



Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board (AWERB) Minutes 03/11/2020

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 03/11/2020

Microsoft Teams

1. **Welcome** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending,
 2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 6th October 2020: approved**
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3. **Matters arising and action point summary**

- **AWERB video:** request for clips to be submitted by January, recognised that AWERB members currently have other challenges. **Action: ongoing** /AWERB video clips to be submitted.
- **GA Sterile males (update 4-11-20):** suggested that GA males may be an alternative to vasectomised males however these are not available commercially (extract below from commercial supplier): **Action complete**
Many thanks for your email.

Unfortunately, we do not have any GA sterile males breeding at any of our sites.

I can let you know that we did trial establishing such a strain but experienced increased animal wastage from the breeding and the AWERB decided against it. I can get more details if it is useful.

The only option we have currently to support this would be vasectomized males.

4. **Named person and Director updates**

Directors update:

- **The AWERB were updated** about a Home Office Compliance issue currently under investigation.
- **Environmental enrichment:** a recent email through our anonymous reporting system has been received. This user did not identify the facility but mentioned a lack of environmental enrichment for example nesting material and dome homes. Actions arising from this are as follows:
 1. Requested that technicians ensure that dome homes are provided and not just handling tubes (this should be in addition) and to ensure that nesting materials are also used.
 2. Vets are currently reviewing our enrichment policy and a revised policy for environmental enrichment will be produced and circulated.

Deputy Directors update:

- **Facility forums:** these have all been organised and will be running via MS teams.
- **merger:** this is currently ongoing but work on the air handling unit has been delayed until January due to Covid related issues. The use of IVCs is being promoted and should be used where possible.
- **Staff Morale:** noted that this is generally good within the facilities.



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NVS update

- **Email communication to PIL holders:** this was circulated to emphasise the importance of monitoring of experimental animals and reporting any issues to named vets in a timely manner.
- **Environmental enrichment:** allowing scientists to make adaptations/enrichments where possible within the confines of caging etc.
- **Health status:** Novel pathogens - Helicobacter and Rotavirus has been detected in one facility.

NACWO update:

- **Enrichment:** Standard enrichment is nestlet/dome home/chew sticks but can be adapted if required.
- **Wild-types:** still maintaining some strains but numbers have been significantly reduced and encouraging commercial purchase instead
- **Non tail capture:** noted collaboration between facilities on this which is very encouraging.
- **Pregnancy:** techniques for early pregnancy detection were discussed.

NTCO update

- **Training:** demands for this have increased and new ways of assessment using screens for example are being developed.
- **Scotpil:** the 4th course is now underway, accreditation for the course is complete with very positive comments received. Noted that animal handling is more of a challenge as this requires one to one assessments within the facilities.

5. Project licences under consideration:

PL28-2020

This project licence is a renewal from an experienced group leader and clinician scientist with the aims to look at [REDACTED] with assessment of the impact of factors such as obesity. The committee and AWERB review panel felt that this was a well justified project licence with clear scientific benefits, it was noted that the applicant was a world leader in the field.

Summary: The application was considered to be well justified and approved subject to the revision of the points detailed below:

- **Vasectomy:** there was some discussion of the requirement for vasectomised mice as these could be provided commercially or from within CTC or another relevant PPL which would avoid the use of additional animals.
- **NTS:** generally very well written in some places the language is overly technical but recognised that with the new form that this can be difficult to get right.



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PL29-2020

This project licence is a renewal from an experienced group leader/reader which focuses on [REDACTED]. It was noted that this was a well written application but would benefit from additional justification of the new severe protocol and editing of the NTS.

Summary: The committee were happy to approve the application subsequent to the revision of the AWERB review summary and following points:

- **Severity limits:** The project licence renewal includes a severe protocol which requires further justification and some refinement.
- **NTS:** this is overly technical and requires additional revision to make this “lay”, it was noted that it was difficult for lay members to understand this summary. It was noted however that there was a good description of the harms which is often poorly described.
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PL30-2020

This project licence renewal is from a very experienced PPL holder who has held a project licence since 1985, the work is at POLE sites . Some additional discussion on the review requirements for POLE work was presented to the committee for example in capture and monitoring of wild animals.

- **POLE work:** additional review measures for capture of wild animals must be considered under the law and during the review, this also includes the consideration on non-target species.
- **Capture of Non-target species:** this has been considered but additional comment on how this will be addressed in the application. The review of POLE work also notes that we should review this as an AWERB perhaps on an annual basis.
- **Training:** noted that this is a priority to carefully consider as darting of animals is carried out by PIL holders who are not normally veterinary surgeons. Noted that the NVS works closely with the PIL holder and NTCO to ensure that all training is thorough and includes training in schedule 1 techniques should any issues arise during sampling/darting.
- **Environment:** a new section in Aspel requires PPL holders to consider the impact of the work on the local area for example disturbance to ground nests/birds.
- **Feral animals:** an external communication about this work, raised with another AWERB as well as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was discussed. It was agreed that needed addressing separately. [REDACTED] to follow up
- **Scientific Justification:** the project is well justified.
- **NTS:** some additional clarification for example explaining the relevance of the specific breed is required. Also within the NTS there is mention of the project assisting with “land management” but it is unclear what this actually means. Thorough revision of the NTS is required to remove overly technical terms.
- **Presentation:** suggest that a member of the group gives a presentation to the AWERB to give more detail on the work.



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PL31-2020

This is a new project licence but a renewal of a project licence which was previously held at the [REDACTED]. It was noted that although this is the second submission to the AWERB there is still a significant amount of work to do. Although there is significant funding (£6m) the work is currently too broad and has not been properly justified without clear explanation of the animal models being used without any links to the science.

Summary: re-submission of licence following discussion and revision required.

PL26-20: [REDACTED] :

This licence has been re-reviewed due to lack of funding however these issues have not been fully resolved and currently there is a potential gap in funding until March 2021.

- Action: request that applicant speaks with senior scientific management to determine if short term funding can be arranged. The application cannot be approved until this is assured.

AWERB Hub update: a summary of the meeting was provided and detailed below

- NTS: discussions on this for example using software for analysis of vocabulary.
- Harm benefit analysis: consider how this is done at each establishment
- Culture of Care: ongoing discussions on this and how this is implemented within establishments

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

none

b. Sub-committee amendment applications:

Approved: A10-20

7. Overseas Research Proposals

OS15-20: Approved:

- Noted that this was specific to a particular area in Sweden where Leptospirosis is an issue.

8. Commercial study considerations: a discussion was convened with another commercial company to determine how applications from commercial companies are considered.

Date of next Meeting: 1st December 2020 10am MS teams