European Food Safety Authority

BIOLOGICAL MONITORING UNIT

Task Force of Zoonoses Data Collection

Minutes of the 29th meeting

Held on 29-30 October 2013, Parma

(Agreed on 07/01/2014)

Participants

- **Network Representatives of Member States:**

Country	Name	Country	Name
Austria	Peter Much	Latvia	Tatjana Ribakova
Belgium	Luc Vanholme	Lithuania	Snieguole Sceponaviciene
Bulgaria	Emil Iliev	Luxembourg	Joseph Schon
Croatia	Dražen Kneževic	Malta	Susan Chircop
Czech Republic	Petr Satran	Netherlands	Rob Van Oosterom
Denmark	Birgitte Helwigh	Norway	Merete Hofshagen
Estonia	Jelena Sõgel	Poland	Jacek Osek
Finland	Saara Raulo	Portugal	Maria Fatima Cordeiro Silva
France	Laurent Montaut	Slovakia	Marta Bedriova
Germany	Matthias Hartung	Slovenia	Maja Kokalj
Greece	Tzani Myrsini	Spain	José Luis Saez Llorente
Hungary	Anna Luca Vecsei	Spain	Carlos Valencia Gonzales
Ireland	Lisa O'Connor	Sweden	Elina Lathi
Ireland	Kilian Unger	Switzerland	Jürg Danuser
Italy	Veronica Cibin	United Kingdom	Lesley Larkin
Italy	Simona Iannetti		

- **Observers:**
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- **European Commission and/or Member States representatives:**
  - Klaus Kostenzer (DG SANCO)
- **EFSA:**
  - Bernhard Url (Executive Director), Pia Mäkelä (BIOMO, Chair), Frank Boelaert (BIOMO), Pierre-Alexandre Belœil (BIOMO), Valentina Rizzi (BIOMO, scientific secretary), Mario Monguidi (BIOMO), Kenneth Mulligan (BIOMO), Simona Fusar Poli (BIOMO), Teresa Da Silva Felicio (BIOHAZ), Andrea

European Food Safety Authority – Via Carlo Magno 1/a, 43126 Parma, ITALY
Tel: (+39) 0521 036 111 • Fax: (+39) 0521 036 110 • www.efsa.europa.eu

Gervelmeyer (AHAW), Paul Devalier (IT Systems), Marco Leoni (IT Systems), Fabrizio Abbinante (P&M team)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The meeting was opened by welcoming all the Task Force (TF) members.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of interest

None of the participants declared an additional interest related to the subjects of the meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 28th meeting of the Task Force of Zoonoses Data Collection held on 18-19 April 2013, Uppsala (Sweden)

The comments received via email from the TF members were taken into account in the final version of the minutes. No additional comments were received during the meeting and the minutes were agreed upon.

5. Topics for discussion

5.1 Upcoming changes in BIOMO unit and Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance (RASA) Directorate

The Executive Director of EFSA, Bernhard Url, summarised the remit of the RASA Directorate, underlining the importance of data collection as the basis for risk assessment process. The contribution of and collaboration with Member States (MSs) (including zoonoses Task Force) was acknowledged as important. In this context the Data Warehouse (DWH) project represents a big investment for EFSA and it is intended for storing and sharing data with relevant stakeholders. EFSA is going to discuss with the European Commission (EC) about the process of opening the access to data with the final aim to build a risk assessment community.

He also presented the reorganisation of the RASA directorate, that will be in place as of 1 January 2014. The aim of this restructure is to gain efficiency through the introduction of the project management approach and a new way of collaboration between renewed units. Some details about the tasks and the structure of the four new RASA's units were given.

5.2 Revision of the mandate of the Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection

The chair informed the TF about the need to revise the mandate of the TF on Zoonoses Data Collection for the next three years, based on the request of EFSA's Advisory Forum (AF). The draft revised mandate was presented. It is proposed to change the name of the TF to Scientific Network on Zoonoses Data Collection for harmonisation purposes within EFSA. Rewording has been implemented to the Terms of Reference to improve clarity about the tasks of the network. In addition, the data collection has been extended to cover also microbiological contaminants (non-zoonotic agents). It was agreed to reintroduce the concept about setting of priorities for the harmonisation of monitoring approaches and data collection. The revised document will be discussed for adoption at the next AF meeting in December 2013.

5.3 EU Summary Report 2012 (EUSR) on zoonoses and foodborne outbreaks

Frank Boelaert gave an overview of the EUSR 2012 on zoonoses and foodborne outbreaks (FBOs). A restricted report has been produced this year, but with an in depth analysis for some pathogens (*Salmonella*, *Trichinella*, *Toxoplasma*, *Listeria*, Q fever) and a new chapter on West Nile virus (WNV). The report has been produced internally, with the exception of the commenting text for *Salmonella* in food and *Listeria* in food and animals. As for human data, maps displaying notification rates have been produced by ECDC, including a pie chart per country informing on the origin of the human cases (domestic or travel associated).

