Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board (AWERB) Minutes 24/08/2021

The University of Edinburgh
Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

Minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held 24/08/20201
Microsoft Teams

1. **Welcome** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending
2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 22nd June 2021:** *approved*

3. Matters arising and action point summary

[redacted]: A thorough discussion has taken place at AWERB meetings on both 3/8/21 and 24/8/21 to consider a recent letter from [redacted] regarding formal management of a [redacted].

Summary discussion

- Clarification from the Scottish Government has been received detailing that these animals are no longer feral but now designated as wild.
- There are no plans from the Scottish Wildlife trust to carry out any management of this wild population.
- Communications from our AWERB to other establishments involved in this work have been sent with confirmation received that no other establishments have been contacted.

The committee agreed the following actions:

1. Circulate a letter of response to the AWERB for consideration.
2. If no concerns then the letter will be submitted to [redacted].

4. Named person and Director updates

Directors update:

- **ASRU changes:** the new system "Bridging ways of working" has now been implemented. Noted some delays in processing of routine PPLs and amendments however urgent matters e.g. amendments have been progressed quickly.
- **Recruitment:** this will commence shortly, with 8 new posts including modern apprentices in facilities.
- [redacted]: still watertight with no water ingress, affected areas have been cleared with no further issues.
- [redacted]: cage wash works commenced and will run till Jan 2022, original plans revised with less works now required.
- **Animal rights activity:** some activity ongoing, particularly related to MBR Acres, a dog breeding facility down south.. Weekly reports are received from Support 4Rs to update us on ongoing activity. Additional activity around the FST from PETA to the Principal. Detailed comment supplied to press.

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NVS update

- **Condition 18:** 2 condition 19 forms have been submitted, one for a liver injury model the other for animals on a paracetamol study.
  One of these involved a mis-dosing event with regulatory advice confirming that this did not constitute a non-compliance. Advice given from the inspectorate suggested that the group should consider how these issues can be prevented in the future and to encourage AWERB discussion on this issue.
  Action: follow up with group to ask them to write to AWERB to provide feedback on their discussions. It was also suggested that this may be a good topic for future roadshows.

NACWO update:

- **Recruitment:** recruiting for a grade 3 at [redacted], cage wash and other responsibilities within facilities.
- **Staffing:** one grade 3 staff member has resigned, the post will be advertised.
- **Humidity:** mobile humidifiers have been very helpful and maintained levels. Plant room repairs are scheduled for next month but mobile units will be retained in case of issues.

NTCO update:

PIL retention: document has been circulated to AWERB for approval (no concerns noted), to be circulated to users shortly. The main changes are that refresher (E1/L) training will be required every 5 years and that licences will be revoked if inactive for >5 years.

5. Project licences under consideration:

PL20-21

This is a new application from a new [redacted], who is an experienced scientist and personal licence holder. The application has generally been very well written, is scientifically justified and was approved subject to the revision of some minor comments detailed below:

- **Numbers**: these do not appear to correlate with the NTS and should be checked.
- **Models:** all clearly established within the University however some clarification on the replacement aspects or the use of lower species could be included.
- **Severity**: some clarification of the use of [redacted] animals, should this be a severe breeding protocol? It appears that animals will be killed before the appearance of clinical signs so this severity limit is likely correctly set as moderate.
- **Humane endpoints**: some of these are not clear and require clarification as to when animals will be humanely killed.

- **NTS**: High level of technical terms although the severities section addressed clearly. Number of animals section is too complex for a lay reader.

- **Admin of substances**: clarify some of the volumes and types of substances for administration required.

- **Breadth of project**: clarify that the work is not too overly ambitious for a new researcher and consider the numbers required. A compromise in terms of numbers may be required, perhaps a small decrease in numbers should be considered, this could be amended going forward if required.

PL18-21

This is a renewal application from a senior group leader, the researcher has a high level of funding and is well published, the licence will focus on [redacted] It was noted that this licence has been very well written and raises no concerns, the licence contains 4 protocols two of which are breeding and maintenance.

- **Protocol 3** should be a moderate rather than a mild severity limit, this should be revised and clarified.
- **Adverse behavioural phenotype**: more details of this are required with details of percentages of adverse phenotype, examples of this include wild running and tonic seizures.
- **NTS**: Some challenging technical terms in NTS! Can see that many of them are difficult to avoid, though. Not much information in 'severities' section eg no proportions given for mild or moderate.
- **Food restriction**: have detailed that animals will be weighed daily, advise a more general wording for this to avoid potential non-compliance.
- **Fear conditioning**: consider more justifification for the use of 2mA for this procedure, can a lower voltage be used, why is this required? Suggest a lower level is detailed e.g. 0.8mA and then an amendment could be added at a later date if necessary.
- **Adverse effects**: clarify that there are no adverse effects with the administration of substances.

PL19-21

This is a renewal PPL application from a senior PI, the main focus of which is the understanding of [redacted]. The application does requires a number of revisions and following revision should be returned for sub-committee review and final approval:

- **Animal experience**: difficult to understand the animal experience as animals currently move between protocols, this should be revised and animals must remain on a single experimental protocol with optional steps where required.

- **Cumulative effects**: more detail on the cumulative effects on the animals is required. This is not currently clear due to the numbers of optional steps and the fact that animals move between protocols.
- **Flowcharts**: consider the use of flow charts to convey what will typically happens to the animal however the major issue is that animals are moving between protocols and this needs to be rectified.
- **Protocol 1**: no GA animals are detailed but clearly GA strains will be used, this requires revision.
- **NTS**: identifiers and overly complex language is included and should be revised.
- **Protocol 9**: this could be removed and controls combined within other relevant protocols

6. **a. Amendment applications submitted to the full AWERB:**

Amendment application:

A49-21: The main aim of this amendment is to request a change from tumour diameter to tumour volume in humane endpoints.

Summary of main points

- Further justification is required for the development of tumours outwith the recommended guidelines https://www.nature.com/articles/6605642.pdf
- Ask for clarification on why these larger tumours are required. This could be justified if a specific tumour size is required to model treatment that could not be done with smaller tumours. Noted that assurances must be given that humane endpoints are adhered to and can be managed with these larger tumours.
- Agreed to send the review to a cancer scientist and then arrange final sub-committee review and approval and present this in the September meeting (for information).

Harm Benefit analysis

The committee were made aware of the main points from a recent document concerning the harm benefit analysis

Discussion points/Actions.

- Document to be circulated for consideration, it seems it will work well in very small establishments but could be more difficult at a large establishment.
- Retrospective/midpoint review: Could we use retrospective review for example at the 4 year mark and to focus this more at the benefits of projects at the end rather than just the harms of the project.
- Retrospective review: Producing a prototype form for use at the [redacted] AWERB with plans to commence this in December 2022.

7. **A.O.C.B:**

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Date of next Meeting: 21st September 2021 10am MS teams