

Advisory Council on Companion Animal Welfare

Date: 17th September 2025

Venue: Backweston campus

Meeting Time: 14:00 – 16:00

Attendees:

Seán O’Laoide (Chair), Catherine Lawler (DAFM), Chris Conneely (Irish Blue Cross), Clare Owens (DSPCA), Jim Stephens (IKC), Conor Dowling (NSPCA), Rory Breathnach (UCD), Alan Rossiter (Vet Ireland), Maureen Byrne (APDT), Sandra Nicholson (UCD), Shane Collins (DAFM), Georgina Murphy (RVN), Alan Walsh (DAFM).

Online: Sarah Lynch (Dogs Trust).

Apologies: Mary McCarthy (DAFM), Siobhan Mullan (UCD), Mairead Cooney (DAFM), Paul Lawless (IKC), Clare Meade (Cat Hospital).

1. Minutes and matters arising

Group confirmed previously discussed DAFM funded citizen survey will not go ahead.

Action Point: Dogs Trust to collate information for potential pet awareness day early in 2026.

2. Update from working groups

Welfare of Cats sub-group

- Development of innate health posters.
- Responsible cat ownership leaflet at advanced stage.
- Work underway on farm cat welfare engagement.

Welfare of exotic animals’ sub-group

- Report submitted July 2025.
- Groups considering options in relation to listing of species permitted to be kept as pets.
- Made recommendations for increased enforcement of sale and supply of pet animal regulations.
- Advancing plans for education messaging.

Innate Health and Extreme Breeding sub-group

- Group's current focus is on dogs. Cats to be included in next phase.
- Raised UK developing an app for stakeholders in relation to innate health of animals.

Action Point: ACCAW Chair to write to Minister informing of potential future issues associated with increased cat pet ownership.

3. DAFM Update

- Policy and legislative responsibility for Control of Dogs has now been transferred to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- Update on the EU regulation for the Welfare and Traceability of Dogs and Cats.
- News reports of diseases associated with imported pets, including zoonotic risks.
- New Animal Welfare strategy is under development.
- Group discussed emerging issue of canine Brucellosis.

Action point: DAFM to share with animal welfare charities information on Brucella Canis.

4. AOB

- Group discussed format of minutes going forward.
- Potential for guest speakers to address future ACCAW meetings.
- Group raised potential update for the Responsible Dog Ownership leaflet.
- Potential role for ACCAW in considering matters relating to Dog Breeding Establishments.
- Group discussed issue of landlords refusing rent leases to pet owning tenants.
- Group raised pet travel tapeworm treatment in relation to show dogs travelling frequently to Ireland from UK.

Action Point: ACCAW to contact Cathy Dwyer, Chair of Scotland Animal Welfare Commission, in relation to speaking at a future ACCAW meeting.

Action Point: During the next meeting of the Dog Control Stakeholder Group, ACCAW aimed to raise the matter of refusal of rent leases to pet-owning tenants.

Action Point: DAFM to forward IKC details of requirements in relation to sale or supply of per animal, for inclusion in cat newsletter.

Next Meeting: 3rd December 2025.