

A meeting of the AWERB was held at 11:00 on Tuesday 21st January 2025

Summary of actions

Item	Action	Due
4	AWERB members' feedback to be compiled and shared with the AMWG team.	End Jan 2025
11	Head of REC&G to clarify minor misunderstandings regarding changes of REC structures and review processes for animal work	End Jan 2025

Minutes

		Agenda item	AWERB Decision	
1.	11:00 (10 mins)	<p>Welcome and apologies New members (an Estates representative, a Biostatistician and an Academic) were welcomed and encouraged to ask questions.</p> <p>Apologies were noted.</p>		
2.		<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2024 Approved pending minor changes.</p>	<i>Approved</i>	AWERB/2425/16
3.		<p>Matters Arising/Actions</p> <p>Discussion took place about the ongoing update of the Policy for maintaining breeding colonies. AWERB members commented on the previously discussed issue of breeding age and industry standards. This will be brought back to next AWERB with the updates.</p> <p>A reminder to PPLh was sent to ensure documentation in Standard Condition 18 includes prior discussions with NACWO and NVS, if necessary.</p> <p>Example of end-of-license report has been uploaded to the SharePoint page for reference.</p> <p>All actions are either completed or in progress and on target.</p>		AWERB/2425/17 AWERB/2425/18a ,b
4.	11:10 (35 mins)	<p>Animal Materials Working Group Guest speakers delivered a PPT presentation about the Animal Materials Working Group and shared the latest draft framework for discussion.</p> <p>Discussion/Q&A summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discussion took place regarding the framework's stance on genomic research and the classification of DNA/RNA as secondary materials. It was explained that the framework draws a line between cellular and acellular materials for practicality. The framework only applies to cellular materials. An inquiry about procedures to assess organisation's adherence to the framework was clarified. It was also clarified that non-invasive methods and samples not requiring direct animal handling (e.g., fur traps) fall outside the framework. 		AWERB/2425/19a /b

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion took place on the application of the framework to archived materials, such as old fish samples of uncertain provenance. The emphasis was on assessing the case individually considering the reputational risk when provenance is unclear. • Confirmed the framework applies only to sentient species as defined by the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022, including decapod crustaceans. • It was clarified that there is no current link between the framework and funding requirements. <p>AWERB members were advised to provide feedback on the framework. A feedback deadline was set for two weeks, with responses to be compiled and shared with the AMWG team for consideration. (<i>ACTION</i>).</p>		
5.	11:45 (15 mins)	<p>PPL Amendment Review <u>PPL Amendment AWERB/2425/20a,b was reviewed by AWERB.</u> Discussion summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay member suggested use of simpler lay language in several sections of the lay summary. • NVS highlighted structural and wording issues in the protocols. Specific suggestions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarifying restrictions on reusing animals showing adverse effects. ○ Ensuring consistency in language for moderate breeding and maintenance protocols, differentiating from mild protocols where necessary. ○ Addressing scenarios requiring euthanasia due to moderate adverse effects. • A discussion took place about the physical manifestations of CF in the fish model beyond enhanced infection susceptibility. Details of this phenotype will be incorporated into the project licence background section. • PPLh was asked whether plans were in place in case the microinjection of genetic material in fish eggs causes adverse effects. • AWERB member questioned the suitability of fish as models for CF, given that they lack lungs. PPLh clarified the reasons and confirmed that the selected fish species possess the CFTR gene. • AWERB member sought clarification on the termination timelines for embryos prior to independent feeding. Adjustments to the termination timeline will be incorporated into the current amendment to ensure compliance. <p>Chair noted that the amendment cannot be approved in its current form. AWERB will provide detailed feedback for adjustments post-meeting. PPLh agreed to submit revised documentation.</p>	For revision	AWERB/2425/20a ,b
6.	12:00 (15 mins)	<p>General updates</p> <p><u>Establishment Licence updates</u></p> <p>The person who covered NVS's maternity leave is being removed from the establishment licence.</p>		

Ongoing review of NACWOs' areas of responsibility on the establishment licence due to recent staff changes.

Standard Condition 18 reports

There has been one. A ZF line experienced 14 deaths (out of 17) over the Christmas period. Remaining fish were euthanised.

Compliance issues

There have been no compliance issues.

Ongoing audit work with HOLC, NTCO and Head of BRF to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice. Audit training sessions being rolled out to PPLh and NP over the next few weeks.

Further meetings are planned with Estates and Security teams to ensure compliance.

Updates from Named Persons Meeting

A named persons meeting has not taken place since the last AWERB meeting.

Update from BSU Board meeting

There was no update because no BSU Board meetings have occurred recently.

Estates

Ongoing collaboration on projects in the facilities related to heating pipework, gas supplies, and other infrastructure.

Additional support on compliance matters is being confirmed with Head of BRF.

