
Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 20 June 2016 at 2pm in U5 Camden videolinked to F82 Hawkshead

1 PRESENTATION FROM PPL HOLDER:

The project licence holder was welcomed to the meeting. She was applying for a replacement project licence which was due to expire on 1 August 2016.

The project licence holder was working with those engaged in the development of advanced technology solutions and services to personalize the development and use of oncology drugs. They provided Personalized Oncology Solutions (POS) to oncologists by establishing and administering expert tumor panels for their patients to analyse medical records and test results, to assist in understanding conventional and experimental options and to identify and arrange for analysis and study of the patients' cancer tissues, as appropriate. Additionally, the company offers personalized PDX development, drug studies and genome sequencing, whereby physicians could evaluate the effects of cancer drugs on their patients' personalized PDX tumor model and understand the genetic makeup of each patient's tumor, enabling them to better select treatment regimens that may be efficacious to the patient.

A query was raised about whether the work on chemosensitivity would be published in order to further the understanding of genotyped of tumours. It was important to make the information publically available rather than just keep it within the company; otherwise the research that was being done would not have wide reach and significance.

2 PRESENTATION FROM PROJECT LICENCE HOLDER

The project licence holder was welcomed to the meeting.

The aim of the experiments was to provide basic insight into normal locomotor patterns of the animals involved and how these have evolved in biology (which might also aid future diagnosis/treatment of gait disorders or abnormalities in these or related species), and also a major contribution to the study's goal of refining cutting-edge gait analysis techniques. It was the refinement of those methods, especially the simulations, that could at least partly replace more invasive measurements of musculoskeletal biomechanics particularly once those simulation techniques are refined, validated and generally accepted by the scientific community as reliable tools.

After the project licence holder had left the meeting his project licence was discussed in further detail. The consensus was that the work being proposed could shed light on species that not much was known about – information that would improve the welfare of these species as well as advancing scientific knowledge with veterinary and medical implication. It was important though to ensure that the husbandry provided and experimental techniques were appropriate. The animals also needed to be closely monitored for any adverse effects.

3 GUIDANCE FROM THE RSPCA IN AVOIDING SEVERE SUFFERING

The RSPCA had recently updated their severe suffering website with two new “road map” resource packs setting out practical steps to help establishments reduce and avoid severe suffering. The “Road map” was a series of practical steps that enabled establishments to identify ways to reduce, avoid and ultimately end severe suffering. A key principle of the Road map was an “audit” of procedures to establish how well current refinement practices are working and to identify any areas where further refinement can be applied.

These had been reviewed by one of the NACWOs. Her view was that what the RSPCA recommended was what the College was currently basically doing: a group (consisting of scientists, NACWOs and NVSs) reviews the project licence at various stages to consider what refinements that could be made; upon completion and during the project a review is done of the numbers of animals actually used compared to predicted usage and their severity.

See: [guidance from the RSPCA in avoiding severe suffering](#)

4 SURVEY OF OWNERS OF DOGS THAT HAD BEEN REHOMED FROM THE RVC

Owners that had rehomed dogs from the RVC had recently been surveyed to see whether any improvements could be made to the dog socialisation programme or how the dogs were treated whilst at the College. The results of the surveys were positive with no major problems identified. These dogs had undergone an ‘informal’ socialisation programme which was less well-structured and documented and done by entirely the animal technicians so it was very reassuring to see that their efforts with the dogs had obviously gone well. There was now a formal socialisation and training programme with volunteers regularly sought to help with this, which involved basic training and play time as well as keeping records of the training done with the dogs.

The external lay panel member commended the questionnaire which he thought was excellent and clear. He suggested that for future surveys, a question could be added about the use of social media and websites. It was quite common for people to post images of their pets on social media and so owners could be asked whether they had done that. Also had there been any particular websites that they had gone to for information and how useful had these been?

5 FARROWING CRATES

It was explained that ASPA regulations were due to change from the beginning of 2017. Farrowing crates would not be allowed unless their use could be justified. There were currently 3 project licences that used sows in farrowing crates. This was so the piglets and sows could be easily looked after.

