

Review of the Farm Animal Welfare Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

*This review provides strong endorsement for the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) to continue in much its present form. **FAWC's work is still needed, FAWC is the best organisation to undertake it, and it provides exceptional value for money.***

Always highly-regarded, FAWC's performance and use of resources have improved significantly in recent years. There is some scope for further improvement, in particular to:

- **Maintain the quality of FAWC's output.** *This depends on attracting members of a high calibre and on retaining their goodwill. There is an imbalance between FAWC's current workload and Secretariat support. A modest increase in Secretariat resources would enable FAWC to operate more productively. Alternatively, FAWC's workload needs to be reduced to avoid excessive pressure on both FAWC members and the Secretariat. In view of FAWC's exceptional overall cost-effectiveness, increasing Secretariat resources seems the better option, if practicable given current financial constraints. There are some more minor concerns about members' remuneration.*
- **Ensure effective outcomes.** *There have been problems with the issues selected for study, with the timing of FAWC's advice and with the Government's capacity to respond. Many of these problems have already been resolved but further improvements would make FAWC even more effective.*
- **Increase awareness of FAWC's activities.** *Even those aware of FAWC's existence are unclear about its activities and most people do not know it exists. Raising FAWC's profile could do much to increase public awareness and understanding of welfare issues. A modest additional sum spent on presenting and publicising FAWC's advice would improve overall cost-effectiveness.*

The Council

1. The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an advisory, non-statutory, Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). It was set up in 1979 with the following terms of reference: *"To keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of slaughter; and to advise the Government of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary."* The terms of reference are accompanied by the following rider: *"The Council can: investigate any topic falling within this remit; communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public; and publish its advice independently."*
2. FAWC covers Great Britain, reporting to Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and to the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales.

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The Review

3. This review is one of the periodic routine reviews that Cabinet Office recommends for all advisory NDPBs. It sought to answer four questions:
 - (i) Is FAWC's work still needed?
 - (ii) If it is, is FAWC the best organisation to undertake it?
 - (iii) An executive NDPB or non-Ministerial Government Department may be established after 2012 with responsibility for animal health in England. What difference, if any, should this make to FAWC?
 - (iv) How well has FAWC performed in the past and how might performance be improved in the future?
4. The findings that follow are based mainly on consultation with officials in Defra and the devolved administrations, with FAWC members, and with a wide range of organisations and individuals.

(i) Is FAWC's work still needed?

5. Public concern about animal welfare is great and growing. The issues are emotive; large commercial interests are involved; and Government advice without authoritative backing can lack credibility. This means that ***Defra and the devolved administrations continue to need independent, objective, evidence-based advice on farm animal welfare.***
6. Animal welfare issues are complex. ***Advice to Government needs to go beyond scientific assessment to encompass, for example, economic, ethical, environmental, social and technical implications.*** While it would be unrealistic to expect a single body to provide Government with all its advice on farm animal welfare, an advisory body that undertook only scientific risk assessments would be of limited value.
7. The *terms of reference* for the Government's main advisory body on farm animal welfare therefore need to allow considerable flexibility. They need too to reflect current Government thinking, which is not simply to avoid unnecessary suffering but to give animals a quality of life, and the increasing importance of consumer choice/retailer action. ***While FAWC's current terms of reference have not constrained it unduly, they could usefully be made broader, to allow more extensive investigations on occasions, and more aspirational. They should include a requirement for key findings and advice to be made public.***

(ii) **Is FAWC the best organisation to undertake its current work?**

8. FAWC has produced internationally-recognised, high-quality advice to Government for thirty years. It has improved its performance significantly in recent years, making its advice more relevant and improving its cost-effectiveness. ***FAWC is generally well regarded and now offers exceptional value for money.***
9. In line with Cabinet Office guidance, the review looked at five *alternatives to FAWC*: in-house advice; 'ad hoc' consultations; advice from a single organisation; market testing / contracting out; and merger / rationalisation with another body. Looking at FAWC's activities in isolation, ***FAWC is the best organisation to undertake its current work.*** If there were strong external drivers, it would be possible to replace FAWC with a combination of in-house advice, supplemented by stakeholder forums and advisory committees. Likewise, if a decision were taken to create a similar Government body responsible for companion animal welfare, this could potentially be merged with FAWC.
10. As for *geographic coverage*, there is a need for common standards throughout Great Britain. Establishing separate councils for England, Wales and Scotland would be costly. ***FAWC should remain a GB body at present with more input from the devolved administrations in its work.*** In future, if welfare strategies and practices diverge widely, it may be sensible to set up separate sub-committees for England, Scotland and Wales.

(iii) **Impact of a new body for animal health in England**

11. As part of the Responsibility and Cost Sharing agenda, it was proposed that an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) or non-Ministerial Government Department for animal health should be established in England in 2012. Responsibility for animal welfare would remain with Defra.
12. It is too early to predict the impact of a new body. It should not affect Defra's need for FAWC. ***FAWC could play an important part in ensuring that any new body for animal health in England was well informed on the welfare implications of its activities.***

(iv) **How well has FAWC performed in the past and how might its performance be improved in the future?**

Relations with Government

13. There are regular contacts between FAWC and Defra and the devolved administrations at a range of levels. ***Personal relations between FAWC and Government are very good.***

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14. In the past there appears to have been a serious mismatch between FAWC's prolific, if sometimes tardy, output and Government's need for its advice and ability to respond. The problems have been tackled to some extent by both FAWC and Government. FAWC has sought to make its output more timely and relevant. Its initiative in producing strategic plans and annual reviews is commendable. **Government needs to become more actively involved in FAWC's planning to ensure that advice is well focused and timely.**
15. Defra has addressed how it should respond to FAWC's advice. There are some concerns about the proposed changes. **FAWC needs to monitor and to take account of how far its advice is heeded.**
16. The way in which FAWC presents its advice can make it difficult for those both within and outside Government to understand. **It would be helpful if some FAWC advice were expressed more simply and/or in terms that would make it directly applicable by those responsible for implementation.**

Relations with other UK organisations

17. **FAWC's relations with other UK organisations are generally good.** In particular, there is plentiful consultation. There is scope for improvement: better use could be made of open meetings; and more information could be provided about closed meetings and FAWC's activities generally. While the scope for joint working is limited by FAWC's need for independence, there could be more collaborative working, especially with other public bodies.
18. FAWC is not widely known by organisations with which it does not have direct contact. Its public profile is probably lower than ten years ago. **FAWC's work deserves to be more widely known; how far it should itself become involved in publicity raises issues of principle and of resources.**

Relations with international organisations

19. FAWC is an active participant in the European Forum for Animal Welfare Councils (EuroFAWC). It has contact with EU institutions and advisory bodies worldwide. More direct involvement in international outreach work would have resource implications. **FAWC should build on the useful links it has developed with its counterparts abroad rather than acting alone internationally.**

Cabinet Office concerns: sustainable development, social exclusion and the precautionary principle

20. The review confirmed that **FAWC's activities contribute to and take account of the Government's objectives on sustainable development and social exclusion. It makes appropriate use of the precautionary principle.**
21. The use of the precautionary principle is linked to wider risk and impact assessments. **FAWC does not make formal assessments and it would not be appropriate for it to do so.** There is pressure for FAWC to look more at the consequences of its proposals, in terms of economics, ethics and practicalities. This would have resource and expertise implications. **An appropriate balance is needed between assessments made by FAWC and those made by Defra and the devolved administrations; it is not clear whether this is currently being achieved.**

Members

22. **FAWC's success reflects the high quality of its twenty members,** appointed for their personal qualities and experience. They work well, together and individually.
23. Findings on key aspects were:
 - **Numbers.** Reducing numbers to eighteen by 2010 is a sensible target. So long as appropriate expertise and balances are maintained, it might be possible to reduce numbers further to, say, fifteen.
 - **Balance.** It is important that academic contributions are balanced by practical inputs and that the views of ethnic minorities are taken fully into account.
 - **Appointment procedures.** The Nolan recommendations are followed well. A few changes could be made to improve transparency, to attract more candidates from ethnic minorities, and to evaluate individuals and overall outcomes.
 - **Remuneration.** This is not a major issue for current FAWC members and is broadly in line with that for other advisory NDPBs. Some minor adjustments would be useful to remove anomalies. Increasing remuneration sufficiently to attract significantly more applicants for posts would not be affordable and there is no shortage of suitable applicants.
 - **Training, induction and guidance.** All adequate; more training might be offered.

Structures

24. **FAWC has a fairly new structure of Standing Committees and Working Groups which is working well.** Defra staff make a valuable contribution; more use might be made of co-opted experts and staff from the devolved administrations.

Secretariat

25. FAWC's Secretariat is composed of Defra staff. Numbers have halved since 2003 and the Secretariat has moved from the Animal Welfare Team to the Livestock Hub as part of a Secretariat shared with other groups.
26. The Secretariat is hard-working and helpful. Because of the reduction in numbers, FAWC members are doing much more unpaid drafting and research. This is a major cause of concern. Members emphasised too the importance of excellent drafting skills and an understanding of animal welfare issues. ***Defra and the devolved administrations need to give priority to addressing the concerns of FAWC members about the balance between their input and the level and quality of Secretariat support.***

Technology

27. FAWC has a well-used website and makes some use of electronic communication with members and outside organisations. Overall, its use of technology is reasonable. It could make more use of electronic communication to reduce running costs and, more importantly, to make external organisations and the public more aware of its activities. More use of teleconferences could enable the devolved administrations to become more involved in its work.

Good practice

28. There is much to commend in FAWC's operations. ***Above all, consultees valued the principle of independent, multidisciplinary, evidence-based advice from a range of experts who seek consensus.*** There are specific examples of *good practice* which deserve to be drawn to the attention of the Cabinet Office and others.

Recommendations

30. Recommendations for improving performance are listed at the end of this Executive Summary, together with a rough indication of resource implications and priorities.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Sources of advice (page 22).** Defra and the devolved administrations should keep under review the scope of advice on farm animal welfare they request from different sources, including FAWC. In FAWC's case, this is also relevant to guiding its strategy, appointing its members and encouraging the use of expert advisers.

Resource implications: none.

Priority: in the course of usual day-to-day work.

2. **Terms of reference (page 24).** Defra and the devolved administrations should consider the following revised terms of reference:

"To further the welfare of farm animals by:

- keeping under review practices on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at any place of killing;
- investigating issues arising from such review ;
- investigating any related issues as requested by Government;
- advising the Government of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary; and
- making public its key findings and advice independently."

The accompanying rider could then be reduced to: " In pursuing this remit, the Council can communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public."

Resource implications: insignificant.

Priority: part of immediate follow-up to review.

3. **Devolved administrations (page 31).** FAWC, Defra and the devolved administrations should consider ways in which the Scottish and Welsh Assembly Governments can become more involved in FAWC activities.

Resource implications: insignificant –options are straightforward and limited.

Priority: part of immediate follow-up to review and on-going.

4. **New English animal health body (page 33).** Defra's Animal Welfare Team should maintain close contact with the Responsibility and Cost Sharing Advisory Group. The team should ensure welfare considerations are fully taken into account; that any new body is aware of the advice FAWC can offer; and that this is covered in any Service Level Agreement. The team also needs to consider how the work of the England Implementation Group (EIG) on the delivery of welfare strategy may best be taken forward by the sector councils and others.

Resource implications: none – part of Team's day-to-day work.

Priority: high.

5. **Relations with Government (page 37).** Defra and the devolved administrations need to ensure that FAWC's strategic plan matches their priorities and that FAWC is clear about EU and other timetables. They should agree deadlines with FAWC for the production of advice and also agree how outcomes may be monitored and measured.

Resource implications: none.

Priority: high, in the course of the current strategic planning process.

6. **Choice of topics (page 38).** Defra and the devolved administrations should keep under review whether there are more topics on which they would welcome FAWC's advice.

Resource implications: none.

Priority: in the course of usual day-to-day work.

7. **Review of outcomes (page 38).** FAWC should review selectively but systematically the outcomes of its earlier advice and raise any concerns with Defra and the devolved administrations.

Resource implications: potentially considerable. Would need to replace additional new work to some extent.

Priority: medium.

8. **Form of advice (page 38).** FAWC, Defra and the devolved administrations should review how FAWC currently presents its advice.

Resource implications: none unless a review cannot be fitted in by adjusting priorities in the short-term. In the longer term, this recommendation should result in savings through the production of more relevant and easily-handled advice.

Priority: high.

9. **Relations with other UK organisations (page 40).** FAWC should:
- regularly update its stakeholders by email on developments. Such an update could be used to alert stakeholders to new material on FAWC's website, including notes of meetings, reports and opinions. It could also give advance warning of publications and news of any other significant developments;
 - seek to make its annual open meeting more productive, perhaps by focusing on a single subject. It could also consider holding open meetings before and/or after reports are published;

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- put fuller notes of Council meetings on its web-site;
- consider whether it should make Council meetings open if demand emerges for that.

Resource implications: (1) up-date could require 10 EO/HEO days a year, costing about £5k; (2) any additional open meetings would cost about £5 k plus Secretariat time in preparation and attendance; (3) the costs of putting fuller notes of Council meetings on the web-site would be about 2 days of SEO/HEO time. Might be off-set by producing shorter notes for members, or using the same ones

Priority: medium.

