

**Minutes of the Rothamsted Research, North Wyke Animal Welfare and Ethical
Review Body – Hybrid Wednesday 3rd December 2025**

1. **Apologies** – None
2. **Actions** – Review of tracker

Home Office Audit – **Full System Audit Process – Internal review/evidence portfolio:**
How to prepare.

No updates. This item should remain on the agenda.

ACTION: [REDACTED] to review at a later date.

AWERB Committee:

NIO – [REDACTED]

NACWO/NTCO – [REDACTED]

ACTION: [REDACTED] to complete training.

Concordat of Openness:

Publishing of minutes on website.

ACTION: Chair to put minutes on website with names redacted

Projects/Reports:

DNA Testing beef cattle – benefits of using hair follicles instead of blood samples.

[REDACTED] found that using hair follicles was considered to be sub-threshold, [REDACTED] would like to use this instead of taking blood samples for DNA testing if possible.

ACTION: Chair to clarify if the Genomic profiling will continue as no lead scientist in place.

Establishment Licence:

Premises to be updated on Establishment Licence – purchase of land at East Rowden has completed.

2c. Staffing:

All positions filled for ASPA following Rothamsted voluntary exits. [REDACTED] mentioned that [REDACTED] is a PIL so maybe useful to add to the list. 3 new operational farm staff appointed following voluntary exits. (1 full time and 2 part time). The farm is operating 1 FTE less than 12 months ago, but the numbers are appropriate given the current workload.

3.Conflicts of Interest:

Due to [REDACTED] being the Livestock Experimental Manager he would be unable to cover the experiments he oversees as NACWO so [REDACTED] will be able to cover these.

ACTION: Chair to circulate register after meeting

4. Establishment Licence: This is to be a permanent Agenda item in order that we review Named Officers, designated premises, etc at each meeting.

a) Additional land purchase at East Rowden has completed and this will need to be added to the current licence, currently there are no animals on the land which are on procedure, [REDACTED] will ensure that everything is in place ready for [REDACTED] to update.

5. Training:

[REDACTED] (PIL) and [REDACTED] NACWO will complete their training. [REDACTED] will start E1&L training in January.

6. Review of projects incorporating regulated procedures:

Improving livestock production efficiency, quality, health, and welfare

a) Selecting sustainable beef cattle – Genomic profiling -See report 1

Currently there is no lead scientist to lead this, [REDACTED] will get clarification as to whether this will continue. If yes [REDACTED] is looking at this being done with hair follicle samples (sub-threshold) as opposed to blood samples. Currently 103 cattle remain on site under licence for this procedure.

b) [REDACTED] Private company– See report 2

Blood samples were taken from the tail but due to the amount of blood required (4 tubes from a single needle insertion) this was challenging. Refinements suggested to reduce stress to the animal, [REDACTED] also suggested using the Jugular rather than the tail.

c) Interventions to Reduce Enteric Methane Emissions.

PIL is [REDACTED] Procedures: Jugular blood sampling and oral swab (sub-threshold)

Unrelated to the procedure an animal on this trial was involved with a collision with a farm vehicle (kicking at the wheel of a 4x4 while being moved and being pulled between the wheel and wheel arch). The injury (cuts) were treated immediately, however 2 weeks later was then identified to be at an advanced stage of infection and further veterinary treatment was required. The infection should have been noticed sooner. [REDACTED] has spoken to all involved and has agreed that a variety of experienced staff to conduct welfare checks. The animal is recovering well.

7. Review of projects not incorporating regulated procedures:

a) Farm Platform -see Report 4

High worm burdens in sheep continue to be an issue. Weaker animals were removed from pastures this season. Acorns were also a significant issue throughout October, [REDACTED] suggested a thick layer of slurry to cover the acorns if this happens again.

b) Rational Microbial-based interventions [REDACTED] – See report 5

██████████ PhD student from Bristol. Initially sampling (rectal swabs) was intended as a mild procedure but was then deemed to be sub-threshold following review. All animals retained within the herd.

c) AgZero project – see *report 6*

One death through acorns and one from Tick-borne fever.

d) Technograzing Project: see *report 7*

One death, cause unknown but suspected of neurological issue.

