Scientific Panel on Plant Health

Minutes of the 62nd Plenary meeting

Held on 29-30 June, 2016, Parma (Italy)
(Agreed on 29 September 2016) [1]

Participants

- Panel Members[2]

  Claude Bragard, Elisavet Chatzivassiliou, Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz, Gianni Gilioli, Jean-Claude Gregoire, Josep Anton Jaques Miret, Michael Jeger, Maria Navajas, Bjorn Niere, Stephen Parnell, Roel Potting, Trond Rafoss, Gregor Urek, Wopke Van Der Werf, Stephan Winter, Jon West, Ariena van Bruggen, David Caffier

- Hearing Experts [3]:

  Oscar Alomar, Roberto Garcia, Carrie Harmon, Jens Linge

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

  Pasquale Di Rubbo, (EU Commission, DG SANTE) participated via web-conference

- EFSA:

  ALPHA Unit: Miren Andueza, Mitesha Aukhojee, Edoardo Carnesecchi, Ciro Gardi, Gabor Hollo, Virag Kertesz, Svetla Kozelska, Ioannis Koufakis, Maria Rosaria Mannino, Marco Pautasso, Gritta Schrader, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Frank Verdonck

- Observers:

  Francoise Petter (EPPO) participated via web-conference

[1] The publication of the minutes shall be made without delay in compliance with the Founding Regulation and no later than 15 working days following the day of their agreement.

[2] Indicate first full name and then surname (John Smith) all throughout the document.

[3] As defined in Article 11 of the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants to the 62nd plenary meeting of the EFSA Plant Health Panel.

Apologies were received from Thierry Candresse and Alan MacLeod.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Committee / Scientific Panel / Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes[4] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest[5] , EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI)and the Specific Declarations of Interest (SDoI) filled in by the Panel Members invited for the present meeting.

For further details on the outcome of the screening of the ADoI or the SDoI, please refer to Annex. No additional interest was declared.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 61st Plenary meeting held on 25 and 26 May 2016, Brussels, Belgium

The minutes of the 61st plenary meeting held on 25 and 26 May, 2016 were agreed.
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/event/160525-m.pdf

5. Report on written procedures since 61st Plenary meeting

There were no written procedures since the 61st plenary meeting.

[4] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf
[5] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf

6. Scientific outputs submitted for adoption / discussion

6.1 Discussion and update on scientific advice in the field of plant health regarding *Xylella fastidiosa* (Well et al.) TOR 1, EFSA-Q-2016-00182

This opinion addresses a request from the European Commission to evaluate whether heterogeneous populations of *Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *pauca* have been found in Apulia (Italy) in addition to the strain named CoDiRO. After reviewing the most recent scientific literature and conducting further sequence analysis of the housekeeping genes used to genotype *X. fastidiosa* from Apulia, the EFSA Panel on Plant Health concluded that the currently available scientific evidence does not support the notion of the existence of heterogeneous populations of *X. fastidiosa* in Apulia. To reach this conclusion, several lines of arguments have been considered: (i) the currently accepted multilocus sequence analysis (MLST) approach provides a robust and sensitive framework to estimate *X. fastidiosa* diversity, which may be further improved by whole genome sequence analysis; (ii) all scientific papers evaluated on *X. fastidiosa* in Apulia come to the conclusion that – notwithstanding host and location – *X. fastidiosa* in Apulia is ST53; and (iii) a single article by Elbaino et al. (2014) provides contradictory statements. After assessment of the methodology and re-analysis of the sequence information underlying the conflicting statement, the Panel considered that the data presented in that article do not support firm conclusions on the existing diversity of isolates. The Panel further considered that MLST data are currently available for only 18 Apulian isolates, and thus more data are needed to study further *X. fastidiosa* diversity, strain evolution and route(s) of introduction. From all evidence currently available, the Panel concludes that *X. fastidiosa* isolates involved in the current epidemic in Apulia belong to a single sequence type, ST53. There is no other information at this moment supporting the notion that, in addition to the strain named CoDiRO, other diversity exists.

The opinion was adopted without requests for any major changes.

6.2 Discussion of draft scientific opinion on HEALTHY-B (EFSA-Q-2015-00047)

The Panel was updated on the HEALTHY-B project activities between the previous PLH Panel discussion (Jan 2016) and today. The main changes in the document regarding external drivers and colony outputs were explained. Microbial aspects of beebread in relation to pesticides and the

