranged that there would be fewer large cohorts in terms of needing ISFs on site, so that would ease the pressure of cohorts competing for access to the animals.
- The Gateway students instead of having an animal handling course throughout term 1, would be involved in the animal stewardship programme.
- The teaching sessions would be for 45 minutes each, with a maximum of two in the morning and two in the afternoon.

The following queries were raised:

- Would the ponies still be rotated so that they spent 6 weeks at Camden and 6 weeks at Hawkshead? It was confirmed that this would be the case.
- Would the amount of student contact be less or more than before? It was confirmed that the amount would be slightly reduced.
- What steps would be taken to ensure that the outside area would remain clean and not allowing faeces to block the drains as the area was not really designed for animal use? The Committee were reassured that this was all planned for – they had previously used the outside space when building work had been carried out so they had been unable to access the indoor space. That had been invaluable experience for collating these plans.
- For the practical sessions, would the pairs of animals be separated? It was confirmed that as per their standard protocol, the animals would be kept together. The ponies would be tethered and there would be separation between them but not complete separation – just enough to allow for the social distancing between the students and the facilitators.
- There would be a new set of calves this year in Camden who were in the process of being halter trained. They would be moving over to Camden in mid-September and the ponies in October.

AWERB confirmed that they were content with the proposal that the teaching be provided outside, as the transmission of Covid-19 was thought to be lower outside and it was also better for animal welfare. They thought the proposals had been planned well, though of course it all depended on what happened in relation to the pandemic.

### **3 ACTION LOG**

#### **3.1 Item 1: Project licence application (18 August 2020)**

The Home Office Inspector's advice had been sought on whether the current project licence could simply be transferred from the existing establishment to the RVC or if a new licence should be written. Although the project licence had been granted in September 2019 (so was valid until 2024), it had been written in the old style format (before the changeover to new ASPeL and the new project licence format). The Home Office Inspector's view was that a new project licence should be written. The project licence new format meant that adverse effects were set out more clearly. This was an issue with the current project licence as well as endpoints not being clear and that needed to be revised. Using the new licence format should help rectify those problems.

#### **3.2 Item 2: Project licence – update from May meeting (16 June 2020)**

The first study with the higher concentration adenine diet had been run. The animals had progressed a lot quicker than previously published reports had indicated they would. The technicians had been closely monitoring the rats and so had caught them before they reached the humane endpoints. They were able to alert the project licence holder, so that they were able to get what they needed from the study. The intention had been to feed the diet for 3 weeks but only 1.5 weeks was managed before the weight loss got too severe. The NACWO would have a discussion with the project licence holder about what data she had managed to get and she would report back to AWERB accordingly.

#### **3.3 Item 8: 3Rs update (16 June 2020 meeting)**

The mini 3Rs bulletin had been circulated to PIL and PPL holders.

#### **3.4 Item 5.3: SOP and guidelines – teaching Animals (12 May 2020 meeting)**

This would be finalised before term started.

#### **3.5 Item 5.2: BSU Virtual Tour (12 May 2020 meeting)**

The External Relations Team were taking this forward. It would now be a video tour as opposed to a virtual tour, so a much simplified version of what had originally been planned. The team had been sent a "picture book" of what should be included.

#### **3.6 Item 5.4: ARRIVE guidelines (12 May 2020 meeting)**

Presentations would be held to launch the new ARRIVE guidelines, which were now available via a website ([www.ARRIVEguidelines.org](http://www.ARRIVEguidelines.org)), so making them a lot more accessible. The website also had fillable checklists that enabled researchers to indicate the specific sections of a manuscript that contained information relating to each item of the guidelines, so ensuring that they were adhering to the guidelines. It would be a continuous process to remind researchers that they needed to adhere to these guidelines.

#### **3.7 Item 5.5: checklist for reviewing project licences (12 May 2020 meeting)**

A template was being worked on which would be circulated.

### **4 REHOMING REPORT**

This was deferred to the following meeting. The technicians involved had been asked to provide a brief presentation on the topic.

## 5 PPL PRESENTATION – AMENDMENT TO PROJECT LICENCE

The project licence holder was welcomed to the meeting.