- 10. Publicity (page 40).** Defra, the devolved administrations and FAWC should consider how FAWC's work might be made known more widely.

Resource implications: depends how it is done. Employing consultants for 10 days would cost about £7k. Using in-house staff for a similar period would cost about £3k

Priority: high.

- 11. Relations with international organisations (page 42).** FAWC might usefully build closer links with the European Commission, either directly or through Defra, to ensure that there is no duplication of work.

Resource implications: about £2k a year if an annual meeting in Brussels is required.

Insignificant if not.

Priority: medium.

- 12. Impact assessment (page 43).** FAWC, Defra and the devolved administrations should consider what assessment FAWC should make of the costs and other impacts of its recommendations before submitting them to Government.

Resource implications: insignificant – should be absorbed in day-to-day work.

Priority: medium.

- 13. Transparency in appointments (page 48).** Defra and FAWC should make it clear that the criteria for membership vary from time to time and that there is no permanent balance.

Resource implications: none. Minor web-site amendment required.

Priority: part of immediate follow-up to review.

- 14. Membership balance (page 48).** More effort should be made to attract candidates from ethnic minorities. The new Defra action plan should be followed.

Resource implications: may be extra advertising costs (borne by Defra centrally).

Priority: in the course of the next appointments round and as required by the Defra plan.

- 15. Evaluation of members (page 48).** The FAWC Chair should review the performance of new members, who should serve a probationary year. Defra and FAWC should review the overall outcomes of appointment procedures periodically.

Resource implications: half a day a year for the FAWC chair. About two days of staff time every two years for the review.

Priority: medium.

- 16. Pay rates (page 49).** Defra should bring the remuneration of FAWC members into line with other Defra advisory NDPBs. The median rate for members appears to be £172. FAWC chairs are already paid about the median rate.

Resource implications: increasing members' daily rates from £146 to £172 would cost about £4k a year (12 members for an average of 12 days a year).

Priority: high.

- 17. Eligible work (page 49).** Defra and FAWC should review the unpaid work that FAWC members are undertaking. They should ensure that FAWC members are not assigned tasks that are more appropriate for the FAWC Secretariat. They should agree how far members should be paid for any other work that is currently unpaid.

Resource implications: the review could require about $\frac{3}{4}$ days of staff time, plus inputs from FAWC members. Paying for an additional 40 days spent on tasks such as drafting would cost about £8k if divided equally between chairs and other members.

Priority: high.

- 18. Training (page 50).** The FAWC Secretariat should investigate whether members would like training provided in, for example, IT skills.

Resource implications: depend on the outcome of the investigation, which should not itself require significant resources.

Priority: low.

- 19. Working structures (page 51).** FAWC should consider the points made by consultees about the drafting burden on some chairs; the possible appointment of vice chairs; the distribution of work among chairs; the movement of members between Standing Committees; and the presentation of material to Council.

Resource implications: insignificant.

Priority: medium.

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- 20. Experts (page 52).** Defra, the devolved administrations and FAWC should think further about the scope for co-opting experts onto working groups. An alternative would be to make some short-term appointments to the Council.

Resource implications: insignificant. Co-optees would need to be paid but the costs would be offset by reduced use of FAWC members and/or Defra staff.

Priority: medium.

- 21. Government contributions (page 53).** Defra should remain committed to providing the current levels of expert advice to FAWC standing committees and working groups. The devolved administrations should keep under review the scope for them to contribute expertise too.

Resource implications: no addition required by Defra. Possibly some increase for the devolved administrations.

Priority: high.

- 22. Secretariat support (page 54).** Defra should increase the overall capacity and drafting capability of the FAWC Secretariat. If FAWC's workload remains at its current levels, an additional HEO should be sought. Care should be taken to recruit staff with first-rate drafting skills. If it is not possible to increase Secretariat staffing, FAWC's output should be reduced.

Resource implications: an additional HEO in the Secretariat would cost about £53k a year (compared with £45k for an EO).

Priority: high.

- 23. Secretariat location (page 54).** As the reasons for creating a shared secretariat with EIG and SEAC no longer apply, the FAWC Secretariat should be relocated with the Animal Welfare Team to improve day-to-day contact on animal welfare issues.

Resource implications: insignificant.

Priority: high.

- 24. Secretariat training (page 54).** Secretariat staff should have both induction and regular refresher training on animal welfare issues.

Resource implications: about 8 staff days a year (Secretariat trainees and Animal Welfare Team trainers).

Priority: high.

- 25. Technology (page 55).** The FAWC Secretariat should, in order of priority:

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- (1) Consult those to whom it sends papers and publications to see whether they would like electronic copies in addition to, or instead of, hard copies.
- (2) Check electronic contact details for stakeholders are up to date and whether other stakeholders could be included on electronic mailing lists.
- (3) Consult stakeholders on whether they would like to receive regular electronic updates on FAWC's work and produce them.
- (4) Consider making more use of teleconferences, in consultation with the devolved administrations.
- (5) Consider with FAWC members what more material might be put on the website. Investigate providing a search facility and an interactive area on the website.
- (6) Investigate use of webcasts and other means of remote access to Council meetings.

Resource implications: the FAWC Secretariat could need additional EO/AO support for about two months, at a cost of about £7k.

Priority: high

- 26. Spreading good practice (page 58).** (1) Defra should send this report to Cabinet Office for information. (2) Defra and the devolved administrations should draw attention to the way in which FAWC operates whenever appropriate.

Resource implications: insignificant.

Priority: (1) as part of the immediate follow-up to the review; (2) in the course of day-to-day work.

- 27. Priority 1: output quality (page 59).** Defra should give priority to addressing members' concerns about Secretariat support and remuneration (Recommendations 16,17 and 22.)

Resource implications: As above: an additional HEO in the Secretariat would cost about £53k a year (compared with £45k for an EO). Increasing members' daily rates from £146 to £172 would cost about £ 4 k a year (12 members for an average of 12 days a year). Paying for an additional 40 days spent on tasks such as drafting would cost about £8k if divided equally between chairs and other members.

Priority: high.

28. **Priority 2: effective outcomes (page 59).** Defra and the devolved administrations should give priority to guiding the subject, form and timing of FAWC's advice (Recommendations 5 and 8)

Resource implications: no additional resources needed unless a review of how FAWC presents its advice cannot be fitted in by adjusting priorities in the short-term. In the longer term, these recommendations should result in savings through the production of more relevant and easily-handled advice.

Priority: high.

29. **Priority 3: increasing awareness (page 60).** Defra should ensure that the FAWC Secretariat has the resources to investigate the technological improvements suggested by consultees (recommendation 25). Defra, the devolved administrations and FAWC should give further thought to how FAWC advice can best be publicised (recommendation 10).

Resource implications: for recommendation 25, the FAWC Secretariat could need additional EO/AO support for about two months, at a cost of about £7k. For recommendation 10, employing consultants for 10 days would cost about £7k. Using in-house staff for a similar period would cost about £3k.

Priority: high.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: WHY FAWC AND WHY A REVIEW?

1.1 Facts about FAWC

1.1.1 Purpose

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an advisory, non-statutory, Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). It has existed in much its current form since 1968, following a Government report which identified the need for independent, expert advice on animal welfare. FAWC's name and remit have been unchanged since 1979. Its terms of reference are: "To keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of slaughter; and to advise the Government of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary."

1.1.2 Geographic coverage

FAWC covers Great Britain. Responsibility for animal welfare has been devolved, so that "the Government" in FAWC's terms of reference is currently interpreted as Ministers in Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and in the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales.

1.1.3 Output

Most of FAWC's advice is contained in over thirty substantial reports published since 1979. In the last few years FAWC has also produced shorter opinions and letters. In addition, it responds to *ad hoc* consultations, usually from Government, and maintains strategic relationships with interested parties and opinion-formers.

1.1.4 Members and Secretariat

The twenty members of FAWC are appointed by Ministers and serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of any organisation or interest group. They have varied backgrounds and expertise, as listed at annex 1. FAWC's Secretariat is drawn from Defra staff and based in Defra offices in London.

1.1.5 Programme and costs

FAWC's current work programme follows its Strategic Plan for the period 2006 to 2010. Its total costs, including the Secretariat, are £300,000 a year. More about FAWC may be found on its website www.fawc.org.uk.

1.2 Reasons for the review

In *Public Bodies: a Guide for Departments*, the Cabinet Office suggests that Government departments should undertake 'light touch' reviews of advisory NDPBs periodically "to give the Department confidence that the NDPB is delivering high quality services efficiently and effectively and fits appropriately into the Department's overall delivery structure". FAWC was last reviewed in 2003. Since then, Defra has, as recommended by the Cabinet Office, undertaken a high-level review of all the bodies involved in delivering its objectives. Because of recent and proposed changes in the delivery 'landscape' and the time since the last FAWC review, Defra, with the agreement of the devolved administrations, commissioned this review from its In-House Policy Consultancy.

1.3 Terms of reference

The terms of reference required the reviewer to:

- assess the Council's performance in contributing to the strategic objectives of Defra in England and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, and its value for money, identifying good practice and lessons for the future; and
- assess the Council's continuing relevance in the wider and evolving landscape of governance and stakeholder bodies in farming, food and welfare.

1.4 Methodology

The review started in April 2009 and has been conducted in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance. It has been overseen by a Project Board of Defra officials, chaired by John Bourne (Livestock Hub), supported by officials in the Scottish and Welsh administrations. Richard Aram, FAWC's Secretary, has acted as Project Manager, while Professor Christopher Wathes, FAWC's Chair, has been kept informed of progress.

The review's findings are based on:

- **36 telephone interviews.** Those interviewed are listed at annex 2.
- **Sixteen written consultation responses.** The FAWC Secretariat sent a letter inviting written contributions to the Review to 207 organisations (including telephone interviewees). The *Veterinary Record* also drew attention to the consultation in its issue of 6 June. The respondents are listed at annex 3.
- **Meetings.** These were with FAWC's chair, the Project Board and Defra officials, again as listed at annex 3.
- **Background reading.** Key documents are listed at annex 4.

The consultation letter set out four key issues to be addressed (the first three based on the Cabinet Office guidance and the fourth a current Defra concern):

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- (i) Is the work that FAWC does still needed?
 - (ii) If it is, is FAWC the best organisation to undertake it?
 - (iii) How well has FAWC performed in the past and how might performance be improved in the future?
 - (iv) An executive NDPB or non-Ministerial Government Department may be established after 2012 with responsibility for animal health in England. What difference, if any, should this make to FAWC?

Most of the telephone interviews used a more detailed questionnaire based on Cabinet office guidance.

1.5 **Structure of the report**

The first three questions in the list above are covered in turn in the next three chapters. Chapter 3 also considers the fourth question. Chapter 5 considers how well FAWC uses the resources available to it. Each of these four chapters looks at a series of issues in the same way. For each issue, the background is described and then the main views expressed by consultees. ('Consultees' here includes interviewees, those who provided written contributions, and those who participated in meetings.) Views are attributed to particular organisations only where the point is a major one not made by others. Conclusions and recommendations on each issue follow.

Chapter 6 sets out the overall conclusions. It highlights good practice as well as the key recommendations and their resource implications.

1.6 **Thanks**

Thanks are due to all the people who have contributed to this review. In particular:

- **Interviewees and written respondents** were generous with their time and thinking.
- **Richard Aram and Janice Munday of the FAWC Secretariat** provided invaluable information and handled administrative tasks efficiently and willingly.
- **Frances Radcliffe, Livestock Hub**, gave useful insights and advice throughout.
- **The Project Board and staff in the devolved administrations** were responsive and supportive.

CHAPTER 2: IS FAWC'S WORK STILL NEEDED?

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks first at the Government's general need for independent advice on farm animal welfare. The next section looks in more detail at what is required by examining FAWC's terms of reference.

2.2 Need for independent, expert advice

2.2.1 Background

Contribution to the Government's strategic objectives

In 1965 the Government report that led to the establishment of an independent committee noted "a continuing development of concern for animal welfare". Public concern has continued to increase both in this country and elsewhere in the European Union, so that animal welfare is an important issue for Defra and the devolved administrations.

For Defra, Departmental Strategic Objective (DSO) 6 is "a thriving farming and food sector with an improving net environmental impact". As an intermediate outcome, Defra is committed to improving the welfare of kept animals, of which farm animals are a large proportion. FAWC's work also contributes to DSO7, which seeks a sustainable, secure and healthy food supply. DSO9 on Defra's desired reputation – "a respected department delivering efficient and high quality services and outcomes" - is also relevant as animal welfare is politically and publicly sensitive.

There are similar strategic objectives for the devolved administrations. In Scotland, there is an objective to have "well-treated and healthy farm... animals". In Wales there is a commitment to "help promote animal health and welfare".

Changes to the animal welfare 'landscape'

There have been the following recent changes in the animal welfare 'landscape' in which FAWC operates:

- The Government published an Animal Health and Welfare Delivery Strategy in 2004. There are separate implementation plans/delivery strategies for each of the three countries. The England Implementation Group and comparable bodies in Scotland and Wales were established to take them forward. The England Implementation Group was dissolved on 16 September: Defra is to work more closely with the Strategy Sector Councils.

