
Minutes: AWERB (Standard Agenda items meeting)

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 12 March 2021 at 1pm via MS Teams

Present

Attendees: 8 plus 1 in attendance, 1 by invitation and 7 apologies

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2 ACTION LOG

2.1 Item 2.5: Skin swabbing versus fin clipping (11 February 2021 meeting)

A workshop would be arranged on this to see if skin swabbing could be refined further. Skin swabbing would also be instigated as a standard policy within the Units.

2.2 Item 3: Proforma PPL comments form (11 February 2021 meeting)

Meeting scheduled for 16th March at 2pm to discuss this further.

2.3 Item 8: Assessors list review (11 February 2021 meeting)

Assessors were being e-mailed to check that they were happy to continue to be on the list and random techniques were being selected for refreshing.

2.4 Item 7.4: Breeding and colony management resource (09 December 2020 meeting)

Although an invite and a reminder had been sent to academics that used breeding colonies to join the discussion group, take up had been very low. All those that were involved in breeding needed to attend to make the discussion group meaningful. This was an important area so researchers would continue to be encouraged to join.

2.5 Item 8: Mice Colony (9 December 2020 meeting)

A meeting had been held with the researcher to put in place an action plan for his research. As there had been no further progress, another meeting would be held with the researcher stressing the importance of this and the steps that would be taken if no progress was made.

3 NACWO REPORTS

3.1 Camden

- There were several new groups who were communicating well with the questions and concerns that they had. As part of their induction process to the Unit, their handling and schedule 1 skills were being assessed and they were also advised on how the training records worked.
- Weekly meetings had been set up with researchers to discuss their studies. This seemed to be working well in ensuring that there was open communication.

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- The Chair informed AWERB that she was very proud of the Camden technicians and their diligence in cross checking study requests against the project licences to ensure that what was being requested could be done. They had identified on a couple of occasions requests that were not possible, as the process was not permissible in the licences. AWERB found this very reassuring and nice to hear and asked that their thanks for the team's care be passed onto them.
- A query was asked whether the technicians were now using ASPeL to access the project licences. A training session was being arranged with the technicians to show them how best to explore ASPeL as it was generally more reliable and quicker for accessing the licences as it was a lot easier to search.

3.2 Hawkshead

An update on current studies was given. All were progressing well.

4 3RS

- A recording of the NC3Rs and MRC Harwell joint webinar on “efficient management of genetically altered mouse colonies” was available to be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/518501136/2fc46ddd3e>.
- **Pan London 3Rs symposium:** 130 people had attended. 16 people had registered from the RVC, with 7 attending. There had also been 5 RVC posters submitted (out of a total of 30).
- **MRC Harwell** have launched a brand new user-friendly portal for [The Harwell Archive](#). The new platform made it easier to search across all mouse strains held at Harwell including mouse lines from individual researcher, external depositor and large-scale projects.
- AWERB were made aware of a RSPCA/IAT/LAVA/LASA sheet on ‘How well is your AWERB running remotely?’ which discussed how to maintain an effective AWERB in COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of the things mentioned, AWERB were already doing, which was reassuring.
- **Tamoxifen:** A query was raised about the Crackit Challenge Tat-Fit which aimed to develop a method that allowed tamoxifen to be added to rodent chow without changing its palatability or consumption by the animals and how this was progressing. It was explained that this was still in the very early stages with the first teams having been appointed to look at the challenge and to make a more palatable diet to deliver tamoxifen. A query was raised whether anyone at the RVC was giving tamoxifen via IP injections rather than orally? There was one researcher and a check would be done with them to see whether there was a scientific reason that IP injections were being used rather than administering it orally, which was now the preferred NC3Rs method.

5 NVS REPORT

5.1 Fostered dog

A new home had been found for the dog that had been fostered following surgery for his cruciate ligament. The dog had required some dental surgery. This had now been done and he had recovered well.

5.2 Ear tags in mice:

A cohort of mice with ear tags had been delivered to the RVC from an overseas supplier. The researcher using the mice has been informed that this was not our preferred way for mouse identification. One of the mice had experienced swelling and inflammation so had been anaesthetised so the ear tag could be removed. The others would be closely monitored.

5.3 Dogs:

Seven pups had recently been born, but one did not survive. Another bitch was due to whelp at the start of April.

5.4 Anatomy pony:

It was noted that one of the anatomy ponies had returned from Camden lame. Upon examination it was found she had a hoof crack. The farrier had examined her and had advised that the bruising was probably due to having been housed on a concrete yard whilst in Camden. Although improvements have been made to the outdoor accommodation for the anatomy animals at Camden, it was important there was an ongoing effort to continue to improve the environment during term time as much as possible.

After discussion the following was agreed:

- Farrier to be asked whether putting shoes on the pony would help in the long term as it would lift her feet off the ground. The shoes could either be metal or plastic. The shoes generally lasted for 6 to 8 weeks so she could be shod just before returning to Camden for her next 6 weeks block.
- The pony should also have a full health check via Equine
- The area in Camden should be reviewed and discussions held with Estates to see what improvements could be made: such as using sand; having more bedding; using more matting; putting clay under the matting to make the ground softer
- Discussions held with anatomy whether the ponies could be rotated more frequently so they were only at Camden for three weeks at a time. BSU now had its own trailer to transport the animals so would be able to transport the animals more frequently if required.
- Update to be provided at a future AWERB meeting.

5.5 Ferret suppliers:

A new ferret supplier had been found to replace the current supplier that was closing down. The first delivery of females due later this month. There were concerns about the difference in health status between the original supplier and the new one. There had previously been an outbreak of Ferret enteric coronavirus (ECE) following the introduction of new animals from an affected supplier into the colony. It was possible the virus could still be within the colony, as it could remain for a prolonged period with the animals exhibiting no clinical signs. Discussions had therefore been held about how to minimise the risk of infecting the new ferrets, with it being decided that the only feasible option was to expose the new cohort to the rest of the colony as early as possible, as exposing them at a young age, should mean that if any disease occurred it should be milder.

6 SCHEDULE 1 REGISTER REVIEW

6.1 Camden:

This list needed to be updated to reflect that one of the research groups had moved out so the majority of their researchers no longer needed to be on the list.

6.2 Hawkshead

The list was being reviewed to make sure the people listed still had relevant experience and were happy to be on the list. It was also being checked to ensure that all species were covered.

7 MID TERM REVIEWS

AWERB noted that 4 mid-term reviews had been received.

8 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that two project licences had been granted since the previous AWERB standard agenda item meeting.

9 AMENDED PROJECT LICENCES

AWERB noted that one project licence had been amended since the previous AWERB standard agenda item meeting.

10 AMENDMENTS TO ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE

AWERB noted that there was to be a new Establishment Licence Holder, as the current one was stepping down. A replacement researcher would also be joining AWERB from April to provide a scientist's input.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

11.1 Study request:

AWERB were informed about a recent study request that had been received to use cadavers and why these were required.

11.2 Dates of next meetings:

These were scheduled for:

- 23 March 2021 at 2pm (PPLs meeting);
- 8 April 2021 at 1pm (standard agenda items)

Secretary
16 March 2021