

**CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) for the
GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (GEIS) on
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE**

**Meeting Notes
November 15, 2000
Holiday Inn, Arden Hills**

Wednesday, November 15

CAC members or alternates in attendance: Gary Allen, Ken Albrecht, Pat Bloomgren, Fraser Hart, Gretchen Sabel, Andy Steensma, Pat Henderson, Harold Stanslawski, Chris Radatz, Paul Christ, Tina Rosenstein, Jeanne Scharf, David Preisler, Tom Dunnwald, Galen Lisell, Kent Sulem, George Raab, Helen Palmer, Ed Heglund, Robert Ferguson and Larry Schultz

CAC members not represented: Kristin Sigford, Roger Gilliland, Mark Schultz

EQB staff present: George Johnson, Gregg Downing and Angela McGovern

Facilitator: Virginia Pierce, Management Analysis Division

Special Guests: Paul Toren, EQB Boardmember, Michael Sullivan, Executive Director, EQB
John Fetrow, Prof. U of MN, Joe Conklin Prof. Emeritus, U of MN

The meeting came to order at 9:00 a.m.

Welcome, overview, and introductions

The meeting opened with remarks by George Johnson. He updated the CAC on the progress on the Technical WorkPapers (TWP's). He explained that all TWP work was proceeding according to schedule. Mr. Downing notified the CAC that Kris Sigford had gone into the hospital for a surgical procedure and she would not be able to attend this month's meeting. The group expressed their sympathies and get well cards were passed around for signature. Mr. Downing made a brief presentation on a proposed process flow chart and draft schedule for completing the TWP's and draft GEIS. The plan allows for three major steps for each TWP and solicits CAC input throughout the process. CAC members gave some limited comments on these documents.

Don Aird from the Minneapolis regional office of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave a presentation on the role of the FDA in Animal Agriculture. He talked about inspection programs and FDA's role in collecting supporting information on incidents. Mr. Aird talked about his experiences with microbiological outbreaks, including the Anthrax epidemic in Northwestern Minnesota and the possibilities of Mad Cow disease (BSE) in our country. He also discussed his knowledge of antibiotic use in animals and the problems of bacterial antibiotic resistance. Mr. Aird stated that from his perspective the most significant sources of antibiotic resistance were

hospitals and nursing homes. He felt that animal antibiotic use was a minor contribution to the problem. Mr. Aird handed out a number of items to the group and answered questions from the CAC.

The main topic for discussion at this meeting was the draft TWP on Animal Welfare prepared by Marlene Halverson. Ms. Halverson made a forty-five minute overhead presentation, which defined the issues and her perspective on these. She also screened portions of a videotape that showed extreme acts of animal cruelty in a hog production facility. CAC was directed to withhold questions during this initial presentation to allow Ms. Halverson the opportunity to establish her thesis. Her doctoral work is on alternative swine housing systems. Ms. Halverson's experience in Europe with animal welfare issues gives her a different perspective from the traditional production systems used in the USA. European society has developed their animal production systems with a greater importance placed on animal well being than is normally found in our country. Historically the animal rights movement has been a much stronger political and social force in Europe for much longer than in the USA. The European animal production model may not be easily transferable into the American social and economic matrix on a large scale.

Issues of animal welfare include animal health and animal well being. Most professionals accept the definition that welfare is the comprehensive term, which includes health and well being as subsets. Animal health refers primarily to physical health . This discipline has been well studied by animal production specialists. A very thorough discussion of animal health issues was provided in the Literature Summary by University of Minnesota Animal Science faculty. Animal well being refers primarily to mental health aspects. This area was not adequately discussed in the Literature Summary. Ms. Halverson was contracted to produce a supplementary TWP that focused on the issues of animal well being. This is a difficult topic to discuss in a quantitative, unemotional fashion. Issues of anthropomorphism, vivisection, animal abuse, animal cruelty, animal rights, genetically modified organisms, xenotransplantation, and vegetarianism all intrude into the discussion when you try to discuss the importance of an animal's mental state. These issues of animal welfare are definitely emerging more fully into the popular consciousness. Despite a variety of strong personal opinions, the CAC has acknowledged the need to address the topic on some level in the GEIS.

Following Ms. Halverson's presentation there were a number of comments and questions from the CAC. This material was provided by Virginia Pierce, who facilitated the meeting and transcribed as many of the CAC comments as possible.

CAC comments on the TWP presentation

1. There are measures of physical welfare. Are there measures for mental welfare?
2. Could you suggest policy recommendations that are feasible, likely to happen, and could change things?
3. Are adequate statistics available on economic impacts? This may be a topic for future

4. How can the definitions in the TWP be quantified? Some measures are qualitative – observable abnormal behavior. Some are quantifiable, like hormonal levels.
5. Are consumers willing to pay increased food costs?
6. How are public “wants” determined?
7. Will the TWP incorporate information from the existing literature summary?
8. Public concern in the U.S. goes back to the 1960s.
9. McDonald’s is refusing eggs from forced molting.
10. Write the paper without villainizing or angelizing one side or the other.
11. How do we know that gestation crates are bad?
12. A lot of positive things can be said. The dairy industry is doing a lot for cow comfort. Successful managers do not abuse. Objective measures are needed. There is other literature like Albright from Purdue and Stan Curtis who have led in developing standards. There is reluctance to make connections between breeding practices. Misuse is a people problem.
13. Do we need to certify animal caretakers?
14. Animal welfare has potential to blindside the industry in the U.S. as it did in Sweden. What approaches could help farmers make changes in production methods? We do not want to be our own undoing. Coordination among agencies is needed – with information to the public and research.
15. What is the role of animal welfare in multi-functional agriculture?
16. How does one determine the value between different negative events in animals?
17. To what extent is the view of animal welfare altered by different religious and cultural values?
18. Be objective. These are polarizing issues. Animal care may be less polarizing than animal welfare. (Welfare was described as a legitimate term in the field of study.)
19. What are policies in other countries that result in desirable management systems?
20. The TWP references need to be peer reviewed.