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- EU action is now mainly through regulation not directive. Together with Government commitments not to 'gold plate' the implementation of EU legislation and to avoid unnecessary regulation, this reduces the amount of domestic legislation. EU negotiations and the implementation of regulations remain important.
- Consumer choice is increasingly influenced by animal welfare considerations and farm assurance schemes are increasingly important for retailers.
- There is a growing consensus that animal welfare policy should not simply be about avoiding unnecessary suffering but about giving animals a particular quality of life. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 reflect this by introducing a duty of care.
- The animal welfare teams in Defra and the devolved administrations have been significantly reduced, by a third in the case of Defra and the Scottish Executive. In Wales, there has been an increase in welfare work in the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer while staff numbers have fallen.

Nature of FAWC's advice

The Government looks to FAWC for advice not only on *risk assessment* but also on *risk management*. This is in contrast to, for example, the separation of roles on food safety in the European Union. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) provides independent scientific advice on risks while the European Commission advises member states on their management.

FAWC seeks to balance the full range of considerations in its advice. In its discussions, it aims to reach consensus. Advice is put forward on behalf of the Council as a whole and there has been only one minority report in the last twenty years.

2.2.2 Consultees' views

Consultees expressed the following views:

- **Government need for independent, expert advice.** Generally seen as extremely useful. The issues were highly emotive and there were big commercial interests involved. Most organisations in the field of animal welfare, including Government departments, were seen as biased in some way. It was important to have independent, detached evaluation of the evidence
- **Others' need for independent, expert advice.** Many consultees made use of FAWC's advice to inform their own policies and to advise their members. FAWC's publications were useful reference documents. If FAWC did not exist, other bodies might have to do more investigations themselves. For other organisations, FAWC's advice is less important than consumer choices based on media reports. Some retailers set their own standards independently of FAWC.

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- **Combination of risk assessment and risk management.** Interviewees within Government thought it essential that FAWC considered *risk management* as well as *risk assessment*. Most external organisations were also convinced of the value of FAWC looking pragmatically at potential welfare standards. One of the most frequent criticisms was that FAWC was too academic, not simply in terms of risk assessment but in its general approach. A few external organisations, representing both the food industry and welfare interests, would prefer FAWC to focus simply on technical, scientific issues.
- **Importance of consensus.** Consultees from FAWC and Government generally valued consensus. Some other respondents thought that FAWC might be too 'middle of the road'. This view was balanced by those who thought that there were plenty of other organisations who expressed extreme views, which would not be appropriate for a Government advisory body.

2.2.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Defra, the devolved administrations and almost all other consultees saw a continuing need for independent, expert advice. The extent of public interest, the emotive nature of the issues, the need for Government advice to have authoritative backing to be credible, and the large commercial interests involved all combine to make this seem essential.

Conclusions

- (1) ***Defra and the devolved administrations continue to need independent, objective, evidence-based advice on farm animal welfare.***

Animal welfare issues are complex. An advisory body that undertook only scientific risk assessments would be of limited value. Defra, the devolved administrations and most consultees recognised the value of advice on *risk management*.

- (2) ***Advice to Government needs to go beyond scientific issues to encompass, for example, economic, ethical, environmental, social and technical implications.***

The range of issues to be considered varies with the topic being examined. There would be risks in expecting a single adviser to cover all aspects of very wide-ranging and complex subjects. For a proper consensus view, all members of an advisory body need to have an adequate understanding of all the aspects on which advice is given. With a very wide remit, depth can be sacrificed to breadth and debate internalised that should be considered by the recipient of the advice. For this reason, Defra and the devolved administrations should not look exclusively to FAWC for advice on farm animal welfare.

Recommendation

- (1) ***Defra and the devolved administrations should keep under review the scope of advice on farm animal welfare they request from different sources, including FAWC. In FAWC's case, this is also relevant to guiding its strategy, appointing its members and encouraging the use of expert advisers (as considered in later chapters).***

2.3 Terms of reference

2.3.1 Background

FAWC's terms of reference for its thirty year existence have been: "To keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of slaughter; and to advise the Government of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary". The terms of reference are accompanied by the following rider:

"The Council can:

- investigate any topic falling within this remit
- communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public
- publish its advice independently."

2.3.2 Consultees' views

Consultees raised the following points:

- **Farm animal limitation.** Most comparable bodies in other countries deal with farm, companion and laboratory animals and some deal with wild animals too. Equines straddle the boundary between farmed and kept animals. The RSPCA pointed out that the killing of crustaceans and other non-farm food animals raised similar welfare issues to the killing of farm animals. At the Government's request, FAWC had looked at the breeding and rearing of game birds on farmed land. Most respondents thought that the farm animal limitation was sensible. The issues relating to other types of animal were different and their inclusion would dilute FAWC's focus.
- **Need for more aspiration.** FAWC has already become more aspirational in some of its reports and is adopting "a life worth living" as an aim, which goes beyond the traditional "five freedoms". Some consultees would like the terms of reference to include an overt commitment to improving animal welfare, though most thought this sufficiently implied by the phrase "keep under review". A specific reference to improvement could suggest that current standards were inadequate and change the focus of FAWC's work.
- **Other welfare issues.** One consultee suggested that there were other welfare issues relating to farm animals that might usefully be covered, e.g. cloning and

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sustainability. FAWC in fact looked at cloning in 1998 at the request of the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and expects to publish an opinion on welfare and breeding in 2011. It has also investigated some aspects of sustainability.

- **International outreach.** Some would like FAWC to become more involved in the welfare of animals abroad, like its counterparts in Australasia. Most, however, considered FAWC had sufficient challenges for its current resources in the UK. It should certainly look at best practice abroad and its work was, in turn, taken into account in other countries. International outreach might be further considered at EU level.
- **Targets for advice.** In line with its terms of reference, FAWC sees itself as advising Government only, although many of its recommendations depend on those outside Government to implement them. FAWC's reports and other documents are made public at the time they are given to Government but FAWC does not promote them actively. Many consultees thought it would be helpful if FAWC's advice were made more easily understood and given more publicity. Others saw confusion if advice did not clearly come from Government. Some consultees would like FAWC to have an explicitly educational role.
- **Requests for advice.** At present, FAWC advice can be commissioned only by Government. Consultees did not suggest that this should change, apart from proposing a broader educational and higher public profile, as above.
- **All killing, not just slaughter.** The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines slaughter as the "killing of an animal for food". Technically, however, it does not apply to all forms of killing but only to death by exsanguination, the draining of blood. FAWC's work has gone beyond that.

2.3.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Dealing with the points above in order:

- **Farm animal limitation.** In general, advising on farm animals only seems enough for a single committee. An extension to other animals may, however, make sense on occasions, as well as retaining links to other bodies (see page 28).
- **Need for more aspiration.** Making the terms of reference slightly more aspirational would fit better with current Government policy.
- **Other welfare issues.** Other bodies deal with some other welfare issues, e.g. the Animal Procedures Committee of the Home Office deals with experiments on animals. In some instances, however, Government might need advice that goes a little beyond the current terms of reference.
- **International outreach.** . There is nothing in the current terms of reference that specifically limits FAWC's activities to Great Britain but for FAWC to become directly involved in international work would be expensive. International outreach is probably best pursued in conjunction with its EU and other international partners.

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- **Targets for advice.** To extend the terms of reference to the provision of general advice would have major resource implications and could cause confusion. This would be a role more appropriate to an executive NDPB or agency. Nonetheless, some explicit encouragement to publicise advice to Government could be helpful.
- **Requests for advice.** Dealing with requests for advice from non-governmental organisations would have enormous resource implications.
- **Killing, not slaughter.** A necessary semantic change.

Recommendation

- (2) ***Defra and the devolved administrations should consider the following revised terms of reference:***

"To further the welfare of farm animals by:

- ***keeping under review practices on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at any place of killing;***
- ***investigating issues arising from such review ;***
- ***investigating any related issues as requested by Government;***
- ***advising the Government of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary; and***
- ***making public its key findings and advice independently."***

The accompanying rider could then be reduced to: "In pursuing this remit, the Council can communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public."

CHAPTER 3: IS FAWC THE BEST ORGANISATION TO UNDERTAKE ITS CURRENT WORK?

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks first at FAWC's overall performance. It then examines various alternatives to FAWC. It considers whether GB coverage is appropriate and, lastly, the potential impact of a new body for animal health.

3.2 FAWC's Performance

3.2.1 Background

FAWC has long been an influential body. Its 'five freedoms' have been adopted around the world. For many years it focused on producing long reports on single species. When last reviewed in 2003, the reviewers proposed relatively minor changes. These and the subsequent follow-up action are listed at Annex 5.

Since that review, FAWC, with Professor Christopher Wathes as Chair, has made some significant changes in the way it operates:

- **A strategic plan and annual reviews.** Stakeholders, Defra and the devolved administrations were consulted on the 2006-10 strategy, which was approved by Government before publication.
- **Advisory opinions and letters.** As well as continuing to publish major reports (about one a year) which take at least three years to prepare, FAWC now produces opinions (one or two a year), which take about eighteen months' preparation, and letters (about seven a year) which generally take six weeks to two months. Stakeholders are consulted on priority subjects for reports and opinions and then Ministers, Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs), and senior officials choose topics from a list, and add their own if they wish. Some letters are prompted by departments' requests for specific advice while others are produced on FAWC's own initiative.
- **Reduced costs.** In the last five years FAWC's costs have reduced from £530k a year to £300k a year.

3.2.2 Consultees' views

In general, nearly all consultees were positive about FAWC. Most were happy with the adjectives used to describe it in the 2003 review (independent, influential, authoritative, unbiased, pragmatic, professional, and technically competent). Other positive adjectives which were suggested included: world-class, well-respected, well-informed, helpful, knowledgeable, respectable, thoughtful, valuable, enthusiastic, passionate, empowering,

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open, transparent, accessible, challenging, and acting with integrity. One respondent described it as academic, in both the good and bad senses.

Of organisations consulted, only Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) queried the quality of FAWC's work. In CIWF's view, FAWC had produced good advice in the past. It sometimes continued to do so, as with the recent report on poultry slaughter, but FAWC's advice was now sometimes of poor quality. Another organisation was "ambivalent", finding FAWC "sound (but no more)". Of the individuals who responded, one thought FAWC should be wound up because of its views on the Jewish method of animal slaughter. Another thought FAWC "worthy but useless. It produces endless reports which are ignored ... by Government".

Views expressed on specific points included:

- **Performance measures.** In terms of *customer satisfaction*, all those interviewed in Defra and the devolved administrations were very enthusiastic about FAWC. External organisations which make use of FAWC reports and opinions praised their *high quality*. FAWC members, who have wide experience of other organisations, praised the *quality of debate* and the *outstanding commitment* of their peers. *Value for money* was described as "unbelievable", while an outsider was surprised to discover how little FAWC cost.
- **Bias.** FAWC was recognised as independent of Government but not necessarily independent of other external influences, given the backgrounds of its members. Two organisations suggested that it was too biased in favour of the welfare lobby, although this was less evident than in the past.
- **Pragmatism.** On the whole, consultees thought FAWC balanced theory and pragmatism well. A few thought it too pragmatic but more thought it insufficiently practical. There were suggestions from both farming and delivery organisations that FAWC should pay more attention to delivery issues.
- **Intelligibility.** The academic nature, degree of detail and complexity of FAWC advice made it difficult to understand by those without an appropriate specialist background, including some FAWC members and Defra officials, as well as those responsible for its practical application.
- **Timeliness.** Delays had been a problem with some reports. The recent one on lamb tail docking and castration had taken twice as long as expected.
- **Authority.** There were some doubts about whether FAWC could claim to be authoritative: it did not cover every competence and its advice was not always implemented.

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- **Challenge / forcefulness.** FAWC was praised for its readiness to tackle controversial issues. In terms of its advice, however, there were concerns that it was too "balanced around the middle" and insufficiently forceful to be influential. Its low profile meant that it "punched below its weight". Some consultees would like to see it seeking more publicity and playing a greater role in education and promotion of welfare issues.

3.2.3 Conclusions

On the whole, this is a very positive endorsement of FAWC's performance. The detailed criticisms are dealt with in the next two chapters.

Conclusion

(3) *FAWC is generally well regarded and now offers exceptional value for money*

3.3 The alternatives

3.3.1 Background

Cabinet Office guidance suggests the following alternatives to an advisory NDPB should be considered:

- (1) In-house advice
- (2) 'Ad hoc' consultations
- (3) Advice from a single organisation
- (4) Market testing / contracting out
- (5) Merger / rationalisation

3.3.2 Consultees' views

(1) *In-house advice*

Almost all consultees valued independence from Government very highly. Further, Defra and the devolved administrations were clear that they lacked the necessary specialist expertise. If they recruited experts, there would be less breadth and depth than FAWC offered. Most external organisations agreed with this assessment. Government would need a supplementary official-led stakeholder forum (or forums) and more specialist advisory committees. A stakeholder forum would probably have less open discussions than FAWC. It would need to be given evidence-based recommendations to discuss: it was unlikely to be able to do its own research in the same way as FAWC. As for specialist advisory committees, experts would be less likely to be willing to join these if they were not clearly independent.