general microbial balance of the hive have been discussed by the WG and included in the Appendices of the opinion and indirectly in the mind-maps. The WG will include some more information on this topic in the main text as well. The PLH Panel has raised the topic of viruses on plants and their link with bee health. It was discussed with the WG and it is covered in the mind-map, in the section on resource providing units by 'contaminants in the environmental matrices – plants'. Clarifications were asked regarding how current databases could be used when assessing floral resources availability. This is already addressed in the opinion via the factor 'land cover/use', specifying that additional methods such as palynological analysis of the nectar in the hive and waggle dance observation should be performed. The relevance of the Köppen-Geiger climate classification in relation to bee health was clarified, as well as how pesticides analysis is covered in the hive and in the resource providing unit. In relation to the colony outputs, the Panel expressed its preference to present the first version of Figure 14 (Variability of the effectiveness of a colony for a given pollination demand) as it looks at pollination from the bee health perspective. The alternative figure looks at pollination from the ecological perspective. The purpose and four approaches described in TOR4 were clarified and the approach for the usage of the toolbox by different stakeholders was explained. The Panel indicated that follow up of the HEALTHY-B mandate will be required to ensure implementation of the toolbox in the Member States. The high complexity of the topic makes it difficult for Member States to implement the toolbox in their on-going activities, unless EFSA could provide further support. Efforts to further harmonise the collection of data on bee health across the EU would also benefit the MUST-B project since it would enlarge the available dataset to inform and validate the model. Finally, the Panel endorsed the parts of the opinion related to TORs 1-3.

6.3 Discussion of scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Ditylenchus destructor* Thorne, (EFSA-Q-2015-00268)

The chair of the WG shortly mentioned the TOR and the specification of the risk assessment focusing on the pathways and risk reduction options. An overview of additional scenarios was presented and discussed specifically with respect to choice and evaluation of risk reduction options. The assessment model for entry, spread and impact was presented in detail including specific parameters, evidence used, model equation and first results for the seed potato pathway including distributions and sensitivity. The type of general data used in the calculations was specified and explained as well.

6.4 Discussion on draft scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Ceratocystis platani* (Walter) Engelbrecht et Harrington, (EFSA-Q-2015-00265)

The chair of the WG presented a summary of the progress. An effort was made to stay as close as possible to the template. Final results of the calculations (apart from entry) are not yet available. The three main pathways of entry (plants for planting, wood, and machinery) and the three scenarios considered (current situation, no measures, additional measures) were summarized. The calculation method of the multiplication factors was presented.

The cumulative probability for the estimated number of founder populations for the three main entry pathways and three scenarios was presented in a graphical form, as recommended by the Methods WG. There is a lack of information on the relative importance of the contribution of the different means of spread to the spread of the pathogen. Impacts were considered on ecosystem services, but not on crops or biodiversity.

The discussion focused on the use of NUTS2 vs. NUTS3 regions in the assessment. The issue of the need for contiguity in the host distribution for pathogen spread vs. the observed long-distance jumps was debated.

6.5 Discussion of scientific opinion on risk assessment of *Cryphonectria parasitica* (Murrill) Barr (EFSA-Q-2015-00266)

The current state of the opinion on the causal agent of chestnut blight (*C. parasitica*) was briefly presented. This pathogen is already widespread in the risk assessment area, but there is still risk posed by introduction of new lines of the pathogen. This could reduce the effectiveness of the currently effective risk reduction option (RRO) (hypovirulence).

The WG has considered entry for the two main pathways (plants for planting and wood), establishment and spread, as well as the possible RROs. Due to the general lack of data on most sub-steps of the risk assessment, expert knowledge was used to estimate the required distributions for the various multiplication factors. Unlike for *C. platani*, in this opinion it was only possible to work at the level of NUTS1 (Member States) for the assessment of the spread. The WG still needs to work on impacts, although it is already clear that, due to the effectiveness of hypovirulence in reducing the severity of chestnut blight, the impact of *C. parasitica* is lower than for *C. platani*.

The discussion focused on the issue of hypovirulence, as well as the clarification of the current regulatory status for chestnut wood with bark.

The deadline for delivery of this opinion is the same as for *C. platani*, i.e. September 2016.

6.6 Discussion of draft scientific opinion on risk assessment of Grapevine Flavescence dorée (EFSA-Q-2015-00271)

The WG Chair presented a summary of the progress made so far. The differences between the approaches of the various WGs and their reasoning were emphasized. It was stressed again that certain parts of the opinion may not be fully in line with the template. The main sections in this opinion were presented and the three chosen scenarios were specified as well. The maps showing the occurrence of FDp and *S. titanus*, the model showing predicted suitability for establishment and the approach for the spread calculations were schematically described. The WG put a lot of effort to justify ratings and clearly explain the uncertainties. The expert elicitation process concerning long and short distance spread was also explained. The impact rating still needs to be worked out. The WG's plans to finalise the opinion were presented.

7 Feedback from the Scientific Committee / Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission

7.1. Request from the European Commission to complete the Pest Risk Assessment (step 2) of 7 regulated pests: update by PLH Panel Working Groups on work progress

- Update on WG progresses and work plan on risk assessment of *Radopholus similis* (EFSA-Q-2015-00269)

The WG will start its work on risk assessment of *Radopholus similis* in September 2016. The future composition of the working group was shortly discussed and the need for external experts was identified.

