Minutes of the Domestic Animal Biomedical Embryology (DABE) Committee meeting held in Denver on Monday January 7, 2008.

The meeting was called to order at 17.30 by chairman F. Gandolfi in the Granite Room of the Hyatt Regency Denver Hotel. Thirty-four people were in attendance.

This was the first meeting of the Committee, therefore the chairman briefly explained that the Board of Governors of the International Embryo Transfer Society (IETS), on February 2007, approved the formation of a Special Committee on Stem Cells in Farm Animals. The purpose of the committee is to explore the interest within the IETS membership in providing a forum for people involved in stem cells and other biomedically important areas of embryo biology in domestic species to interact and share knowledge, and to increase the visibility of this research area. The IETS Board established that this committee will be a stand-alone committee, not within the context of Health and Safety Advisory Committee or other IETS committees, and invited F. Gandolfi to act as first chair.

Dr. Gandolfi explained that the initiative to form the committee arose from an informal meeting of a number of IETS members held in Kyoto during the 33rd Annual IETS Conference. During the months after the Kyoto meeting, attendees at this initial meeting established a Committee name and a “Terms of Reference” for the Committee and these were approved by the IETS Board on 20 August 2007. Dr. Gandolfi illustrated the Terms of Reference to the audience.

A discussion followed on the scope of the Committee. Some participants proposed that any possible form of stem cells should be included, arguing that limiting the committee to considering only embryo-derived cells was restrictive in light of recent successes in deriving stem cells from somatic sources. Discussion ensued during which it was agreed that while stem cells are an important focus of the committee, other areas, including nuclear reprogramming and transgenesis, are also of interest to the members. Regarding the initial emphasis on embryo-related stem cells, Dr. Gandolfi pointed out that this derived from our link with IETS and thus embryonic research, but that there is no pre-defined limit to the Committee's scope, which will expand and evolve with the scientific interests of its members. Discussion on changing the name of the committee ensued. Some speakers felt this was needed, but no alternative names were agreed upon. It was agreed that a better definition of the goals of the committee is needed and this will evolve through a further discussion among the members.

It was agreed that a web site for the DABE committee should be established as soon as possible. Matt Wheeler explained that establishing a site through FASS [Note: Federation of Animal Science Societies; the management service that IETS uses] would be expensive. Dr. Wheeler proposed that he establish an independent web site that could be linked to the IETS site, and this proposal was approved.

It was proposed that a Symposium on Domestic Animal Stem Cells be held as a satellite meeting immediately before or after the next possible IETS Annual Conference. [Note: Dr. Gandolfi has found that the 2010 meeting is the first available date]. A formal
proposal for the Symposium will be prepared by mid-2008 by Dr. Gandolfi, with the help of anyone interested.

It was proposed that a workshop on the derivation and maintenance of ES cell lines in domestic species be organized to be held at the 2009 IETS Annual Conference. [Note: Dr. Gandolfi has requested a time be allotted within the program; the details of the workshop will be defined through further contacts with the Local Organizing Committee for the 2009 IETS meeting. Dr. Gandolfi will soon ask DABE members to contribute proposals].

The fact that any DABE initiative will require funds was brought up, and it was suggested that we try to gather financial support. Dr. Gandolfi stated that he will try to contact potential sponsors and that any suggestions would be most welcome.

The next meeting of the DABE will be in San Diego, CA in January 2009 in conjunction with the IETS Annual Conference. The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Gandolfi at 18.30.