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(2) *'Ad hoc' consultations*

Defra and the devolved administrations already undertake 'ad hoc' consultations when appropriate. Nearly all consultees thought them useful only as a supplement to, not as a replacement for, FAWC. FAWC plays a useful role in identifying issues to be studied and has a broad, independent remit. Relying totally on 'ad hoc' consultations would probably result in poorer quality and less depth of advice, with loss of continuity. The interpretation of the consultations would be left to civil servants and Ministers with less knowledge and experience of the issues than FAWC.

(3) *Advice from a single organisation*

Most groups had vested interests, if only in undertaking more research. While it was important that Government realised it could look for advice to organisations other than FAWC, none had the same range of membership. Species-specific health and welfare councils could have a more formal role if their membership were more balanced. FAWC could also work more like a research council, but this would be more expensive.

(4) *Market testing / contracting out*

This would be more expensive and there are no obvious candidates.

(5) *Merger with other organisations*

There were fears that any merger would lead to less funding overall and to loss of distinctiveness. As already discussed, most consultees thought FAWC's current responsibilities were broad enough and that a focus on farm animals was appropriate. Possible candidates for merger include: the Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC); the Animal Procedures Committee (APC), run by the Home Office for experimental animals; and the Zoos Forum (run by Defra). There is already a Liaison Board of these bodies which is preparing its first report, on welfare surveillance.

There was little enthusiasm for merger, though some possibilities were preferred to others:

- **CAWC.** CAWC is not funded by Government and covers the UK. It is, like FAWC, a Defra interest in England. Companion animals are dealt with alongside farm animals in the Welsh Assembly Government, the Scottish Government, and in Northern Ireland. CAWC and FAWC already work together when necessary, as on genetic modification. If Government decided that it needed advice on companion animals from a Government body, it would have to look first at its detailed requirements and then at how they might best be met. This would not necessarily be through CAWC. If FAWC were merged with a similar Government body responsible for companion animal welfare, separate sub-committees would

probably be needed as, while 'the five freedoms' apply to both, companion and farm animals are generally very different. This would increase administrative costs, although there could be savings from co-located Secretariats.

- **APC.** APC undertakes a very specific job, concerned with an operational process under legislation. It has executive as well as advisory functions. Nonetheless, its interests are considered by some as closer than CAWC's to those of FAWC. Home Office involvement could make merger harder and less cost-effective.
- **Zoos Forum.** Has a very different role and different legislation. It is primarily concerned with zoo licensing issues and with encouraging zoos in conservation, education and scientific research. It can consider any animal issue where there is a zoo interest, including offering advice on animal welfare “ where no other more suitable body exists through which those views could be more appropriately put” There are some common educational issues and moral attitudes relating to zoo and farm animals.

3.3.3 Conclusions

From the viewpoint simply of the work that FAWC undertakes, there are no obvious advantages in any alternative and many disadvantages. One FAWC member commented that it is a measure of FAWC's success that he had not previously even considered an alternative to it, unlike some other bodies. If there were strong external drivers, it would be possible to replace FAWC with a combination of in-house advice, supplemented by stakeholder forums and advisory committees. Likewise, if a decision were taken to create a similar Government body responsible for companion animal welfare, this could potentially be merged with FAWC.

Conclusion

(4) *FAWC is the best organisation to undertake its current work.*

3.4 **Should FAWC continue to be a GB body?**

3.4.1 Background

FAWC covers Great Britain. Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK without an advisory body on animal welfare: it has a place on the comparable body, the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC), in the Irish Republic.

Animal welfare is a devolved issue, with the overarching Great Britain 2004 Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and separate country implementation plans. The current FAWC Chair has taken steps to ensure that the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government are engaged in FAWC's work. The Council meets in both Edinburgh and Cardiff annually, when the Chair meets CVOs and Ministers. Officials in both

administrations receive meeting papers and are invited to contribute to studies. They are consulted during policy development and involved in the selection of FAWC members. Ministers in the devolved administrations have sought specific FAWC advice, notably the Scots on pigs and the Welsh on sheep. A veterinary adviser in the Scottish Government coordinated the recent Government response to FAWC's response on lamb tail docking and castration.

3.4.2 Consultees' views

Consultees expressed the following views:

- **Separate councils for England, Scotland and Wales.** There was no support for this at present, with respondents noting the existence of, and need for, common standards. The devolved administrations were content with current relationships and concerned about the potential proliferation of bureaucracy. A Defra official saw increasing difficulties in getting an agreed GB policy line with different councils. Others were concerned about the implications of conflicting advice. Some consultees stressed the importance of FAWC continuing to consider issues which were important for one country only, while others drew attention to the increasing divergence in practice among the constituent parts of GB.
- **Future Welsh and Scottish involvement.** It might be helpful to encourage more specific involvement by the devolved administrations in FAWC's work by, for example, more teleconferencing or invitations to particular meetings. Neither administration could provide additional funding: at the time of devolution, it was agreed that Defra would support FAWC as a GB body.
- **Northern Ireland.** The position of Northern Ireland appears anomalous. This is for the Northern Ireland Government to consider, not this report. Most consultees thought a UK body preferable to a GB one as there should be common UK standards.

3.4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

There is no reason to change the *status quo* at present.

Conclusion

- (5) ***FAWC should remain a GB body at present. In future, if welfare strategies and practices diverge widely, it may be sensible to set up separate sub-committees for England, Scotland and Wales.***

Establishing separate country sub-committees could make it more likely that Northern Ireland would become part of the same structure. This would be desirable.

FAWC needs to remain aware of developments in all three countries. More input from the devolved administrations in its work would help this and also increase the administrations' understanding and ownership of FAWC.

Recommendation

(3) *FAWC, Defra and the devolved administrations should consider ways in which the Scottish and Welsh Assembly Governments can become more involved in FAWC activities.*

3.5 Impact of a new body for animal health in England

3.5.1 Background

As part of the Responsibility and Cost Sharing agenda, it has been proposed that an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) or non-Ministerial Government Department for animal health should be established in England in 2012 while responsibility for animal welfare would remain with Defra. There would be implications for the future role and location of the UK CVO. There are no comparable proposals to separate animal health and welfare in Scotland and Wales.

Consultation on the proposals ended in June 2009. In September Defra set up a Responsibility and Cost Sharing Advisory Group to, among other things:

- examine the proposals and the consultation responses; and
- advise on the responsibilities, scope and functions of the new body, including how best to ensure its animal health policies and Defra's animal welfare policies remain aligned.

In its consultation response, FAWC emphasised the importance of establishing appropriate working relations between the new body and Defra to ensure that animal health and welfare were not considered in isolation. It would like the new body to promote animal welfare to stakeholders and would welcome opportunities to work alongside it. The proposed registration system could benefit animal welfare surveillance, inspection and enforcement. FAWC would like consideration to be given to encouraging and incentivising good welfare practice through the proposed registration / levy / insurance system. Levy payments should not be set so high that they adversely affected expenditure on animal welfare.

3.5.2 Consultees' views.

Most external consultees emphasised their opposition to the proposed new body. In their view, responsibilities for animal health and welfare should not be separated.

As for the potential implications for FAWC:

- **FAWC's survival.** The proposal should not affect FAWC's survival: it would still be needed to give advice to Defra on animal welfare. The proposal might instead enhance its position within Defra because of the reduction in Defra's overall responsibilities.
- **Advice to the new body.** It would be important to avoid duplication and also to provide for challenge and advice to the new body. Many consultees hoped that FAWC could become its adviser, as well as continuing to give advice to Defra. This would, however, be for the new body to decide: it would need to discuss arrangements with Defra.
- **England Implementation Group role** The new body could fulfil EIG's role on health but not welfare. This would leave a gap on the implementation of welfare strategy which Defra would need to consider how to fill. For FAWC to do so, would be a major extension and change in its role. EIG dealt with monitoring and stimulating the implementation of existing strategy while FAWC was not currently engaged in either detailed monitoring or stimulating activity. The sector councils might also play a role. As the Government wished to avoid additional regulation, it was important to focus on making changes through the market or increased knowledge.
- **Funding.** Opportunistically, some thought FAWC might benefit from additional funding from the new body. While welfare was unlikely to be among its priorities, the Responsibility and Cost Sharing approach could generate fresh resources. Others thought this very unlikely: the proposals were not intended to increase overall expenditure.

3.5.3 Conclusions and recommendations

It is too early to predict the impact of a new body. While it may have no direct or immediate impact on FAWC, consultees have raised important issues which will need to be addressed at an early stage if a decision is taken to establish such a body.

Conclusion

- (6) ***FAWC could play an important part in ensuring that any new body for animal health in England is well-informed on the welfare implications of its activities. It is important too that the responsibilities of the England Implementation Group for delivering welfare strategy are clearly re-assigned. FAWC also needs to retain good links to the UK CVO.***

Recommendation

- (4) Defra's Animal Welfare Team should maintain close contact with the Responsibility and Cost Sharing Advisory Group. The team should ensure welfare considerations are fully taken into account; that any new body is aware of the advice FAWC can offer; and that this is covered in any Service Level Agreement. The team also needs to consider how the work of the England Implementation Group (EIG) on the delivery of welfare strategy may best be taken forward by the sector councils and others.**

CHAPTER 4: HOW WELL HAS FAWC PERFORMED IN THE PAST AND HOW MIGHT ITS PERFORMANCE BE IMPROVED IN FUTURE?

4.1 Introduction

FAWC's general performance was considered in the last chapter. This chapter examines FAWC's relations with Government, with other organisations in the UK, and with international organisations. It also looks at how far FAWC has taken account of Government objectives on some non-welfare issues.

4.2 Relations with Government

4.2.1 Background

Devolved administrations

Some aspects of FAWC's relations with Government have been considered in previous chapters. Those with the devolved administrations were described on pages 29 and 30.

Defra

FAWC has the following contacts in Defra:

- **Ministers.** An annual meeting with the relevant Minister at the FAWC Chair's request.
- **Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO).** The CVO is among those asked to select issues for study and the Chair meets the CVO annually. FAWC used to have contact with Defra's Farm Animal Liaison Committees but these no longer exist.
- **Animal Welfare Team.** There are quarterly meetings between the head of the team and FAWC's Chair. Members of the team attend FAWC meetings of all sorts, brief Ministers and are involved in appointing FAWC members. The team usually leads on responses to FAWC reports and opinions.

Plans, programmes and performance

Defra and the devolved administrations are consulted on FAWC's strategic plan and Government approves it before publication. Quality standards and deadlines for reports are generally set by FAWC itself. Government does not usually set any specific performance targets, nor does it monitor outputs and outcomes systematically.

Defra and the devolved administrations give FAWC specific deadlines for submitting advice when clearly necessary, e.g. on beak trimming.

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Feedback and follow-up

There have long been problems with the Government's handling of FAWC advice. Until recently, Government tried to produce formal written responses to all reports. In practice, the 2003 review found that responses "were often late, were sometimes non-existent or did not always fully address the proposals put forward ... there were, apparently, reports up to ten years old which had not been responded to". The reviewers suggested that FAWC reports should be acknowledged within a month, with a more detailed response covering each proposal within six months from the date the report was issued. Since then, while acknowledgement of reports has been prompt, very few full responses have been issued. During the course of this review, one has been issued on lamb castration and tail docking, coordinated by the welfare team in the Scottish Executive. Before that, the last full response was in 2005.

The head of the Animal Welfare Team has considered how handling can be improved. She has concluded that the preparation of detailed responses to every report cannot be a priority for scarce staff resources, though they may continue to be appropriate in some cases. In others, responses will take different forms. On the recent report on the welfare of white meat animals at slaughter or killing, a Defra Minister has written to explain how the report was taken into account in EU negotiations and will continue to play a role in informing future reviews and research.

4.2.2 Consultees' views

In general, consultees thought relations were very good. The current FAWC Chair was meticulous in maintaining contact with both Defra and the devolved administrations and in keeping to FAWC's brief. It might be helpful to formalise some of the reporting arrangements. Relationships with the CVO would need to be reviewed when the CVO's future had been clarified by decisions on the possible new body for animal health in England (see previous chapter).

Detailed comments included:

- **Strategic planning.** The Government could usefully be more active in FAWC's strategic planning, without compromising FAWC's independence. It could communicate EU timetables to FAWC more clearly.
- **Requests for advice.** While Government sometimes requested advice on emerging policies or problems, e.g. contingency planning, some FAWC members would welcome closer dialogue on advisory topics, especially for reports and opinions. There were limits to how far FAWC could respond to issues that arose suddenly: it could not give instant advice on subjects it had not previously considered and was suitably wary of appearing to be used for political purposes.

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- **Performance targets.** A very rigid approach to performance targets could interfere with FAWC's independence and be a distraction. On the other hand, FAWC might benefit from some more explicit and firmer targets, and from some monitoring of its outputs and outcomes. Timeliness in producing its longer reports had long been a problem. To some extent, this reflected dependence on volunteers and the need for thoroughness, but delays could limit reports' usefulness. Since the 2003 review, FAWC's workload had been made more manageable by reducing the number of reports being prepared at any one time from 8 to 3. Major delays could usually be attributed to unforeseen contingencies, such as the illness of a working group chair or a Government request for advice on a different subject.
- **Freedoms and flexibilities.** (*FAWC can: investigate any topic falling within its remit; communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public; publish its advice independently.*) There was general agreement that FAWC's freedoms were appropriate, although the European Commission needed to be aware that FAWC could not negotiate on the UK's behalf. FAWC used its freedoms and flexibilities well.
- **Feedback and follow-up.** This was the area of most concern to FAWC members and outside organisations. CIWF suggested that Defra rarely implemented any of FAWC's recommendations for strengthening welfare legislation. Defra and the devolved administrations, on the other hand, were clear that FAWC's advice had been very influential: recently, for example, it had been used in negotiations on EU slaughter regulations. Government had rarely rejected FAWC's advice (although it did so on an earlier report on the slaughter of red meat animals).