NTCO update

Training and Competency Assessments

- Schedule 1 training and competency assessments – mice
- Training and competency assessment tunnel handling – mice
- Training and competency assessment - mouse pup handling
- Competency assessment ultrasonic vocalisations – mouse pups
- Competency assessment surface righting reflex – mouse pups
- Training identification tattooing – mouse pups
- Training and competency assessments two choice test behavioural assay – swordtail fish

PIL courses

- PIL Practical completed for 1 x fish candidate
- 2 x candidates enrolled on PIL course for January
- 2 x PIL C practical courses arranged for February

Other courses attended

- Assessors course for all NACWOs
- ROP training for PPLh
- GW4 3Rs Symposium, which was successfully run at the UoE

		<p><u>Courses coming up</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWERB workshop running in February for the new AWERB members/NACWOs • Fish genotyping training day currently being planned <p><u>HOLC update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a HOLTIF planned on 10th February. HOLC will inform members if there are any significant HO updates. • Two-thirds of ROPs have been submitted and NACWOs/HOLC have been sense checking as they are being submitted. 		
7.	12:15 (10 mins)	<p>Named Veterinary Surgeon's visit (<i>verbal update</i>) NVS gave verbal update of their activity since last meeting, including:</p> <p>Rodent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVS visited rodent facility. • A refinement to the CO2 schedule 1 method was implemented and reduces stress in mice. • There was a discussion with a PIL about the movement of animals around the facility, and the importance of using trolleys. • Discussed breeding plan of Hectors, which have been backcrossed over the last year to reduce the incidence of tumours. • Noise near the facility was flagged as a potential stressor for animals. Steps are being taken to address this. <p>Fish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An imported ZF line in quarantine had some animals observed over Christmas period with abnormal swimming and runts – plan to backcross when move into main facility. • Tank of trout in Jan euthanised as some mortalities occurring – abnormal PMs – sent samples off to try to ascertain cause <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proliferative kidney disease has been diagnosed in samples.. The sending farm has been informed, and a management meeting will discuss future control. • Facility team now sexing ZF when leave nursery to understand sex ratios of different lines to aid regeneration and evaluate skewed sex in TG lines • A skin swabbing workshop is planned next month, with external researcher coming to lead this – to drive forward refined genotyping methods in fish facility. • Efforts are underway to refine genotyping methods for Arabian killifish. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROP training • Prescription for researcher • PPL reviews 		
8.	12:25 (15 mins)	<p>3Rs initiatives/updates and Culture of Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of care action plan is actively monitored through regular meetings. • The next State of Play report will be shared with AWERB, now produced biannually due to time constraints. • A handbook addressing communication strategies was developed with contributions from multiple teams. Feedback 		

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

		<p>from staff is being collected before finalising and sending to AWERB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility tours are being scheduled to foster better collaboration and understanding between teams. • Biannual meetings for team feedback and review have been implemented. • Efforts to address compassion fatigue among staff and managers are ongoing and will be a focused topic moving forward. • GW4 3Rs symposium: Animal technicians presented posters, with one technician receiving an award for killifish husbandry work. • High-level 3Rs strategy: Development of a comprehensive strategy is underway, with plans to include input from team members and review policies from other institutions. Focus areas include identifying barriers and tracking operational practices to ensure consistency. • Office space solutions were discussed. Updates on office space were provided, noting progress toward a collaborative workspace solution. • Continuous focus on training and enrichment activities across facilities. 		
9.	12:40 (5 mins)	<p>Production of Antibodies Annual Assessment Form Antibodies Annual Assessment Form AWERB/2425/21 was reviewed by AWERB.</p> <p>Discussion Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVSs highlighted the positive impact of the adjuvant refinement. Clarifying when phage display libraries were last tested was appreciated. • A discussion occurred about the lack of detailed evidence to support the statement that non-animal alternatives have been tried without success. • A discussion took place to encourage academic members to think about how experiments can be critiqued to ensure they align with 3Rs principles. <p>AWERB expressed appreciation for the improvements. The form will be rereviewed out of meeting and will then be approved by Chair's action.</p>	For revision	AWERB/2425/21
10.	12:45 (5 mins)	<p>Update on Chair's Action <u>ASPA regulated</u> None have had chair endorsement since the last AWERB meeting; three amendments are currently in review, including the one discussed in the current meeting.</p> <p><u>Non-ASPA</u> No projects endorsed since the last AWERB meeting. However, a new project involving bats in the US with procedures that would be regulated under the ASPA is currently being reviewed by AWERB sub-group.</p>		
11.	12:55	<p>Any Other Business A discussion took place about REC structures and review processes for animal work. Head of REC&G will clarify minor misunderstandings after meeting. (<i>ACTION</i>).</p> <p>AWERB were reassured that all processes would be carefully planned, keeping workloads manageable and ensuring best</p>		

		practices. A discussion focused on amendment review processes and exceptions for minor amendments with historical or operational complexities. The importance of clear communication and case-by-case assessment was emphasised.		
12.	13:00	End		

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 18th February, Online