- Update on WG progresses and work plan on risk assessment of *Diaporthe vaccinii* Shaer, (EFSA-Q-2015-00267)

The WG started to draft the PRA using as a model the Ceratocystis draft opinion. Based on the existing literature evidences, the main pathways for entry have been identified (plants for planting, fruit, natural spread from neighbouring countries).

The potential for establishment in Europe has been analysed on the bases of two models. The input for defining the range of suitable environmental parameters was derived from the data on D. vacinii infection, provided by Hossein Khandan.

The need of data/experts elicitation was identified, in order to quantitatively define

- the plant for planting pathway;
- the fruit pathways
- the distribution of native *Vaccinium* plants in Europe

In order to collect data on the plants-for-planting import in EU, two questionnaires have been prepared (one for plant nurseries and one for berry producers).
Further data on the existing infections within Europe and within EU, should be collected. So far within EU, D. vaccinii has been proved to be present in Latvia, while data from the Netherlands and Lithuania should be confirmed.
The WG relies on the results of the survey that should be concluded in 2016, and requested the possibility to contact the EFSA PLH Network for the D. vaccinii survey in the MS.

- Update on WG progresses and work plan on risk assessment of *Eotetranychus lewisi* (McGregor), (EFSA-Q-2015-00270)

The chair of the WG presented the Terms of reference, the WG composition and detailed work plan including the working group meetings.

- PLH Panel Working Group "Directive 2000/29 Methods": development of fit for purpose risk assessment methodologies and process to update EU listing of regulated plant pests (EFSA-Q-2014-00351)

- Presentation and discussion on methodology and template for risk assessment and update on WG progresses

The current state of play of the methodology was shortly summarised by the Chair of the WG. Furthermore, approaches to communicate the results of the different steps of the risk assessment were presented. These approaches had already been sent to the pilot working groups after the last plenary and are now considered by them. To have a harmonised output of results will only be possible with the next set of pilot studies applying the new methodology.

One of the chairs of the pilot groups asked for a simpler description of the methodology in the template, which can be used (under data and methodology) in the opinions.

It was emphasized that a clear message with regard to the output of the risk assessment is needed. Justifications have to be provided to give evidence, however it may be too demanding for every sub-step of the assessment. Graphs to visualize outcomes of the different steps were welcomed. The decomposition of the different elements contributing to uncertainty was considered as a good visual element. All in all, narrative

of results, tables, and graphs represent a useful basis for a very good communication strategy to present the opinion.

It was again underlined that a clear guidance document would be needed, with practical explanations. The guidance is due in May 2017. This guidance will replace the former guidance on a harmonised framework for pest risk assessment.

- Presentation and discussion on methodology and template for risk reduction options (RROs) and update on WG progresses

The progress achieved in the preparation of the template and in fiches presenting the Risk Reduction Options were presented and discussed. The Panel members contributed with feedback on the template (calculations, list of phytosanitary measures) and on fiches (clarification of paragraph contents, level of details needed regarding specific pests, final valorisation).

7.2 Update on Scientific Committee and its Working Groups

The WG on uncertainties is now organising/providing EFSA training on uncertainties. Panel members chairing working groups dealing with pest risk assessment developed according to the new methodology were encouraged to participate.

The WG on EFSA Guidance is now analysing the procedure when to re-open a published EFSA scientific opinion using case studies (e.g. PLH Panel opinion on Xylella).

7.3 EFSA

7.3.1 Follow-up from the 61th PLH Panel Plenary meeting held on 25-26 May 2016, Brussels (Belgium)

The list of registered observers and the results of the open plenary survey results was presented to the participants and shortly discussed. No need for direct follow-up actions was identified.

7.3.2 Presentation of the outcome on Court judgement C-615/13P

The outcome on Court judgement C-615/13P regarding a request to access to documents was presented. The impact in general is as follows: Requests for personal data increase. Individual data linked to the preparation of scientific outputs is likely to go public, e.g. documents in track changes, comments, e-mails with scientific comments, internal notes. Experts will be confronted more often with questions about their rights. It is important to differentiate between documents outside of the contribution to scientific outputs

7.4 European Commission

The panel was informed about possible future mandates such as a mandate on *Xylella fastidiosa* and a number of pest categorisation mandates.

8 New Mandates

There were no new mandates presented.

9. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

9.1 Final report on the MediSys for Plant Health EFSA procurement

The outsourced project Medisys (Univ. of Lleida and IRTA, Spain) for plant health was presented. This project aimed at developing the Medisys media monitoring tool of the Joint Research Centre (Ispra) for detecting emerging and re-emerging plant health threats in the media. The tool has already proven to be useful to follow media attention on *Xylella fastidiosa* over the last months. For *Xylella*, Twitter activity about this pathogen is now being monitored as well.