The decision to no longer issue formal Government responses to every FAWC report concerned some FAWC members and outside organisations. In their view it suggested that FAWC was being sidelined and showed a lack of respect for the hard work of its members. FAWC took trouble over the detailed wording of its recommendations: a lack of a similarly detailed response would deprive both it and others of useful feedback for the future. It was important for FAWC and external organisations to know which recommendations were not acceptable, as well as those which were to be implemented. Both FAWC and other organisations had previously been able to comment on the Government's response.

The FAWC Chair, other FAWC members and some external organisations were sanguine about the change. There was a range of ways in which FAWC could influence policy. The presence of Defra staff in FAWC working groups meant that there were exchanges of views as policy developed. The prompt response on the white meat slaughter report had been welcome. One consultee suggested it could be useful for FAWC to produce fewer new reports and spend more time looking at what had happened to its previous recommendations.

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- **Form of advice.** Consultees in Defra, the devolved administrations, FAWC and some external organisations suggested that FAWC might need to look further at the way in which it presented its advice. The language and complexity of the arguments could make it very difficult to understand. While, as considered earlier, it would cause confusion for FAWC to address audiences other than Government directly, there was widespread interest in its findings and others took them into account. The FAWC Chair suggested that it could be helpful for FAWC to become involved in drafting welfare codes. FAWC had undertaken this in the past and its New Zealand counterpart did so. This could ensure stakeholder involvement and that FAWC's advice was made available sooner. Defra and the devolved administrations would still need to be responsible for laying the codes before the relevant legislatures and decisions have yet to be taken on whether the codes should be up-dated.
- **EIG.** The establishment of the England Implementation Group was seen by some as sidelining FAWC. It had diverted resources away from FAWC and confused people. (The relationship between FAWC and EIG was considered in the previous chapter.)

4.2.3 Conclusions and recommendations

In general, FAWC has extremely good relations with Defra and the devolved administrations at a range of levels. In the past there appears to have been a serious mismatch between FAWC's prolific, if sometimes tardy, output and Government's ability to respond to it. The problems have been tackled to some extent by both FAWC and Government: FAWC has sought to make its output more timely and relevant while Government has addressed how it should respond.

Conclusion

- (7) ***Relations between FAWC and Government at a personal level are very good. Changes have been made recently to improve overall outcomes but there is scope for further improvement.***

FAWC's initiative in producing strategic plans and annual reviews is commendable. Government needs to become more actively involved in this process. It needs to ensure that FAWC's advice is both relevant and timely. For its part, FAWC needs to monitor, as it has sometimes done in the past, what action is taken to implement its recommendations.

Recommendations:

- (5) ***Defra and the devolved administrations need to ensure that FAWC's strategic plan matches their priorities and that FAWC is clear about EU and other***

timetables. They should agree deadlines with FAWC for the production of advice and also how outcomes may be monitored and measured.

- (6) Defra and the devolved administrations should keep under review whether there are more topics on which they would welcome FAWC's advice.*
- (7) FAWC should review, selectively but systematically, the outcomes of its earlier advice and raise any concerns with Defra and the devolved administrations.*
- (8) FAWC, Defra and the devolved administrations should review how FAWC currently presents its advice*

4.3 Relations with other organisations in the UK

4.3.1 Background

The Chair of FAWC is clear that FAWC exists to provide advice to Government, at present interpreted as Ministers in Defra and the devolved administrations, and not to other organisations. Nonetheless, he recognises a wide range of stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors. FAWC maintains good contact with them as follows:

- **Liaison Board.** A Liaison Board consisting of FAWC, CAWC, APC and the Zoos Forum meets twice a year and is preparing a report (see page 28).
- **Government bodies.** There have been recent meetings with several bodies, including the Animal Health Agency, the Meat Hygiene Service, and the Local Authorities' Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS).
- **Non-governmental organisations.** FAWC has an annual open meeting. Attendance has reduced steadily over the last three to four years from about 80 to about 30 to 40 organisations.

There is extensive consultation with stakeholders. As part of the strategic planning process, about a hundred provided views on priorities from a list of possible topics for investigation. When producing individual reports, stakeholders are invited to contribute in writing at the beginning; oral evidence is taken from key stakeholders; and consultation meetings, again with key stakeholders, are held towards the end of the report-writing process on the provisional findings and recommendations. Those preparing reports also undertake field visits.

FAWC's Chair and others meet organisations that express particular concerns or in which they have a particular interest. Some FAWC members are also members of stakeholder organisations e.g. Professor Richard Bennett was a member of the England

Implementation Group and Huw Davies is a member of the Welsh Animal Health and Welfare Steering Group.

4.3.2 Consultees' views

Most consultees recognised that FAWC needed to be accountable only to Government. While the interests of the animal had to be pre-eminent, consultees considered that FAWC had many stakeholders: they held predictably varied views on their relative importance. Consultees were generally positive about their relationships with FAWC; no organisation was pressing for FAWC to be abolished, although there was some apathy and indifference.

Points made about specific aspects of relations included:

- **Consultation.** Consultation was generally seen as good and plentiful. One consultee suggested that FAWC might usefully adopt the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's approach in holding open stakeholder meetings on proposals. Another suggested that the way FAWC 'took evidence' like a Select Committee could be intimidating and that a more collaborative approach would be more productive.
- **Annual open meeting.** This could be made more focused (FAWC is already considering this). It might be helpful to hold open meetings after reports were published.
- **Openness of other meetings.** There was no demand for FAWC's regular Council and group meetings to be open. Objections were raised by some FAWC members and external organisations to this: debate would be inhibited, some issues were commercial in confidence; meetings would be more expensive to arrange; meetings would be longer if public participation were allowed; attendance would be limited to a 'hard core'; extremists could target individual members. On the other hand, other FAWC members and consultees saw no objection to openness: it could improve FAWC's image and bring it in line with many other public bodies. While not arguing for open meetings, the RSPCA would like greater transparency on decision-making and on when decisions were unanimous. A farming organisation would also welcome more information on proceedings. The current notes of meetings that are published on the web-site were not considered adequate.
- **Geographical spread of meetings and visits.** Visits and meetings in the devolved administrations worked well. It could be helpful for the annual open meeting to also move around. Similarly, if other meetings were open, these could move around too.
- **Other communications with stakeholders.** Many consultees would welcome regular updates on FAWC's activities. This could help avoid surprises when reports were issued and also provide more information on proceedings at Council meetings and elsewhere.

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- **Publicity.** This was currently a live issue within FAWC. Some FAWC members considered it should do more to promote its views while others did not see it as a public-facing body. The specialist press covered FAWC's work but the national press did not. FAWC did not hold Press conferences about its reports. FAWC probably had a lower profile than ten years ago, possibly reflecting the increasing impact of campaigns targeted at consumers. FAWC might help to inform consumers by drawing more attention to GB standards in comparison with those elsewhere in the world. Several respondents commented that the public generally did not know of FAWC's existence. FAWC had neither the structure nor resources to react to media interest in animal welfare issues or events.
- **Joint working.** A number of organisations were interested in more joint working with FAWC. FAWC members and others saw difficulties in significant amounts of joint working, which could compromise FAWC's independence. There could be possibilities with public bodies such as the Meat Hygiene Service and Animal Health. Joint working would require additional resources.

4.3.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

(8) FAWC's relations with organisations in the UK are generally good.

Consultees suggested some sensible minor improvements. Publicity and joint working raise some more fundamental questions about FAWC's role.

Recommendations

(9) FAWC should:

- **regularly update its stakeholders by email on developments. Such an update could be used to alert stakeholders to new material on FAWC's website, including notes of meetings, reports and opinions. It could also give advance warning of publications and news of any other significant developments;**
- **seek to make its annual open meeting more productive, perhaps by focusing on a single subject. It could also consider holding open meetings before and/or after reports are published;**
- **put fuller notes of Council meetings on its web-site;**
- **consider whether it should make Council meetings open if demand emerges for that.**

(10) Defra, the devolved administrations and FAWC should consider how FAWC's work might be made known more widely.

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4.4 **FAWC's relations with international organisations**

4.4.1 Background

The European Forum for Animal Welfare Councils (EuroFAWC) is a discussion forum for a wide range of countries. A predecessor body was established in 1994/95 but lapsed. EuroFAWC in its current form was set up in 2005 on the initiative of FAWC's current Chair and his German counterpart. The European Commission, the Council of Europe, and OIE (the animal health wing of the WHO) attend. It includes advisory bodies, CVOs and/or policymakers. The New Zealand equivalent of FAWC is an invited observer. The UK provided the secretary during EuroFAWC's establishment and for its first three meetings; Belgium now does this. EuroFAWC has an annual meeting which travels around Europe.

FAWC also has contact with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Commission and advisory bodies worldwide, especially the New Zealand one. Professor David Morton, a FAWC member, is also a member of EFSA's panel on animal health and welfare.

4.4.2 Consultees' views

Consultees made the following points:

- **Outreach work.** FAWC could be more proactive internationally like its counterparts in Australasia, either alone or with its European counterparts.
- **Links with the European Commission.** FAWC needed to build closer links with the Commission. FAWC's work has sometimes failed to take account of similar work being undertaken in Europe.

4.4.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

As already discussed on page 23, more direct involvement in international outreach work would have resource implications. This would be best undertaken in conjunction with others.

Conclusion

- (9) ***FAWC has developed useful international links in recent years. It should build on these existing links with its counterparts rather than acting alone abroad.***

Recommendation

- (11) ***FAWC might usefully build closer links with the European Commission, either directly or through Defra, to ensure that there is no duplication of work.***

4.5 Cabinet Office concerns

4.5.1 Background

The Cabinet Office guidance on reviews emphasises the importance of NDPBs taking account of:

- the Government's objectives on sustainable development;
- the Government's objectives on social exclusion; and
- the precautionary principle. (The use of risk assessment is probably a more appropriate current issue.)

4.5.2 Consultees' views

Of those consulted, only FAWC members showed significant interest in sustainable development, social exclusion and the precautionary principle. Other consultees were more interested in the introduction of more formal risk and impact assessments.

Points raised included:

- **Sustainable development.** FAWC had looked at the relative merits of intensive and extensive production and took account of land usage and environmental footprints. It had considered climate change implications. There could be conflicts: e.g. in terms of the environment and disease control, intensive indoor livestock keeping had advantages but had some welfare disadvantages. FAWC had also looked at the implications of the increase in the world's population. A non-FAWC consultee suggested that ethical considerations formed a fourth sustainability pillar: FAWC had been looking at these. Another drew attention to the possible perverse consequences of FAWC recommendations, e.g. setting high standards for pigs in the UK had led to more pork being imported from countries with lower standards. Defra had a new role in food sustainability and FAWC might need to feed into this.
- **Social exclusion.** FAWC generally took account of the social implications of its recommendations for both producers and consumers, e.g. religious slaughter; problems for the poorest consumers from increased welfare standards; geographical differences such as crofting; stockmanship from a rural community viewpoint; and production in developing countries.
- **Precautionary principle.** The precautionary principle should be used only where there was no evidence and this was not generally the case in FAWC's work. Where

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it had been applied, it was generally more in relation to the animal than to people or the environment ie FAWC always aimed to give the animal the benefit of the doubt. The precautionary principle was more apparent in food safety work. Its use always needed to be proportionate.

- **Risk and impact assessment.** FAWC did not make explicit risk and impact assessments. These could be difficult because the issues were so multi-faceted and there was no sensible model of proportionality for animal welfare. Assessments were implicit in FAWC's work and its members were cautious. Some risk assessment had been done on caged birds. EFSA does formal risk assessments which are not always useful. FAWC took EFSA assessments into account when relevant. It lacked its own expertise in risk assessment. Defra used risk assessment to analyse FAWC's findings. . FAWC was increasingly interested in both economic and ethical analysis.

While non-FAWC consultees did not generally argue for EFSA-type formal assessments, many would like to see more analysis by FAWC of the impact of its recommendations. More should be costed. Other consultees suggested FAWC should look at the practicalities of its recommendations in more depth: some recommendations could appear 'naïve'

4.5.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

FAWC has recently looked more explicitly at sustainability issues than at social exclusion or use of the precautionary principle but has not ignored the latter.

Conclusion

- (10) ***FAWC's activities contribute to and take account of the Government's objectives on sustainable development and social exclusion. It makes appropriate use of the precautionary principle.***

There is significant pressure for FAWC to look more at the costs of its proposals and their other potential impacts, in terms of economics, ethics and practicalities. This would have resource and expertise implications. An appropriate balance is needed between assessments made by FAWC and those made by Defra and the devolved administrations as recipients of its advice.