21. Our charge is how these issues affect the Minnesota environment.
22. We will be providing a subject index of relevant supporting papers for each TWP.
23. Use the word well being instead of welfare, as we do in the scoping document.
24. The professional term is animal welfare and includes health and well being.
25. Who are the relevant scientists or disciplines that study animal welfare?
26. Watch out for use of terminology like factory-farming , industrial-agriculture.
27. What is different in practices and effects in European countries and what inferences can we use in Minnesota in policy development?

Continued CAC discussion after the presenter left

1. We need Marlene's total paper in December.
2. It is unpolitical to introduce things to polarize things further. The video was inappropriate.
3. The video is not a bad thing; we must see those things, even though they are extreme. Abuse exists. It doesn't mean that it is characteristic. How can we move from where we are to something better?
4. There is little guidance on what to do for general agriculture. I do not see apparent policy considerations.
5. The beginning of the TWP refutes claims made by the U of M., refutes the literature search.
6. It is not an unbiased paper. It is an advocacy document, a bully pulpit of one person. Present both bodies of work without making one or the other wrong.
7. It should be no shock on what we got. It was missing from the literature review.
8. We need to be clear on what is abuse.
9. The content is polarizing. Can we cull/take a position on key components in this body of knowledge that can be applied in current production systems?
10. Footage on all kinds of good and bad systems is available. There is no discussion of proper employee training and supervision.
11. We need a factual study of the gaps related to animal well being.

12. The University is building a new swine research facility in Waseca where several kinds of housing, including moving away from crates, are being used.
13. There is a question on the proper way to euthanize downed animals.
14. There are tradeoffs with bedding; salmonella from bird droppings.
15. A lot can be done in a disease-free environment like Sweden does. The UV Vet School Center for Disease Eradication has funded six projects in four years on how to eliminate antibiotics and what in antibiotics increases feed efficiency.
16. Reaction to the presentation is hostile and emotional. The document is sobering, not any more advocacy than the literature review. Let's not cover up or smooth over.
17. Write the TWP as a different perspective, not as a response to the University.
18. Need care in how we use a 32-page bibliography in terms of our credibility. Whittle it down to the gold.
19. If we question the presenter's credibility, we should bring her back. If we don't like the TWP, we can drop it.
20. I admire Helen Palmer for keeping the topic in front of us. The credibility issues have to do with how things are stated – reduce polarizing language, and what is stated – home in on facts.
21. We need best management practices for well being by species and different systems. Steps the dairy industry is taking with cow comfort is an example.
22. We need a document that tells what is (facts), not what should be (advocacy)

CAC Suggestions for the Animal Health TWP

1. Include how to measure well being.
2. Include economic studies or recommendations for future research in economic area. In any policy recommendation we need to bring in the economic factors.
 - a. How we compete with other states
 - b. What other countries do to support their systems (Sweden – imports, exports)
 - c. Are these systems competitive on the world market?
 - d. Time factor to change to those systems and government support during change
3. Question of incorporating information from the literature review – work out what to include.
4. Write without villainizing or angelizing the various approaches or parties.
5. Include current positive efforts toward animal welfare – literature like Albright – Purdue and Stan Curtis.
6. Include approaches to help farmers make changes in production.
7. Look at different religious and cultural values.
8. Question use of terms – welfare and well being.
9. What policies in other countries result in desirable management systems?
10. Paper should be a factual study of what is and the gaps related to animal agriculture.

Initial animal health policy considerations

1. Develop best management practices on animal care, well being, and welfare.
2. Development of best management practices fact sheets on animal well being.
These fact sheets could be developed for: confinement systems, pasture systems, and hybrid systems, etc.
3. Should new antibiotics (or some existing ones) be reserved for human use only?
4. Reserve some antibiotics for people and forbid their use on animals.
5. Required education of animal caretaker and licensed animal caretakers, and options or corrections in operation for animal welfare.
6. Provide opportunity for nesting material in production facilities. Nesting material used would not promote disease.
7. Additional economic analysis should be completed and should accompany alternatives to our current production processes.

Mr. Sullivan made remarks on his observations of the meeting and CAC's charge from the Legislature and the Environmental Quality Board. He indicated that this was a difficult process but he was generally pleased with what he had observed. He encouraged the CAC to continue the process toward their ultimate goal, the completion of the GEIS.

The document submitted by Ms. Halverson did not actually fulfill the requirement of a draft TWP. She will have to provide a more complete draft TWP for CAC review. This will cause delays in the process. The December meeting is now expected to be a two-day event dealing primarily with the issues of Human Health impacts. Michael Valentine of EarthTech and his staff will present their work , answer questions and take comments for document finalization.

4:45 Summary

5:00 Meeting Adjourned