A farrowing crate was a tool used to house a single mother pig with her young piglets. It was primarily designed to allow the piglets to separate themselves from the sow in order to avoid being crushed. The sow is placed in the farrowing crate approximately one week prior to farrowing. The sow is then kept in the crate until she is finished lactating and the piglets are weaned. Piglets are weaned at 4 weeks of age; therefore, the sow spends approximately 4-5 weeks in the farrowing crate.

AWERB agreed that the use of farrowing crates would need to be considered on a case by case basis. If it was justifiable and included on the project licence, then the consensus was that the farrowing crates could be allowed for particular studies.

6 APPLICATION OF THE 3RS

The NVS reported that she had met with one of the NACWOs and come up with a list of standard procedures that could be reviewed as part of the 3Rs. It was noted that the list could be divided into two areas: genotyping and surgery.

7 HOME OFFICE INSPECTOR VISITS

There had been several visits by the Home Office Inspector.

7.1 Welfare Barn

Following the weekend of 14th/15th May a higher than expected level of mortality was observed amongst the chicks housed in one of the rooms within the Welfare Barn. It was possible that relatively low humidity in the room was a contributing factor to this. The processes for determining how rooms were set up and checked to determine whether the correct environmental conditions had been set was being investigated.

Documentation has been put in place to make sure all systems are fully checked before animals are housed in the welfare barn. SOPs on how to set rooms up for each type of species were also being put together.

The Home Office had been informed of this occurrence and of the actions being taken.

7.2 Review current home office codes of practice and advice notes

It was agreed that the following codes of practice and advice notes would be reviewed:

- Code of practice for the housing and care of animals bred, supplied or used for scientific purposes
- The “use, keeping alive and re-use” advice note
- The “harm-benefit analysis process” advice note
- Advice note re-homing and setting free

8 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May were agreed to be an accurate record.

9 MATTERS ARISING

9.1 Policy on how to handle rodents

This policy was in the process of being amended. It would then be circulated for final sign off.

9.2 Assessors list

An updated list for Camden had been circulated

9.3 Online suggestions box

This was now available on the intranet for staff and students to use to put forward ethical issues for discussion.

9.4 Seminars

NC3Rs had been emailed to ask if they would be able to recommend some suitable speakers that could be invited to speak at ethic related seminars.

9.5 Project Licence paper

The project licence holder had confirmed that the method they developed for using qPCR to count parasites has been published, and they were using it in a number of their studies; as well as presenting the methodology at several meetings.

9.6 Hypergravity project

AWERB recommendations in relation to this project had been complied with and there would now be a 2 week acclimatisation period.

9.7 Production of antibodies, antisera and blood products

Each new project under this licence would now come to AWERB to be reviewed to ensure the specific protocol was ethically acceptable.

10 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

10.1 Efficient breeding of genetically altered animals group

A summary report had been provided of the GA lines that the College had, including tick-over colonies.

11 NEW PROJECT LICENCES APPROVED

AWERB noted that one Home Office project licence had been approved.

12 PROJECT LICENCE AMENDMENTS

AWERB noted that the Home Office had approved two amendments to existing Home Office project licences.

13 ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE AMENDMENT

AWERB noted that three new NACWOs had been added to the licence and three names removed.

14 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted the Condition 18 reports that had been submitted to the Home Office.

15 STUDY FORMS APPROVED

AWERB noted that three study forms had been approved.

16 TRAINING RECORDS

16.1 Training for schedule 1 killing

It was pointed out that under ASPeL it was now mandatory for personal licence applicants to have completed Modules K (theory) and K (skills) for the relevant species, unless the applicant could show they have previously satisfactorily completed the alternative standalone local module (EU 6.3) or equivalent training. This meant that no one could work on their animal of interest until signed off as competent in schedule 1, even if there was no intention to schedule 1 an animal. This could cause difficulty if working with more unusual species.

In the UK it was accepted that schedule 1 of an animal should not form part of a training course but will be part of on the job training with associated records of this training. When applying for a personal licence on ASPeL, a template for K (theory) and for K (skills) needed to be completed as well as for the other mandatory modules. Where accredited training has been achieved the full details should be provided in the template. Where local training has been achieved then the template should be completed with a request for exemption from accredited training.

17 CONCORDAT ON OPENNESS ANNUAL REVIEW

The RVC had submitted a response to the Concordat on Openness Annual review.