Recommendation

- (12) ***FAWC, Defra and the devolved administrations should consider what assessment FAWC should make of its recommendations before submitting them to Government.***

CHAPTER 5: HOW WELL DOES FAWC USE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IT?

5.1 Introduction

An advisory body such as FAWC is critically dependent on the quality of its members. This chapter looks first at that and at the implications for appointment procedures and remuneration. It then looks at the guidance, structures, Secretariat and technology used to support members and to make sure their expertise is employed to best effect.

5.2 Members' quality

5.2.1 Background

Numbers

Under the current Chair, FAWC membership has reduced from 24 to 20; the target for 2010 is 18. The reductions were made because a larger Council had become unnecessary and unwieldy. Members are paid for 10 to 15 days' work a year and usually do 20 to 30. The Chair is paid for 25 and currently does about 50.

Expertise

Members' backgrounds are given at Annex 1. They are appointed for their personal qualities and experience, not as representatives of organisations. Most are selected because of FAWC's work programme as set out in its strategy while others bring generic expertise. Because of FAWC's dual role in risk assessment and risk management, members' academic backgrounds include veterinary science, agriculture, economics, ethics, and education, while others bring practical experience of implementation in, for example, farming or retailing. A first lay member was appointed in 2006 and has resigned with effect from the end of October. In the next round, a consumer affairs expert and a veterinary epidemiologist will be sought.

Geographic, gender, ethnic and disability balance

There are members from England, Scotland and Wales. There is no one from Northern Ireland. There are fifteen men and five women, one the lay member who has resigned. There is no member from an ethnic minority and no members are disabled.

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Singletons

The role of single experts (or small minorities) in groups can be difficult, and FAWC has several of these. They may become frustrated and isolated or they may adopt the group norm. Conversely, a single representative of a sector can give them disproportionate influence.

5.2.2 Consultees' views

Consultees praised the very high quality of FAWC members. They were all very well respected in their own fields and displayed extraordinary commitment and dedication. They were welcoming to newcomers.

Other points made included:

- **Expertise.** The main concern was that FAWC's membership was too academic. Organisations involved in farming, enforcement and delivery would like to see more people with practical experience in their own fields and, in one case, more practising vets. There were also suggestions for more expertise in sociology, risk assessment / management, consumer, economics and environmental issues.
- **Competences.** It was suggested that the appointment process might include psychometric tests to identify potential chairs. IT competences were also increasingly important.
- **Representational roles.** Most consultees thought it right that FAWC members were expected to 'leave their organisation at the door'. An advisory body with representatives was said to work well in Ireland but less so in the Netherlands. Some respondents questioned the feasibility of members taking a purely objective view. One consultee suggested the appointment process should examine conflicts of interest in more depth.
- **Singletons** FAWC singletons interviewed had not encountered problems: other members had been welcoming and they had not been inhibited from putting forward their views. One suggested that FAWC rightly chose 'middle of the road' experts so that they were properly representative. Meetings were well chaired.
- **Gender, disability and ethnic balance** Many consultees pointed out that FAWC would inevitably reflect the pools from which it recruited: these were generally dominated by white, able-bodied men. The gender balance was better than many expected. The absence of disabled people did not pose obvious problems. It was, however, important to get the views of ethnic minorities. If members of ethnic minorities were not on the Council, there would need to be specific consultation to obtain their views when appropriate.

5.2.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Earlier chapters have drawn attention to FAWC's high levels of performance. Its success reflects the high quality of its members. They work well, together and individually.

There is tension between representing the diverse interests involved in animal welfare, and keeping the Council manageable. FAWC has generally dealt well with this tension.

The balance of expertise among members of advisory NDPBs is likely always to be criticised. In FAWC's case, it is important that its members possess the expertise to evaluate evidence from a wide range of sources. Members are also expected to draft reports. For both these tasks, an academic background is very helpful. Academic input needs to be balanced, however, by those with more practical experience. FAWC chairs and members from an academic background also need to ensure that their discussions and publications can be understood by other participants and readers.

Conclusion

(11) FAWC's members are of high quality. Reducing numbers to 18 is a sensible target. So long as appropriate expertise and balances are maintained, it might be possible to reduce Council numbers further to, say, 15. It is important that academic contributions are balanced by practical inputs and that the views of ethnic minorities are taken fully into account.

5.3 Appointment procedures

5.3.1 Background

Appointments are made on merit in accordance with Nolan procedures. Criteria for appointment are drawn up taking account of the current skills available and perceived needs. They are made clear at the time applications are invited. This is done through Press advertisements, through relevant organisations and through approaches to individuals. Members of the Jewish and Muslim communities were encouraged to apply for the lay member vacancy but applicants from those communities were not appointed.

The interview panel includes some one nominated by the Office of the Commissioner on Public Appointments (OCPA). Panel recommendations are considered by Ministers in Defra and the devolved administrations.

Appointments are for a three-year term. Individual performance and FAWC's needs are evaluated towards the end of that period, taking into account a report by the FAWC chair, and some members are invited to serve for a second term. In very exceptional circumstances, a third term may be served. There is no procedure for terminating the appointment of poor performers before the end of a three year appointment period.

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There is no overall evaluation of the outcome of appointment procedures. OCPA and Defra monitor gender, ethnic and disability balances. Defra is producing an action plan and targets for ethnic representation on all its NDPBs. OCPA undertakes occasional audits of the recruitment process: this was last done for appointments made in 2005.

5.3.2 Consultees' views

Appointment procedures were generally regarded as tough but fair. They might deter some people but consultees did not suggest this justified changing them.

Points made included:

- **Transparency.** There was no information on the overall balance sought for FAWC, just on the criteria for current appointments. The criteria for deciding on reappointments for second three-year terms were also unclear. Unsuccessful candidates should be given the reasons for their rejection without needing to seek specific feedback.
- **Gender, disability and ethnic balance.** Consultees were unanimous in supporting appointments made on merit rather than by favouring any particular group.
- **Advertisement.** Posts might be advertised more widely. It might be made clear that applications from ethnic minorities were particularly welcomed.
- **Evaluation.** There should be reviews of the overall outcome of the appointments procedures and ways of dealing speedily with poor performance. Members might serve a probationary year.
- **OCPA involvement.** The inclusion of an independent OCPA member complicated and slowed the process on occasions. Defra found their contribution valuable.

5.3.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

In general, appointment procedures follow the standard Nolan prescription and work well.

Conclusion

(12) *Defra and the devolved administrations apply the Nolan appointment procedures well.*

There are some improvements that might be made to improve transparency, balance and performance.

Recommendations:

- (13) **Transparency.** *Defra and FAWC should make it clear that the criteria for membership vary from time to time and that there is no permanent balance.*
- (14) **Balance.** *More effort should be made to attract candidates from ethnic minorities. The new Defra action plan should be followed.*
- (15) **Evaluation.** *The FAWC Chair should review the performance of new members, who should serve a probationary year. Defra and FAWC should review the overall outcomes of appointment procedures periodically.*

5.4 Remuneration.

5.4.1 Background

FAWC members are paid £146 a day, with the Chairs of the Council and its sub-groups paid £220. In general, members work for significantly more days than those for which payment is made (see page 44). In theory, following the 2003 review, claims could be made for preparation time but are not. This would cost an additional £50k a year. Some payments have been made for whole days spent drafting.

Not all chairs and members of Defra's advisory NDPBs are paid. Of those that are, rates range from £100 to £300 for members and from £151 to £500 for chairs. The members and chair of the England Implementation Group have been paid significantly more than others. The different rates are intended to reflect varying contributions but owe at least as much to the varying histories of the bodies concerned.

5.4.2 Consultees' views

Points made by consultees included:

- **Impact on recruitment.** The level of pay had neither attracted nor deterred current FAWC members. Remuneration was irrelevant for some because their employers paid for their attendance. Although there had been an average of sixteen applicants for each post since 2005, the levels of remuneration might deter the self-employed / employees in small businesses from applying. On the other hand, paying FAWC members what they could earn elsewhere would not be affordable and there was an element of *pro bono* work in most public appointments.
- **Relativities.** There was a little resentment among FAWC members that they were paid less than their EIG counterparts (£300 a day). The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) had recently surveyed the 'loss of earnings' daily rates paid by

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other organisations. These ranged from £250 to £430. The RCVS had set its own rate for RCVS Council members at £300 a day.

- **Hours worked.** There was some resentment among FAWC members about the quantity of unpaid drafting and research work they were doing because of reduced Secretariat support (see page 52). One FAWC member suggested payment by the hour rather than by the day.

5.4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

The level of remuneration is not a major issue but some adjustment would be helpful.

Conclusion

- (13) ***Remuneration for FAWC members is broadly in line with that for other advisory NDPBs. Increasing it sufficiently to attract significantly more applicants for posts would not be affordable and there is no shortage of suitable applicants. Some minor adjustments are needed, however, to make sure FAWC members are rewarded fairly in comparison with others.***

The adjustments needed relate both to the rates of pay and to the work that is remunerated. If these adjustments appear unaffordable, the amount of advice commissioned from FAWC should be reduced.

Recommendations:

- (16) ***Pay rates.*** Defra should bring the remuneration of FAWC members into line with other Defra advisory NDPBs. The median rate for members appears to be £172. FAWC chairs are already paid about the median rate.
- (17) ***Eligibility.*** Defra and FAWC should review the unpaid work that FAWC members are undertaking. They should ensure that FAWC members are not assigned tasks that are more appropriate for the FAWC Secretariat. They should agree how far members should be paid for any other work that is currently unpaid.

5.5 Induction, training and guidance

5.5.1 Background

The FAWC Chair gives a presentation to new members on FAWC's history and operations before their first meeting. At their second or third meeting, members are invited to give a presentation on their own interests. There is no formal training.

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The FAWC Secretariat provides written guidance for members.

5.5.2 Consultees' views

- **Customer satisfaction.** FAWC members were content with the induction, training and guidance they received. Most emphasised that they had much experience in attending meetings. Some had forgotten that they had received written guidance and few appeared to refer to it regularly.
- **Competences.** As noted on page 45, not all FAWC members have IT competences and not all have experience of chairing meetings.

5.5.3 Conclusion and recommendations

The current arrangements for training, induction and guidance are adequate. More training in specific areas might be helpful. It should be voluntary: FAWC members are already generous with their time

Recommendation

(18) *The FAWC Secretariat should investigate whether members would like training provided in, for example, IT skills.*

5.6 Structures

5.6.1 Background

Before it produced a strategic plan, FAWC had a large number of working groups set up on an 'ad hoc' basis to produce individual reports. It now has only three working groups and also has three standing committees which produce opinions and letters.

Although the 2003 review suggested a deputy chair should be appointed, this has not been considered necessary.

It would be possible to co-opt expert advisers to sub-groups: groups looking at farm assurance, fish and laying hens have done so in the past. There are no such co-optees at present: expert advice comes from Defra's veterinary staff.

5.6.2 Consultees' views

There was generally praise for the current structure. It produced a high quality of debate.

Points made included:

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- **Pressures on chairs.** All the chairs appeared to be coping well, though the lack of Secretariat support had put a heavy drafting burden on some of them. Another Standing Committee might help. FAWC's Chair carries an enormous load, very capably. He might share more with the chairs of sub-groups and vice chairs might be appointed to deal with particular issues such as exit interviews.
- **Membership of groups.** It would be helpful if people moved between Standing Committees from time to time.
- **Use of experts.** FAWC could make more use of co-opted experts on working groups. This would help fill any gaps in expertise and also allow Council numbers to be reduced further. There could be dangers in creating two tiers of membership. Encouraging full FAWC involvement by co-optees could in effect by-pass Nolan procedures. An alternative would be to make short-term Council appointments.
- **Civil servants' role.** Civil servants' participation in working groups was much valued: they helped to avoid 'gaffes', provided continuity and learned much themselves. Though a civil service presence might appear to compromise FAWC's independence, FAWC members and the civil servants involved were clear that it did not do so. FAWC members were concerned about the possible impact of potential staff reductions and retirements in Defra. Defra was committed to providing ongoing support for the groups. Staff in the devolved administrations would like to play a larger part when feasible.
- **Relations between the Council and groups.** The sub-groups could point up the controversial areas more clearly when submitting reports / opinions / letters to Council for clearance.

5.6.3 Conclusions and recommendations

There is no need for major structural changes.

Conclusion

(14) *The structure of Standing Committees and Working Groups is working well.*

The points made by consultees deserve to be considered further.

Recommendations

(19) *FAWC should consider the points made by consultees about the drafting burden on some chairs; the possible appointment of vice chairs; the distribution of work among chairs; the movement of members between Standing Committees; and the presentation of material to Council.*

- (20) *Defra, the devolved administrations and FAWC should think further about the scope for co-opting experts onto working groups. An alternative would be to make some short-term appointments to the Council.*
- (21) *Defra should remain committed to providing the current levels of expert advice to FAWC standing committees and working groups. The devolved administrations should keep under review the scope for them to contribute expertise too.*

5.7 Secretariat

5.7.1 Background

The 2003 review found that FAWC needed more Secretariat support and recommended the appointment of an additional HEO. This appointment was made.