Human salmonellosis cases continue to decrease in a statistically significant way. In poultry populations there was also an overall further decrease in *Salmonella* prevalence due to the *Salmonella* control programmes in poultry populations. For campylobacteriosis in humans a statistically significant increasing trend has been observed in the last five years, even though in 2012 the number of cases decreased a bit compared to 2011. A slowly increasing trend was also observed for listeriosis. VTEC cases in humans decreased compared to 2011. But even without the 2011 data (large German outbreak) the EU trend for VTEC infections during 2008–2010 was significantly increasing and the case numbers also increased in 2012 compared to 2010. The decreasing trend in the total number of rabies cases in animals observed in previous years discontinued in 2012, with an increased number of cases reported in farm animals and foxes. The year 2012 was the first one when the MSs reported data on WNV in animals, with the majority of positive findings in horses reported in south Europe, and only few positive animals identified in central Europe. A slight increase of *Salmonella* FBOs was reported.

The TF commented that a clear explanation of a case definition (serological results versus clinical signs) and surveillance system (active versus passive) in place in different MSs should be added for specific zoonoses (e.g. WNV) to avoid misinterpretation of data.

MSs have time until 15 November to comment the EUSR 2012, sent for consultation on 18 October 2013.

5.4 EU Summary Report 2012 on antimicrobial resistance, mandate on randomisation of antimicrobial resistance sampling, update on ECDC, EFSA and EMA analyses of data on antimicrobial resistance and consumption

Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil updated the TF on the 2012 EUSR AMR. According to the plan agreed, the report will be a shorter one, with the main focus on pathogenic bacteria (i.e. *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*). Resistance in indicator *E. coli*, specific resistance to third-generation cephalosporins and monitoring of MRSA will also be addressed. The report will include occurrence data, temporal trends as well as spatial distributions; a more in depth analysis of the multi-resistance in *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and indicator *E. coli* will be included for the first time this year.

Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil presented the status of progress of the Joint ECDC/EFSA/EMA WG. The main objective is to analyse the relationship between consumption of antimicrobial substances (sales data) and occurrence of resistance in human and animal isolates. Details on the draft approach were presented, including how limitations will be addressed in the report. Combinations of antimicrobials/bacteria were proposed to explore possible approaches for analysis. The report is to be issued by the first semester of 2014 and the TF will be consulted on the final draft version.

Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil informed the TF that, in the context of the adoption of the new legislation on harmonised monitoring of AMR, EFSA has received a new mandate from the EC on randomised sampling. The request refers to harmonised procedures for randomised sampling of carcases and caeca at slaughter and of fresh meat at retail. An internal WG has been set up in EFSA to produce a report on this topic by April 2014.

5.5 Publication of national PDF reports

The chair explained that most of the problems encountered during migration of data from the Data Collection Framework (DCF) to the web application have been solved and most of the 2011 national reports have been published on EFSA website. Only few MSs still have some pending issues and will be bilaterally contacted by EFSA to solve the remaining problems. Aggregation of 2012 AMR data for web application tables will be done, when necessary. It was also clarified that each country can have published on EFSA web site either the link to its national report or the PDF report produced through the EFSA web application.

5.6 Rolling plan for EU Summary Reports

The chair informed the TF about the plan to draft a rolling plan for future EUSRs. The intention is that in the coming years, not all zoonoses will be addressed every year, but some of them could be covered every second or third year, while all the reported data would be available each year (including the historical data) in EFSA DWH. Once the proposed plan is internally agreed, EFSA will consult first ECDC and EC, and then the TF.

The chair clarified that in the future all data will be accessible through the DWH, where pre-defined reports including tables, maps and graphs will be available; but no text analysing the data can be included.

5.7 Update on *Listeria* projects

Frank Boelaert gave an overview on the progress of *Listeria* baseline survey analyses. The report A, published in June 2013, focused on the prevalence of *L. monocytogenes* in the surveyed RTE food categories (fish, meat and cheese) and the analyse of the qualitative and quantitative test results. The report B will include the analysis of factors related to the prevalence of contaminated foods, and the development of predictive models both for the microbial growth of *L. monocytogenes* under various storage conditions and for compliance with *L. monocytogenes* food safety criteria in foods. Preliminary considerations from data analysis were presented. No analysis for cheese samples has been performed due to too few positive results. Due to data-related challenges, the experts of EFSA WG indicated that it is not possible to develop satisfactorily accurate predictive models for the microbial growth of *L. monocytogenes* under various storage conditions. Instead, the current data can be used to validate existing predictive models of growth of *L. monocytogenes.*

Teresa Da Silva Felicio informed the TF about the European *Listeria* typing exercise (EliTE), a joint study by ECDC, EFSA and EURL *Listeria*; the project aims to study the molecular epidemiology of human listeriosis by comparing human typing data to the food data from the European *Listeria* baseline survey using PFGE. The joint report is to be issued by end of 2014.