The discussion focused on the issue of changing pest names (categories can be easily edited); whether the tool has already found new threats (a rare case, but for example *Geosmithia morbida* was highlighted by the tool and picked up by EPPO during a presentation on the project earlier on); whether the tool could be used to monitor spread of plant pests (this might be the case in countries with little plant pathology capacity); whether Facebook and other social media could be monitored too (this is possible, in fact various blogs relevant to plant health are already monitored).

A meeting of the steering committee for the project after the PLH plenary meeting has been organized to discuss plans for future developments of the project. These include making use of the tool for posting media items and scientific literature on *Xylella* on the EFSA webpage about this topic that is currently under development. Further development of the Medisys tool for identification of new plant health threats could be part of a possible new mandate from the European Commission on horizon scanning. The results of a web survey among the stakeholders (EFSA PLH Panel members, EFSA PLH team staff, as well as officers at EPPO and the European Commission) already receiving daily email alerts based on the Medisys for Plant Health tool were presented. The final report of the project is now under revision and will be published soon.

9.2 Presentation of Dr. Carrie Harmon on National Plant Diagnostic Network database

Dr. Carrie Harmon gave two presentations at the plenary, as a hearing expert:

1. Diagnostic Data of the National Plant Diagnostic Network, a general presentation on the activities, methodologies and data of the Network

2. A presentation on the data on *Radopholus similis*, *Diaporthe vaccinii, Xylella* spp., *Eotetranychus lewisi*

After the presentations Dr. Carrie Harmon answered several questions posed by the panel members and EFSA staff. A synthesis of the Q/A is reported in annex.

9.3 Discussion on future PLH Panel self-tasks

A full list of possible PLH Panel self-tasks was presented and the relevant background for each task explained. During the follow-up discussion the importance, usefulness and urgency of the tasks was analyzed and evaluated. The participants agreed on the following areas which should be discussed during the next plenary (i) surveillance, (ii) short pest categorization and (iii) commodity risk assessment. To facilitate the discussion a discussion paper/proposal on these three tasks should be provided by the EFSA secretariat before the next plenary.

10 Any other business

The next PLH Plenary meeting will be held in Parma on 28-29 September, 2016.

Annex:
Agenda Point 9.2
Questions and answers:

Q: Do you use/maintain reference cultures/specimens for your diagnostic work?

A: We have positive controls for many molecular tests, definitely for high-risk, regulated pathogens. Most labs can't maintain culture collections, but when something new is identified, we often submit type specimens to the federal mycologist, or to our local herbarium.

Q: How have you achieved harmonization of methods?

A: We have not achieved complete harmonization, but we are working to ensure each lab uses the best methods to ensure we have quality diagnostic data and are providing the best, most appropriate diagnosis for our clientele. Regulatory diagnostics are harmonized by APHIS-required protocols. For everything else, we work as a team to communicate the best, most reliable, most appropriate tests to use. Most of our protocols are on www.npdn.org (available only to NPDN members), or the bugwoodwiki diagnosticians cookbook (open to the public).

Q: Are there any instances of detecting something and then preventing further spread? (Using the data to forecast an epidemic early on)

A: Each night a report runs that indicates any new pest-host-state combinations in the database – these are not necessarily new to the state, but they are new to the database. After 10 years, we still have new entries every day, and all diagnosticians receive this report every morning so we can be watching for new things. If a lab detects something "hot", a communications protocol is initiated – the diagnostician calls the regional hub, then the regional director or associate director communicates to the other four regional directors and the USDA NPDN national program leader. Those people then communicate to their state diagnosticians (the NPL communicates to his superiors). The data includes the pest and the host, plus symptoms and diagnostic methods, as appropriate, but not the state.

Q: What data could be in a file if requested?

A: Assuming the data request included all data relevant to a specific pest or host, the file would include all reports, for all states, for all time, to the county level for that host-pest combination.

Q: Where/who do the samples come from?

A: Anyone, anywhere. Growers, homeowners, regulatory partners, etc. The UF hub lab receives from any country, any US state, and host. A note about the UF international samples: we do not process nematode samples, only plant disease samples.

Q: What is your (NPDN's) relationship to PestLens?

A: PestLens is a USDA-APHIS effort to look outside the US for exotic pests that could threaten US agriculture. NPDN is a USDA-NIFA-University effort to look for pests domestically. Not related, but on friendly terms.

Q: Have you collected data from your submitters that could be analyzed to assist with surveys? Survey data – asking for distribution information from the submitter (citizen science question)

A: We are about to embark on a more systematic way of collecting information on samples that arise from our NPDN first detector submitters. Additionally we do request, for submissions to my lab, information about how many plants are affected out of how many total to get an idea of distribution.