Since then, FAWC's Secretariat has been substantially reduced and reorganised. It has moved from the Animal Welfare Team to the Livestock Hub to be part of a shared secretariat serving the England Implementation Group (EIG), the National Standing Committee on Farm Animal Genetic Resources (FAnGR) and the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC). In practice, resources have not been extensively shared. EIG has now been dissolved and SEAC's workload is decreasing significantly, with an associated decrease in the Secretariat resource required to service it.

The Secretariat has been reduced from 6 to 2.5 posts, plus some administrative support. The Secretary, Richard Aram, is on temporary promotion to SEO, with a full-time HEO and half an EO. The Secretariat services ten FAWC groups and deals with the website, queries, appointments and other issues.

5.7.2 Consultees' views

Consultees displayed much enthusiasm and admiration for the Secretariat as a whole and for the Secretary in particular. Both FAWC members and outside organisations commented on their helpfulness, while FAWC members also emphasised their commitment and hard work. At the same time, FAWC members made it clear that they would like more support.

Consultees made the following points:

- **Pressures on members.** Because the Secretariat had been reduced greatly, FAWC members had to do substantially more unpaid drafting and research. Some resent this. Defra consultees could see value in FAWC members doing some drafting and research themselves.

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- **Pressures on staff.** The Secretariat is aware that some tasks take longer than desirable and that they cannot provide as much support as they would like.
- **Quality of staff.** Consultees recognised that the quality of Secretariat staff, like any other group of civil servants, could vary. FAWC members were especially concerned that the current Secretary's outstanding contribution should be properly recognised. They were very concerned too that Secretariat staff should have consistently good drafting skills and thought it would be worth paying for higher grade staff to make this more likely.
- **Knowledge of welfare issues.** Consultees in Defra, FAWC and the Secretariat stressed the importance of the Secretariat understanding animal welfare issues. Defra vets might provide training and there could be opportunities to 'shadow' staff in the Animal Welfare Team. Repositioning the Secretariat within the Animal Welfare Team so that it would be aware of day-to-day developments from informal contact would also be helpful. This would also help to keep the Animal Welfare Team engaged with FAWC's work.
- **Contributions from the devolved administrations.** In theory, greater involvement by the devolved administrations would be helpful. In practice, the Secretary thought that this would only be possible if staff from the devolved administrations were seconded to work in London. Neither the Scottish Government nor the Welsh Assembly Government has the resources for this (or indeed to offer any additional assistance at present).

5.7.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Previous chapters have drawn attention to the hard work and dedication of FAWC members. Their output is of a high quality and they are paid much less for producing it than they could earn elsewhere. Defra and the devolved administrations need to ensure that they receive adequate Secretariat support.

All FAWC consultees made it clear that the Secretariat's hard work and dedication matched their own. They were equally unanimous in expressing concern about recent reductions in numbers and most had concerns about drafting capability. Most stressed that members of the Secretariat needed excellent drafting ability and that understanding of animal welfare issues was essential.

Conclusion

- (15) ***Defra and the devolved administrations need to give priority to addressing the concerns of FAWC members about the balance between their input and the level and quality of Secretariat support.***

There are a number of steps that should be taken.

Recommendations

- (22) *If FAWC's workload remains at its current levels, Defra should increase the overall capacity and drafting capability of the FAWC Secretariat. An additional HEO would be most appropriate. Care should be taken to recruit staff with first-rate drafting skills. If it is not possible to increase Secretariat staffing, FAWC's output should be reduced*
- (23) *As the reasons for creating a shared secretariat with EIG and SEAC no longer apply, the FAWC Secretariat should be relocated with the Animal Welfare Team to improve day-to-day contact on animal welfare issues.*
- (24) *Secretariat staff should have both induction and regular refresher training on animal welfare issues.*

5.8 Technology

5.8.1 Background

FAWC has its own website, with well over 100,000 'hits' and about 6,000 copies of its reports downloaded each month. It is now FAWC's main channel of public communication. This has enabled the production and circulation of hard copies of reports and other papers to be substantially reduced. There are plans to incorporate the website into the Defra one. The Secretariat maintains electronic mailing lists. There is significant electronic communication among FAWC members, although the Secretariat sends out hard copies of meeting papers.

5.8.2 Consultees' views

Consultees generally thought FAWC's use of technology was adequate and in some instances above average. One pointed out that it was the quality of FAWC's thinking that mattered, not whether its presentation was 'state of the art'. Nonetheless, consultees had some useful suggestions to offer.

Points made included:

- **Website.** All consultees thought the website well maintained and – at the least – adequate. Views differed on whether it required improvement. While some found it easy to navigate, others would welcome a search option. There were suggestions for more material that might go on the site, e.g. background papers for reports (there are copyright issues here), fuller notes of meetings and a list of useful sources. The site might be made more interactive, though that would have resource implications. There were some concerns about incorporating FAWC's

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website with Defra's, which was less user-friendly. There were also implications for the perceived independence of FAWC.

- **Webcasts.** These might be used for the annual open meeting and any other meetings that were opened up. There was no strong demand for this, however. The Food Standards Agency and SEAC had abandoned webcasts in favour of telephone access and tapes, respectively.
- **Teleconferences.** These might be used more. In particular, teleconferences could allow more participation by the devolved administrations. FAWC members stressed the value of face-to-face contact.
- **Electronic mailing lists.** The Secretariat needed to ensure that lists were regularly updated as some contact details were out of date. Several consultees were keen to make use of them to provide updates on FAWC's work (see page 39).
- **Electronic circulation of papers.** Many documents were still circulated only as hard copies. This inhibited their wider circulation, prevented filing in some organisations and gave some FAWC members too much to carry. Hard copies were, however, often easier to read and it could be more efficient to print large quantities centrally rather than individual recipients printing their own.

5.8.3 Conclusions and recommendations

There are no major problems but some merit in all the ideas above.

Conclusion

- (16) FAWC makes reasonable use of technology. There are some relatively minor changes that could be made to improve its accessibility to external organisations and the public, and to reduce running costs.**

There would be resource implications in making some of the changes described above. Because of the long-term gains, it could be worth the cost of assigning a temporary member of staff to the FAWC Secretariat to implement them.

Recommendation

- (25) The FAWC Secretariat should, in order of priority:**

- (1) Consult those to whom it sends papers and publications to see whether they would like electronic copies in addition to, or instead of, hard copies.**
- (2) Check electronic contact details for stakeholders are up to date and whether other stakeholders could be included on electronic mailing lists.**

- (3) Consult stakeholders on whether they would like to receive regular electronic updates on FAWC's work and produce them.**
- (4) Consider making more use of teleconferences, in consultation with the devolved administrations.**
- (5) Consider with FAWC members what more material might be put on the website. Investigate providing a search facility and an interactive area on the website.**
- (6) Investigate use of webcasts and other means of remote access to Council meetings.**

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY AHEAD

6.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the review's main findings. It then identifies examples of good practice that might usefully be copied by other organisations. The final sections suggest an order of priorities for implementing the review's recommendations, identifying the resource implications for those concerned.

6.2 Main findings

The review followed Cabinet Office guidance by looking first at whether FAWC's work was still needed and then at whether FAWC was the best organisation to undertake it. Both were found to be the case, with almost no dissent from consultees. The review then examined how well FAWC had performed in the past and how its performance might be improved in future. It found that FAWC was performing well, with significant improvements in recent years, and provided exceptional value for money.

The review identified scope for further improvements in performance and use of resources. In particular, it found some continuing mismatches between Government priorities, FAWC's output, and Government responses to FAWC's advice. These were already being addressed to an extent. The review also found an imbalance between FAWC's current workload and Secretariat support. A modest increase in Secretariat resources would enable FAWC to operate more productively. Alternatively, FAWC's workload needs to be reduced to avoid excessive pressure on both FAWC members and the Secretariat. In view of FAWC's exceptional overall cost-effectiveness, a modest increase in Secretariat resources seems the better option, if practicable given current financial constraints. Likewise, a modest additional sum spent on presenting and publicising FAWC's advice would improve overall cost-effectiveness.

6.3 Examples of good practice

6.3.1 Background

The focus of NDPB reviews is now not just on whether they should survive but also on identifying good practice to be shared with others.

6.3.2 Consultees' views

Consultees found much to commend in FAWC's operations. ***Above all, they valued the principle of independent, multi-disciplinary, evidence-based advice from a range of experts who sought to achieve consensus.***

In more detail, consultees valued FAWC's:

- **Quality of output:** in particular, reports were definitive, well-grounded and reasonably concise. They made excellent reference documents.
- **Range of ways of giving advice:** reports, opinions and letters.
- **Recommendations:** generally achievable.
- **Approach:** strategic, flexible, holistic, open to change, adaptable and constructive.
- **Consultation and transparency:** involvement at several stages of reports and open meeting.
- **Willingness to learn:** from others in the UK and abroad.
- **Close cooperation with policy divisions.**
- **Structure of standing committees and working groups.**
- **Efficient Secretariat.**

6.3.3 Conclusions and recommendation

There is no doubt that FAWC is operating well. Other organisations could learn from it.

Recommendation

- (26) ***Defra should send this report to Cabinet Office for information. Defra and the devolved administrations should draw attention to the way in which FAWC operates whenever appropriate.***

6.4 Priorities and resource implications

6.4.1 General

In a 'light touch' review it has not been possible to look at the costs and benefits of recommendations in any depth. This makes it difficult to rank them in order of priority. The list of recommendations on page 9 includes a rough estimate of resource implications and an indication of priorities. Most of the report's recommendations can be implemented in the course of organisations' usual work, without additional resources. It will be for Defra and the devolved administrations to make a more detailed assessment. They will need to judge the value of providing additional resources for FAWC against competing claims for expenditure, on animal welfare in the first instance. In Defra's case, the comparison would be made easier if the FAWC Secretariat were re-located with the Animal Welfare Team (recommendation 23)

The following sections seek to identify the top priorities. They highlight those recommendations key to maintaining the quality of FAWC's output, to ensuring effective outcomes, and to increasing awareness of FAWC's activities. They again include a rough indication of the resource implications.

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6.4.2 Output quality

FAWC's success is dependent on its attracting members of a high calibre and on retaining their goodwill. On the whole, FAWC members are very positive about their work and the support they receive from Defra and the devolved administrations. There are two areas of concern: first, about reductions in Secretariat support and second, to a much lesser extent, about whether their remuneration is fair compared with that for members of other NDPBs.

At a time of severe financial constraints, Defra has faced - and will continue to face - tough choices in the use of resources. There are signs that the FAWC Secretariat may have been reduced slightly too much: members should not feel themselves to be 'cheap labour'.

Recommendation

(27) Defra should give priority to addressing members' concerns about Secretariat support and remuneration (recommendations 16, 17 and 22).

Resource implications: an additional HEO in the Secretariat would cost about £53k a year (£45k for an EO). Increasing members' daily rates from £146 to £172 would cost about £4k a year (12 members for an average of 12 days a year). Paying for an additional 40 days spent on tasks such as drafting would cost about £8k if divided equally between chairs and other members.

6.4.3 Effective outcomes

For FAWC to be most effective in safeguarding and improving farm animal welfare, it must focus on key issues where its advice will be heeded and implemented. In the past there have been problems with the issues selected for study, with the timing of FAWC's advice and with Government's capacity to respond. Some of these problems have been overcome by the adoption of a more strategic approach. Defra's decision to vary the form of its responses may also help. More needs to be done.

Recommendation

(28) Defra and the devolved administrations should give priority to guiding the subject, form and timing of FAWC's advice (recommendations 5 and 8).

Resource implications: no additional resources needed unless a review of how FAWC presents its advice cannot be fitted in by adjusting priorities in the short-term. In the longer term, these recommendations should result in savings through the production of more relevant and easily-handled advice.

6.4.4 Increased awareness

FAWC has a low profile. Even those aware of its existence are unclear about its activities and most people do not know it exists. A modest injection of funds could significantly improve FAWC's contacts with others and hence increase awareness of welfare issues.

Recommendation

- (29) Defra should ensure that the FAWC Secretariat has the resources to investigate the technological improvements suggested by consultees (recommendation 25). Defra, the devolved administrations and FAWC should give further thought to how FAWC advice can best be publicised (recommendation 10).**

Resource implications: for recommendation 25, the FAWC Secretariat could need additional EO/AO support for about two months, at a cost of about £7k. For recommendation 10, employing consultants for 10 days would cost about £7k. Using in-house staff for a similar period would cost about £3k.

ANNEX 1: Members of FAWC

Chairman

Professor Christopher Wathes holds the Chair of Animal Welfare at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. He is a research scientist with interests in the environmental biology and management of farm and other animals.

Members

Professor Michael Appleby, welfare policy advisor for the World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA). Member of the Scientific Committee of Humane Farm Animal Care and the Animal Compassionate Committee of Whole Foods Market in the USA. Formerly senior lecturer in Applied Animal Behaviour, University of Edinburgh.

Professor Richard Bennett, an agricultural economist in the Department of Agricultural and Food Economics at the University of Reading. He is a member of the England Implementation Group for the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and a Trustee of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, the Humane Slaughter Association and the Farm Animal Welfare Trust.

Professor Henry Buller, Chair of Rural Geography and Director of the BA Human Geography programme at the University of Exeter. Editor of the international rural science journal *Sociologia Ruralis*.

