

# Hon Andrew Hoggard

Minister for Biosecurity  
Minister for Food Safety  
Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare, Skills)  
Associate Minister for the Environment



MIN24-0217

Dr Matthew Stone  
National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee  
nawac@mpi.govt.nz

Dear Dr Stone,

## **Letter of Expectations for NAWAC**

I am writing to you to notify you of my expectations for the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) for the 2024-25 financial year.

The Government's Coalition Agreements include reform of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to ensure its function, membership and mandate are appropriate. I expect that once that process is completed, I will contact you again to update this letter.

It is important that NAWAC continue to advise Ministers when requested, but otherwise focus on the remaining Committee functions set out in the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act). Below, I have identified the areas of Government interest that I expect NAWAC to prioritise.

### ***Codes of welfare for the livestock sectors***

In line with the Government's desire to support the primary sector, it is important to me that New Zealand continues to rank highly for animal welfare standards. This is important for the standard of care provided to animals in New Zealand, for people in charge of animals, and our international reputation with customers and consumers.

I am advised that current reviews of the dairy, deer, and sheep and beef cattle codes are well underway. It is important that these proposed codes are completed in a timely manner to provide the primary production sector certainty about what standards they have to meet, and what recommended best practices they should be aiming to achieve. As capacity allows, the poultry codes should be the next priority for NAWAC.

My expectation is that work on other codes currently underway is to be paused, this includes any work on the rabbit code of welfare or any other 'companion animal' codes of welfare, and any opinion pieces the Committee is considering.

### ***Elevated consideration of economics and practicality***

The Act requires NAWAC to consider good practice, scientific knowledge and available technologies when determining its proposals for minimum standards, recommended best practices, and regulations. However, it may consider practicality and economic impact of any proposals, if relevant.

I am aware that significant concerns were raised by industry stakeholders regarding the practicality and economic impacts of some proposals put forward by NAWAC in its recent consultations for the pigs and dairy cattle codes of welfare, and associated regulations.

Minimum standards and regulations impose legal obligations on owners and persons in charge of animals. As such, it is in line with the principles of good regulatory practice to consider if those legal obligations are practical (for example, certain, feasible, workable) and proportional (the costs being imposed are proportional to the anticipated benefits).

Going forward, it is my expectation that NAWAC will give greater regard where questions of feasibility arise, or that are likely to incur significant financial outlay (for example, capital expenditure on infrastructure, or additional costs driven by changing practices or processes). When appropriate, NAWAC should undertake or seek more detailed analysis of the impact of its proposals.

It is not intended that inclusion of these criteria override animal welfare requirements, but they do need to be considered where relevant to ensure any proposed minimum standard or regulation is workable.

### ***Affected persons are highly engaged throughout the process of code of welfare reviews***

It is important to me that NAWAC engages openly, positively, and in a genuine way with all stakeholders when undertaking these reviews, particularly with those who will be affected by any changes to animal welfare standards. I recognise that review of codes of welfare generate a range of views and opinions. While all perspectives need to be considered by NAWAC when determining its proposals, I want to be satisfied that those who will be affected by any changes feel their voices are heard and their concerns are given due consideration.

It is important to me that you, as Chairperson, continue to engage with me regarding your programme of work, ensuring that Government expectations for NAWAC are met.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of NAWAC's members and thank them for their commitment to the challenging task of ensuring that New Zealand animal welfare standards continue to be regarded as some of the best in the world.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Andrew Hoggard  
**Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare, Skills)**