8. Proposed upcoming projects:

a) Sheep GHG trial – ██████-see *attached document*

██████ had some concerns with this project.

1. The project will involve identifying lambs with a high worm burden and withholding veterinary treatment.
2. Withholding treatment would require an amendment to the current PPL or a separate license for the project.
3. A proposed alternative would be to identify animals with a raised worm burden, but sub threshold for intervention. However, the health of these animals may not be compromised enough to fulfil the aims of the trial.

b) ██████ *Private company* (phase 2) – Unsure if this will be going ahead. Awaiting outcome of funding bid. This would be a relatively straightforward repeat of last years project requiring the collection of blood samples from FP cattle.

c) ██████ PhD trial. This will involve testing a methane inhibitor in young calves using greenfeed. Concerns over the welfare of young calves being put into the SRF on a slatted floor.

Nutrition concerns if they would be getting enough as they would still be on milk. AJ said it would be difficult to monitor what their food intake was as they would be grouped together and if separated it would raise the issue of animals being housed individually.

9. Other animal health and welfare issues:

a) PIL meeting – Update from ██████-No meeting has taken place due to both ██████ and ██████ training.

b) Inspection of premises, housing, etc ██████ will set up a rota for the inspection to take place.

c) Farm Managers Report – see *report 8*

Cattle:

Total number of cattle on farm as at 17.11.2025 – 445 (139 on procedure).

North Wyke Farm is currently TB free. BVD free, Johne's risk level 3.

75 new calves bought in, unfortunately a high Pneumonia rate despite vaccination, due to excellent stockmanship by [REDACTED] no losses.

A lame bull resulted in poor conception in heifer group.

Sheep:

Total number of sheep on farm as at 17.11.25 – 519-(0 on procedure)

Worm burden continues to be an issue with 11 deaths since July 25, [REDACTED] has reduced flock size to try and help with the worm burden, acorns an issue this year with 3 deaths to acorn poisoning.

General:

Staffing is back up to a manageable number with [REDACTED] joining full time and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on zero hours. All buildings ASPA compliant.

Action required – Ventilation improvements required in sheep shed to help with calf pneumonia rates

d) NVS comments – [REDACTED]

Was surprised we had not had more deaths with acorns so was pleased we had managed it well.

[REDACTED] raised the ‘Roadmap for phasing out animal testing in the UK’ recently released by the government. The short-term plans do not appear to have an immediate impact on the scope of the work carried out at NW, but [REDACTED] will keep this under review.

e) 3Rs

Several refinements were discussed regarding the [REDACTED] *Private company* project including heating the tail to improve blood flow if multiple vacutainers are required again.

Some barrels have been hung in the calf shed to give them something to play with. Cattle scratching brushes are being replaced where worn.

10. Project Licence applications and/or amendments:

Depending on outcome for point 8 there are no amendments and no new PPL applications.

11. Full system audit process-Internal review? Evidence portfolio [REDACTED]:

Action required- Full document review required now all vacant AWERB posts have been filled.

12. Concordat on Openness:

Minutes to be uploaded to website in line with Exeter university procedures

Action required – [REDACTED] to upload to website.

13. H O Communications

Questionnaire sent via HOLTIF regarding the Landscape review of the current and future capabilities, capacities and opportunities for research using animals in the UK.

Action: Chair to complete questionnaire consulting with other AWERB members as required

14. Research Ethics Committee:

Update from [REDACTED] – It is agreed that if REC come across any projects requiring AWERB input they will flag with chair.

15. Submissions from staff:

None

16. A.O.B

None

17. Date of next meeting:

May/June 2026