Dr Joanne Conington, senior Animal Breeding Specialist in the Sustainable Livestock Systems group at the Scottish Agricultural College. Formerly a sheep specialist with the Meat and Livestock Commission.

Huw Davies, a sheep farmer from Carmarthenshire. He is a member of the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Wales and of the Welsh Regional Board of the Moredun Research Institute, and a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies.

Professor Sandra Edwards, Chair of Agriculture at the University of Newcastle. Previously director of the Scottish Pig Industry Initiative, past President of the British Society of Animal Science and member of the European Food Standard Authority working groups on pig welfare.

George Hogarth, Production director for an international chicken breeding company based in Scotland. A science graduate with research experience in poultry welfare and international experience in commercial poultry production.

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Gwyn Jones, a dairy farmer from West Sussex. Currently Chairman, NFU National Dairy Board, and a member of NFU Policy and Governance Boards; director and board member of Dairy UK; and Chairman of Dairy UK Producer Forum. Vice Chairman of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (milk).

Ruth Layton, veterinary surgeon and holder of the RCVS Diploma in Animal Welfare Science Ethics and Law. Director of the Food Animal Initiative. Consultant to food retailers and the food service sector.

Dr David Main, BVA Animal Welfare Foundation Lecturer in Animal Welfare at the University of Bristol and an RCVS recognised specialist in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law.

Professor David Morton, Emeritus Professor of Biomedical Science and Ethics, and a laboratory animal veterinarian. Member of the European Food Standards Authority's Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare, the Companion Animal Welfare Council, and the Board of Assured Food Standards.

Andrew Nicholson, Senior technical manager and animal welfare specialist for the Co-operative Group. He is a member of the joint pig industry technical advisory committee and the EU Technology Platform on Global Animal Health.

Reverend Professor Michael Reiss, Professor of Science Education at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Dr Philip Scott - Reader in Farm Animal Studies at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at Edinburgh University and lead veterinarian in the School's Farm Animal Teaching Hospital. RCVS and European specialist in sheep health and production and European specialist in bovine health management.

Stuart Shearlaw, formerly Senior Animal Health and Welfare Inspector for Central Scotland Police and Chair of the Scottish Animal Health and Welfare Panel. Now working for Animal Health in Galashiels in the Scottish Borders.

Steven Tait, an independent commercial consultant specialising in animal welfare, the food chain and consumers. Formerly Head of Sales and Marketing at RSPCA Freedom Food.

Alison Ward, a horticulturist and independent consultant; consumer representative on the Food Standards Agency Committee on Toxicity in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment; past director of the British Bankers' Association, and formerly a non-executive director in the Health Service.

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Meryl Ward, director of a commercial pig breeding and finishing business, member of the British Pig Executive and a founder member of Agskills Training Association. She is a Council Member and Selector for the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust and a member of the Genesis Assurance Technical Advisory Committee.

Mike Wijnberg – Leading veterinarian for a large pig production and processing company. Member of the Pig Veterinary Society, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians and RSPCA's Freedom Food Technical Advisory Committee on pigs.

ANNEX 2: Telephone Interviewees

Defra:

Richard Aram (FAWC Secretary)
Helen Browning (Chair, England Implementation Group)
Nigel Gibbens (Chief Veterinary Officer)
Liz Kelly (Animal Welfare Team and Veterinary Adviser to FAWC)
Susanna May (Animal Welfare Team)
David Pritchard (Senior Veterinary Consultant - Animal Welfare Team and Veterinary Adviser to FAWC)
Gavin Ross (Programme Manager, Responsibility and Cost Sharing)
Geoff Webdale (Animal Welfare Team)

Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development:

John Terrington (Animal Identification, Legislation and Welfare Branch).

Scottish Government Department for Rural Affairs and the Environment:

Ian Strachan (Animal Welfare Policy Branch);
Andrew Voas (Veterinary Adviser).

Welsh Assembly Government:

Huw Jones (Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer) and three colleagues.

FAWC Chairs of Standing Committees and Working Groups:

Professor Michael Appleby (Pigs, Poultry and Fish Standing Committee)
Professor Richard Bennett (Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation Standing Committee)
Huw Davies (Ruminants Standing Committee)
Professor Sandra Edwards (Economics and Farm Animal Welfare Working Group)
Dr David Main (Education, Communication and Knowledge Application Working Group)
Professor David Morton (Welfare Strategy Working Group)
Meryl Ward (Disease and Farm Animal Welfare Working Group)

FAWC members

Revd Professor Michael Reiss
Stuart Shearlaw
Alison Ward

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Other Organisations:

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (John Cross, Chair, BPEX)
Animal Health Agency (Catherine Brown, Chief Executive)
Assured Foods (David Clarke, Chief Executive)
British Retail Consortium (Andrew Opie, Policy Director)
British Veterinary Association (Nicky Paul, President)
Companion Animal Welfare Council (Lord Soulsby, Chair)
Compassion in World Farming (Peter Stevenson, Chief Policy Adviser)
Co-operative Society (Andrew Nicholson, Senior Technical Manager)
Farmers' Union of Wales (Dr Hazel Wright, Policy Officer – Commodities)
Meat Hygiene Service (Jane Downes, Veterinary and Technical Director)
NFU (Catherine McLaughlin, Animal Health and Welfare Adviser)
NFU Cymru (Dylan Morgan, Deputy Director)
NFU Scotland (Penny Johnston, Policy Manager – Livestock)
RSPCA (Dr Julia Wrathall, Head, Farm Animals Department)

ANNEX 3: Written Responses and Meetings

Written responses.

The RSPCA and the Welsh Assembly Government submitted written comments as well as giving telephone interviews. Another 16 responses were received as follows:

- Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law Veterinary Association
- British Cattle Veterinary Association
- British Egg Industry Council
- British Poultry Council
- Country Land and Business Association
- Food Standards Agency
- Gurnard Parish Council
- Halal Food Authority
- Local Authorities' Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services
- Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
- Trading Standards Institute
- Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare and Humane Slaughter Association
- University of Plymouth
- Three individuals

Meetings

March: initial meeting with Frances Radcliffe (Livestock Hub) and Richard Aram (FAWC Secretary)

May: meeting with Professor Christopher Wathes (FAWC Chair)

July: Project Board meeting (John Bourne, Chair; Susanna May, Dr Liz Kelly, Frances Radcliffe and Richard Aram)

ANNEX 4: Background reading

FAWC publications

Strategic Plan 2006-2010 (October 2006)

Annual Review 2007/08 (June 2008)

Annual Review 2008/09 (June 2009)

Report on Welfare Labelling (June 2006)

FAWC Report on the Implications of Castration and Tail Docking for the Welfare of Lambs (June 2008)

Opinion on the Welfare of Farmed Game Birds (November 2008)

Defra

Business Process Review of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (March 2003)

Consultation on a New Independent Body for Animal Health (2009)

Cabinet Office

Public Bodies: a Guide for Departments (Chapter 9: Reviewing a Public Body – last updated June 2006)

New Zealand Government National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Annual Report, 1 January to 31 December 2008 (June 2009)

ANNEX 5: Action taken on the Recommendations of the 2003 Review

Recommendation 1: FAWC should continue to be the primary provider of farm animal welfare advice to Ministers and the Department.

Action: FAWC is still the primary provider of independent farm animal welfare advice to Government Departments in England, Scotland and Wales.

Recommendation 2: Regional locations should be considered for the FAWC annual open meetings.

Action: Open meetings still held in London because that is most convenient for most participants. The three Council meetings each year move around London, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

Recommendation 3: The appointment of a deputy Chairperson, from within the Council, should be considered.

Action: Deputy Chair not considered necessary, other than on an *ad hoc* basis (e.g. if chair excuses himself from discussion on the basis of interest, or in case of illness).

Recommendation 4: The guidance notes for FAWC members should be modified to help steer Working Groups through the review process, in order that a more logical sequence of action can be taken.

Action: Guidance for FAWC members has been greatly updated. Sequence of actions for typical report, opinion and advice studies are published in the FAWC Strategic Plan 2006-2010.

Recommendation 5: The role of the R&D Working Group should be reinforced as a medium through which R&D proposals are referred by other Working Groups, rather than as a Group with its own separate agenda.

Action: R&D Group wound up in 2008 after producing the Report on the Welfare Implications of Castration and Tail Docking of Lambs. Standing Committee structure (since 2005) monitors proposed and published research in each sector via Secretariat and members' horizon scanning.

Recommendation 6: The Council should consider alternative options for Council meeting arrangements at a suitable opportunity, with a view to adopting any that are considered viable and suitable for the Council and its members.

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Action: New agenda structure reflects the organisational structure from 2005.
Regional meetings held.

Recommendation 7: More frequent attendance by Ministers at Council meetings should be considered, even if only for a short time.

Action: Ministers and Chief Veterinary Officers are invited to attend FAWC Council meetings when in the relevant territory (England, Scotland or Wales).

Recommendation 8: An annual consultative questionnaire to stakeholders should be considered as another means of identifying welfare issues worthy of review.

Action: No formal annual consultation with stakeholders on priority issues. Consultation with wide stakeholder base (100 responses from 600 organisations) involved in preparation of the FAWC Strategic Business Plan (5 yearly process). Option to consult more often on shorter opinion studies.

Recommendation 9: FAWC should include, in its forward agenda, a review to determine the extent to which animal husbandry skills could or need to be improved, which might yield significant welfare improvements.

Action: Stockmanship Report published 2007.

Recommendation 10: A review should be undertaken by a FAWC Working Group of the welfare surveillance and enforcement activities, in order to evaluate their effectiveness and to put forward proposals which seek to improve compliance with welfare standards.

Action: Welfare surveillance and enforcement included in Welfare Strategy study to report in 2009.

Recommendation 11: Wherever possible, it might be better for Working Groups to be allocated more specific issues to investigate, in order that conclusions are reached more easily, reports published more quickly and accepted proposals implemented more speedily.

Action: Opinion studies begun in 2006 on focussed topics, which should take 12-18 months to produce as against 3-4 years for a typical major report.

Recommendation 12: FAWC reports should be initially acknowledged by the Minister and AWD within, say, one month with a more detailed response covering each proposal within, say, six months from the date the report is issued.

Action: Acknowledgement of reports is usually prompt. Last full response was to Farm Assurance Report in 2005. Decision taken by Animal Welfare Team on resource grounds not to respond in detail (i.e. recommendation by recommendation) to any more FAWC reports.

Recommendation 13: All published FAWC reports should contain, in the foreword, a request from the Chairwoman for comments from readers on the proposals within the report.

Action: Not taken up. Comprehensive consultation process, including on public website, for most studies.

Recommendation 14: An additional HEO should be appointed to the Secretariat team, to help alleviate the pressures on FAWC members and the current Secretariat staff, as well as reinforce the report drafting capacity.

Action: Additional HEO appointed after review. Secretariat staff post-review in 2003: 1 G7, 2 HEO, 1 EO, 1 AO, 1 AA. Current staff: 1 SEO, 1HEO, 0.5EO, 0.4 AO, as a result of resource cuts and organisational changes in Defra.

Recommendation 15: Greater usage should be made of both the FAWC website and the email facility to communicate information, both externally and internally.

Action: Website regularly updated with advice, reports, opinions, consultations, meeting summaries, press notices etc. Significant use now made of e-mail for regular communication both internally and externally (including consultations, *ad hoc* requests, meeting invites, agenda and papers for meetings, electronic debates on documents or issues, etc).

Recommendation 16: The EO and AA postholders should be provided with appropriate IT training including Excel and Access to increase the usage of spreadsheets and databases that will better serve FAWC's needs

Action: IT training was provided. .

Recommendation 17: FAWC members' reading and preparation time should be paid for on the basis of 25% of the daily rate for each day that they qualify for the daily attendance rate

Action: Preparation time payments not fully taken up. Chairs of Council and sub-groups receive an enhanced fee for preparation time. Ordinary members do not for all meetings because the cost is outside the current budget (or would reduce the work that FAWC could do). Members can receive a daily fee for contributions such as days spent drafting advice.

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Recommendation 18: An official advisory body is needed for companion animal welfare matters, so that Ministers and the Department can obtain independent and impartial advice in much the same way as FAWC provides in respect of farm animals

Recommendation 19: CAWC should be the official body to advise Ministers on companion animal welfare matters and that it should operate independently from FAWC

Recommendation 20: Defra should underwrite CAWC's operating costs on a grant-in-aid basis, pending a decision on its longer-term funding

Recommendation 21: Defra should utilise the next two years to assess the work undertaken by CAWC together with its commercial funding, in order to consider which of the funding options it might wish to adopt for the future

Recommendation 22: CAWC should consider the possible need for commercial representation within its membership

Action on recommendations 18 to 22: For CAWC.

FAWC Secretariat
August 2009

ANNEX 6: GLOSSARY

APC	Animal Procedures Committee (Home Office)
CAWC	Companion Animal Welfare Council
CIWF	Compassion in World Farming
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DSO	Departmental Strategic Objective
EIG	England Implementation Group
EuroFAWC	European Forum for Animal Welfare Councils
FAWAC	Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (Irish Republic)
FAWC	Farm Animal Welfare Council
LACORS	Local Authorities' Coordinators of Regulatory Services
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NFU	National Farmers' Union
OIE	World Health Organisation for Animal Health
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SEAC	Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee