
Minutes: AWERB minutes: Standing Items meeting

Status: FINAL

Meeting held: Wednesday 7 September via MS Teams

Present: 14 plus 1 in attendance, 3 by invitation and 10 apologies

1 **PRESENTATION:**

Following a study request in relation to cultivated meat AWERB had asked that the researchers attend this meeting to provide a presentation on their work and to discuss their study request further. The researchers explained that their aim was to use breakthrough technology to meet the challenges of sustainable meat production. Their vision was to develop, mass manufacture and ultimately, initiate consumer adoption of cell-based “lab-grown” meat products. Their initial work had focused on porcine, but they were now looking to expand and use bovine tissues in order to compare species and cell growth, as their technology needed to be validated across different species.

AWERB explained that for each study request received, the use of the animal had to be justified. What had been learned from the work already done on the pigs? The researchers advised that they now had experience of the surgeries, the aseptic techniques and handling, as well as what enzymes were required for the isolation of the cells. It however would take time to identify the right enzymes that were needed for the bovine tissues.

Was it possible to obtain the tissues directly from an abattoir? This had been considered and several abattoir’s contacted, but this had proved not to be possible.

AWERB noted that this was a new area that was being ventured into and a new science. It was important to make sure that when looking at cutting edge science like this that the ethical and moral values of using animals was considered.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 August 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record.

3 **MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LOG**

3.1 **Item 5.2: Reviewing of research policies (02 August 2022)**

It was confirmed that comments on research policies should be provided to the Secretary.

3.2 **Item 2.4: Paper for senior management about the proposed BSU virtual tour (4 August 2022 meeting)**

This was still being worked on.

3.3 **Item 2.7: AWERB budget (5 July 2022 meeting)**

A one/two page discussion paper with a costed proposal of training requirements was now required by senior management. There was an external workshop coming up on 6 October to discuss

improving induction, training and CPD for all AWERB members and to analyse training needs. The AWERB Chair had signed up to attend.

3.4 Item 6.6: Ethics oversight of RVC Wildlife and Pest Control used (26 April 2022 meeting)

This had been raised at the April Ethics and Welfare Committee and the Establishment Licence Holder had been tasked to ask the Environmental Sustainability Manager if she could attend an AWERB to provide an update on the methods that were used by Estates. She had agreed to this, and a date needed to be arranged.

4 REACH: DOES AWERB WISH TO HAVE A POLICY POSITION ON “REACH”?

A letter had recently been received from the Head of Animals in Science Policy and Co-ordination at the Home Office providing confirmation that there had been no change to any of the legislation related to regulatory testing using animals.

This had raised a question on whether we should have a policy position on “REACH”. The College’s current approach was to not undertake routine toxicity testing for regulatory purposes as part of the contract research activities unless it was part of a programme of work to bring novel products to market. Routine toxicity testing was therefore not a business model for BSU, and projects would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

It was noted that it was unlikely that the College would be asked to be involved in routine toxicity testing, as it would be difficult to be competitive with other CROs. However, it was possibly something that would need a formal position on when considering culture of care.

5 3RS

AWERB noted the summary that had been provided of the 3Rs mini symposium that had taken place at Camden on 6 July 2022.

AWERB also noted the response that had been submitted on the Concordat on Openness annual review.

6 FOI REQUESTS

AWERB noted that two FOI requests had been received and the responses.

7 NVS REPORT

7.1 Hawkshead

7.1.1 Pig unit: In the GM pigs, there was a pig that was being bred with one of the boars. She had previously developed a suspected uterine/endometritis type infection which had not needed to be treated with antibiotics at the time as the discharge had resolved itself and the pig had not been sick. She had presented with symptoms again though and received a course of streptomycin. She was now fine with no return of the discharge. She had not been bred from since.

7.1.2 Dog unit:

- Female dog: One of the female dogs had undergone artificial insemination by an external reproduction veterinary specialist. Three days later she showed signs of dullness, inappetence and a fever. Upon examination she had a vulval purulent nasty looking discharge. She was given an ultrasound examination which showed abnormal fluid in her uterus. She was treated for 3 days for a suspected open endometritis. Upon day 3 she started vomiting and had a higher fever spike. The dog had previously had several litters and the decision had already been taken that this would be her last litter. It was decided that she should be surgically spayed, from which she had recovered well and would be rehomed.

- **Puppy:** a young carrier puppy that had been born in April and was not due to be used in the study had been spayed so she could be rehomed. Six days post spay, an umbilical intestinal hernia had been detected. The umbilical hernia was replaced successfully, and a discussion held whether a second surgery for surgical repair of the defect was needed prior to rehoming. The defect however had continued to close on its own without the need for surgery. A new home had been found and the new owner's vet and medical insurance company would be provided with a medical history letter.

7.2 **Culture of care:**

AWERB were informed of a sad incident that had happened. An investigation had been carried out and plans put in place in terms of moving forward. One of AWERB's roles, as well as considering animal welfare, was to also consider technicians and the study team's welfare too and make sure that they were mentally, emotionally, and physically looked after too. All involved with this situation had acted professionally, supportively, and collaboratively with each other, which was a good thing for the RVC, and was something that should continue but it was important to ensure that researchers and staff were looked after.

7.3 **Camden**

7.3.1 **Ferret**

One of the ferret's had undergone surgery 6 weeks prior to developing symptoms. The surgery had gone fine and nothing untoward had been detected in the postoperative recovery period. The ferret however was then observed being unable to use its hind legs and slightly moving from side to side, with decreased/diminished reflexes so was seen by the specialist exotic team. They could not identify what was wrong. The ferret was placed on anti-inflammatory fluid therapy and then antibiotics but continued to decline so was euthanised. A full histopathology of the neurologic system had started. Results were expected in a couple of weeks. A condition 18 report had been submitted.

7.3.2 **Brown Norway rats red stained urine**

Histopathology results revealed that hematuria was related with renal epithelial proliferation, a condition that had been described in a previous study as very prevalent in this rat strain.

8 **NACWO REPORT**

8.1 **Hawkshead**

- **Hot weather:** following the recent hot weather in August, fans had been placed in the dog unit and the animal welfare barn. For the horses, they had all been moved to shaded fields and some had been hosed down to cool them.
- **Dog unit:** 5 of the bitches had been mated, so a lot of litters were expected. Six dogs had also been rehomed.

8.2 **Camden**

- **Ferrets:** There was a possibility of Epizootic Catarrhal Enteritis (ECE) in the ferrets. Four new ferrets had arrived in May free of pathogens and were kept separated from the current colony for the first few weeks before being slowly introduced, to allow the animals to develop some immunity. At the beginning of July, they were moved into the colony ferret room, but after about a month they had started showing signs of diarrhoea and a little bit of body weight loss. Treatment had been implemented and the four ferrets seemed to be recovering. It was thought the problem was due to infectious agents that were already in the colony, being transferred to the new ferrets, as they had not yet built-up adequate immunity. It was important when

introducing new ferrets to take the process very slowly to provide opportunity for immunity to be developed.

- Guinea pig: one of the guinea pigs had to be culled as he had deteriorated and was losing weight. A post-mortem had been done which showed that one of his kidneys was an abnormal shape. A partner needed to be obtained for the remaining singly housed guinea pig.
- Mice fighting: a couple of mice had been fighting and their wounds treated.
- Ferret six monthly health and welfare assessment report for the Home Office: this had been carried out. No concerns had been identified apart from some of the ferrets had small sore areas around the head implants/ears. These were being treated with regular cleaning and topical treatment.

9 NTCO REPORT

The NTCOs were reviewing approaches to the training and training folders and would report back at a future meeting.

10 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted the Condition 18 reports that had been submitted.

11 STUDY REQUESTS

AWERB noted that one study request had been approved since the previous meeting.

12 END OF PPL REVIEW

Due to running out of time this item was deferred to the next meeting.

13 AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

Due to running out of time this item was deferred to the next meeting.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This would be a PPL review meeting and was scheduled for 21st September.

Secretary
20 September 2022