There were two main changes being requested:

- An addition of a new protocol to allow soft tissue interaction with materials.
- Amendments to protocols 2 and 6 to the steps and adverse reactions.

The following questions were raised:

- Was there a reason behind using subcutaneous buprenorphine specifically rather than oral to alleviate postoperative pain? Did sub cut provide a better degree of pain relief; or was there a difficulty in the oral consumption of the jelly? The project licence holder advised that they had used both methods previously. The jelly had been easy to use, but they had found that it took time for technicians to transfer the animal from one cage to another and to monitor the amount of jelly that was eaten to ensure that they got the appropriate dose of buprenorphine (which was easier to monitor through an injection). Overall though, the jelly was a less stressful route to use, so the project licence holder was happy to use this method if the technicians were. It was noted that it was not necessary to specify which option would be used, as either option was fine and would provide flexibility.
- Was buprenorphine adequate in terms of pain relief? The project licence holder confirmed that he had used it previously with no problems.
- For the antibiotic administration, why was this post-surgery rather than a pre-operative dose at the start of surgery? Was there a specific reason for that? It was explained that this was due to the project licence holder's experience with larger animals. They had always given 3 days post-operative cover. If however the recommendation was to adjust down to just one injection at operation then this could be done. It was noted that this was done as standard in general practice unless there were complications during the surgery.
- The proposed 3.5 days to monitor animals that were in pain to see if they improved was queried as it seemed a long period of time to let the animals suffer. Why did they have to be left that long? The project licence would be amended to clarify that the animals would be assessed for gradual improvement on a daily basis for up to 3.5 days and that if there was no improvement then they would be euthanised.
- The reaction to flurochrome bone labelling needed a humane end point. AWERB advised that the humane end point should be the signs to look out for that would necessitate the decision to euthanise an animal: for example signs of hypocalcemia. The signs needed to be set out in the project licence, so the technicians knew what they would need to look out for.
- A query was asked whether power calculations had been carried out for the new protocol. This needed to be done. All the other protocols had been aligned to power calculations.

The project licence holder was thanked for attending the meeting. He would be provided with a summary of the discussions so that he could finalise the project licence amendment.

After the project licence holder had left the meeting, AWERB discussed the project licence. They recognised that this new protocol was an important step to translate and take forward previous work so that it could be progressed into human patients. They were happy once the revisions had been made for the project licence amendment to be submitted.

## 6 NVS REPORT

- **Lame stud dog:** The dog has now had surgery to repair his ruptured cruciate ligament and was recovering well. He had been fostered out to a member of staff.

**7 NACWO REPORT – CAMDEN**

- **Mice study:** the first study had started the previous week but had not gone as anticipated with 5 out of the 35 animals having to be prematurely euthanised as they were approaching their humane end point. The animals had been closely monitored (up to 3 times a day) by a NACWO and the technicians. A post study investigation would be done and discussions held before moving forward on with their next proposed studies.

**8 RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT LICENCE THAT HAS NOW EXPIRED**

AWERB noted that for this project licence, a retrospective assessment to the Home Office was required, as it had involved the use of horses. The aim of the Retrospective Assessment was to determine whether the objectives have been achieved; the harms caused to animals; the number and species used; the severity of the procedures; and, whether lessons could be learnt to further the implementation of the 3Rs. AWERB would review the assessment and provide any comments within 2 weeks of the meeting.

**9 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE**

AWERB noted that two project licences had been granted since the July meeting.

**10 PROJECT LICENCES AMENDED BY THE HOME OFFICE**

AWERB noted that 3 project licences had been amended since the July meeting.

**11 MID TERM REVIEWS OF PROJECT LICENCES**

AWERB noted the mid-term review that had been received. It was a very clear review, with the project having made good progress.

**12 END OF PROJECT LICENCE REVIEW**

AWERB noted the end of project licence review that had been submitted.

**13 CONDITION 18 REPORT**

AWERB noted that a condition 18 report had been submitted and the remedial action that had been carried out following discussion with the Home Office Inspector.

**14 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm.

Secretary

03 September 2020