

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)



Minutes

Present:	[REDACTED]	Chair
	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	NACWO, NIO, NTCO, HOLC
	[REDACTED]	NVS
	[REDACTED]	NACWO, Clerk
	[REDACTED]	Scientific Member
	[REDACTED]	Scientific Member
	[REDACTED]	Lay member
	[REDACTED]	Lay member
	[REDACTED]	Lay member
	[REDACTED]	Statistician
Apologies:	[REDACTED]	PEL Holder

STANDING ITEMS

- 1. Apologies for absence**
Apologies were noted as above.
- 2. Quoracy**
The quorum was met.
- 3. Introduction of new members**
The Committee welcomed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was previously a member of the AWERB prior to the closure of the BRF in 2021.
- 4. Minutes**
Considered and approved: the minutes of the meeting held on 26/4/2024.

UPDATES TO THE AWERB

- 5. Update on transfer of Project Licences ([REDACTED])**

- [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) now has added City St George's (CSG) as additional availability. Primary availability remains at [REDACTED].

The PPL expires in June 2025, and CSG will be listed as the primary establishment upon renewal. Review of the PPL prior to renewal will take place at the next AWERB meeting.

[REDACTED] still has some fish lines at [REDACTED], which are in the process of being imported to CSG.

- [REDACTED] now has primary availability at CSG, with secondary availability at [REDACTED]. DO has no remaining fish lines at [REDACTED].

6. Update on amendment to name of Establishment Licence ([REDACTED])

- To reflect the merger between City and St George's, the establishment name on the PEL has been amended to City St George's. Named Persons remain the same, and [REDACTED] remains the PELh.

7. Report from NTCO/NIO/HOLC ([REDACTED])

Received and considered: NTCO/NIO/HOLC report, An Overview of the UK Legislation Governing Animal Use in Scientific Research, Procedure for Review and Approval of ASPA Project Licence (PPL) Application

- Committee received and considered *An Overview of the UK Legislation Governing Animal Use in Scientific Research*, written by [REDACTED] to provide an overview of ASPA and related legislation in layman's terms. [REDACTED] suggested that this could be added to the BRF web page.

Action agreed: [REDACTED] to explore adding *An Overview of the UK Legislation Governing Animal Use in Scientific Research* to the BRF web page.

- Committee received and considered *Procedure for Review and Approval of ASPA Project Licence (PPL) Application*, written by [REDACTED] to explain the process of reviewing PPLs. Committee members agreed that this was very helpful. [REDACTED] suggested that a PowerPoint template for PPL holders to use for presentation at AWERB meetings.

Action agreed: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to draft PowerPoint template.

- Both PPL holders and [REDACTED] have had inductions to the unit and their Schedule 1 Killing competencies reassessed.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have had microinjection competencies reassessed.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have been assessed as competent on the non-recovery procedure of severing a major blood vessel under terminal anaesthesia.

[REDACTED] has completed inductions for two embryo users, i.e users that are not conducting any regulated procedures, and will only be using <5dpf embryos for their experiments.

[REDACTED] to be added as NTCO on PEL shortly.

- A new noncompliance form has been released by the Home Office, which must be submitted as a Word document. ASRU continues to encourage self-reporting.

It was clarified to the Committee that reports of noncompliance are encouraged but not mandatory, as opposed to reports under Standard Condition 18 of PPLs. There is no set deadline for noncompliance reports but it is good practice to submit these ASAP.

ASRU will be changing the standard protocol templates for the breeding and maintenance of genetically altered (GA) mice and zebrafish. They are asking for input from Establishments on this.

There is a change to the conflict of interest declaration process for new NVSs and NACWOs. Declarations must now be submitted to the PELh prior to submission to ASRU.

8. Report from NACWO (■■■)

To receive and consider: NACWO report

- Wildtype (WT) fish, imported from ■■■ in March and April, are now adults and breeding well. Fish from both imports spawned successfully at 8 weeks post-fertilisation, which is a sign of good health and welfare. Nursery survival rates were higher in the April import than the March group, with 70% and 62% survival rates respectively at 5 weeks of age.

Both groups of WT fish showed skeletal malformations of the tail, but many have been observed to have grown out of these. Neither group showed a significant bias in sex ratio.

A new generation of WT fish will be bred shortly, and parents selected from the April import.

- Large mass spawning tanks, adapted from old conventional mouse cages, are now in use for the WT embryo service. Anecdotally embryo quality appears to be better than the previous method of setting up fish in pairs or trios. This method has saved BRF staff considerable time in setup and collections.
- Five lines of ■■■'s GA fish were imported as embryos in mid July. These are all maintained under Protocol 1 (mild) of ■■■'s PPL. 5 week survival rates have not yet been recorded, but there have been few observable losses and they are growing well.
- One line of transgenic fish has been created under ■■■'s mild breeding protocol from injected WT embryos. Significant losses (>50%) were noted by 3 weeks of age. It was noted that this may be attributed to their WT background, as their parents were from the March import from ■■■ which also showed significant nursery losses. In case this was the case, the fish from the March import have been retired from breeding.
- ■■■ has generated three lines of GA fish under his moderate breeding protocol. All fish were monitored closely for harmful phenotypes and all three lines were not raised past 18dpf. ■■■ is discussing husbandry refinements with ■■■ that may help to raise the fish to an older age without reaching humane endpoints, as this would be very valuable for the experiments.
- A third standalone rack was installed in May and is now being seeded. So far this process is going well.
- All adult fish are provided with enrichment in the form of plastic plants. They have been observed interacting with these and there have been no negative effects seen. Samples of plastic 'tents' are being tried out as further enrichment. Anecdotally there appears to be lower incidence of eggbound females in tanks with the 'tents', suggesting the fish may be using these as a spawning substrate.

9. Report from NVS (■■■)

To receive and consider: NVS report

- Fish appear to be healthy and growing well, and systems are running well.
- Detritus samples have been taken from the racks to send for health screening where a Mycobacterium spp. PCR panel will be carried out. Currently due to the young age of the fish it is not necessary to send out whole fish for testing.

PROPOSED LICENCE AMENDMENTS

10. Proposal for amendment to Establishment Licence – Rehoming (■■■)

Received and considered: Rehoming Scheme Proposal, Policy for the rehoming of zebrafish (Draft)

■■■ proposed amendment to the PEL whereby wild-type zebrafish that have not undergone any procedures would be rehomed at the end of their breeding life. This was proposed as an invitation-only trial in the first instance, whereby fish would only be rehomed to those known personally by BRF staff such as friends, family, and colleagues.

Decision made: Whilst the proposal of a rehoming scheme was well received by the Committee, the proposed amendment was not approved in this instance. The primary concerns raised were:

- Accidental rehoming of GA fish – though this was acknowledged as very unlikely and [REDACTED] clarified that accidental release of GMOs is covered in the risk assessment for GMO use at CSG.
- Misunderstandings from the general public may lead to damage to reputation of CSG.
- Questions were raised about the liability of CSG if there were any issues with the rehoming process.

The Committee agreed that the proposal should be reviewed by Governance, Legal and Assurance Services (GLAS) for advice. Following advice from GLAS, the proposal will be reconsidered at a future AWERB meeting.

Action agreed: [REDACTED] to send proposed amendment to GLAS to review.

Other business

*Starred items not discussed unless notified to the Chair or Clerk in advance of the meeting.

11. Terms of Reference

Updated Terms of Reference approved by all members of the Committee other than two new members ([REDACTED] and [REDACTED]). TOR to be sent out to new members for approval.

Action agreed: [REDACTED] to send TOR to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for approval by next AWERB.

12. *Dates of Future Meetings

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]