Another project on *Listeria* comprises different activities with the main objective to contribute to the understanding of the public health risk of listeriosis from consumption of RTE food. It includes a systematic literature review on *L. monocytogenes* in RTE food. In addition, a quantitative microbial risk assessment (QMRA) on *L. monocytogenes* in RTE food and a comparison of *L. monocytogenes* isolates from different compartments along the food chain using whole genome sequencing analysis are foreseen. For these latter activities, a request for using data and isolates from the baseline survey has been made to SCoFCAH and no objections have been raised. Confidentiality will be guaranteed through anonymisation of MSs' data. The outcome of these activities is expected by end 2015/ beginning 2016.

5.8 Update on foodborne outbreaks investigations at EU level

The chair updated the TF regarding the latest developments in the multi-national foodborne outbreak investigations at EU level. The issue had been also discussed at recent EFSA's AF

meeting. In July 2013, EFSA received a specific mandate from EC on a request for scientific assistance in the investigation of multinational foodborne outbreaks. EFSA is requested to contribute to ECDC's outbreak investigations by providing data from zoonoses and foodborne outbreaks monitoring, and to in-depth analyses of the food data. In addition, upon specific request from EC, EFSA is asked to provide assistance in tracing back and forward analyses of the incriminated batches of animals, food or feed.

The chair also informed the TF that a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) between EFSA, ECDC and EC is under preparation for the outbreak investigations at EU level. Compared to the previous version, the notification of the AF before the publication of any risk assessment has been foreseen.

The Italian representative gave an update about the activities carried out in Italy during the Hepatitis A virus (HAV) outbreak and the provisional results from the ongoing investigation.

The Irish representative presented a summary on the HAV outbreak in Ireland. Descriptive and case control studies have been performed and the hypothesis on the food source has pointed to frozen berries. As a preventive measure, the precautionary advise to boil imported berries for one minute has been issued at national level.

The Polish representative gave an overview on the tracing back and tracing forward investigations taken place in Poland following the RASFF notifications issued. Specific measures have been implemented in Poland to reinforce the surveillance and control along the food chain.

5.9 ECDC-EFSA initiative on collaboration on non-foodborne zoonoses

Andrea Gervelmeyer presented an ECDC/EFSA's initiative on collaboration on non-foodborne zoonoses. The aim is to set up a close collaboration between the animal health and human health sectors for the prevention and control of non-foodborne zoonotic and potential zoonotic diseases. Some events took place in 2011 and 2012 to define the objectives and the strategy of the project. Recently an EFSA Task Force on improving collaboration at the animal-human interface on non-foodborne zoonotic and potential zoonotic diseases has been set up. Joint ECDC and EFSA networks activities have started to further strengthen this collaboration. The first meeting of the joint ECDC-EFSA networks will take place at the beginning of December in Stockholm and the TF members will be invited to attend.

5.10 Information on molecular data collection

Valentina Rizzi updated the TF on the activities of the WG on the molecular typing data collection. The background for the molecular typing data collection at EU level was summarised as well as the draft flow for isolate-based data. A WG has been set up to guarantee data compatibility between the collection systems for human, food and animal isolates through definition of common nomenclature, common data dictionaries, and similar SOPs. The draft data model for data collection was discussed. Following the request of some MSs, EFSA will evaluate with the WG how to revise the data model to cover the variables necessary for the purpose of the collection of molecular typing data.

5.11 Update on revision on foodborne outbreak reporting specifications

Valentina Rizzi informed the TF about the progress of the WG on FBO reporting specifications. The proposed changes to the reporting system were presented and discussed. The major change regards the use of the same dataset for both 'strong' and 'weak' evidence FBOs, with the consequence to have the the same 'causative agent list' for all outbreaks and to add the new variable 'Strength of evidence' to differentiate the two types of outbreaks. Renaming of some pick lists and addition of new terms within the existing pick

lists were also proposed. The revised technical specifications will be send to the TF for consultation by the end of the year.

5.12 EFSA's new IT strategy

Paul Devalier presented EFSA's IT operational strategy, designed in support of the EFSA organizational strategy. The IT architectural vision is based on EFSA objectives and environment. Six priorities have been identified and emphasis was given to talent management systems. The need for an integrated approach was also stressed.

The chair underlined the ongoing discussion on the use of two different reporting systems for zoonoses. The web application will be dismissed in the near future and the DCF will replace it. Harmonisation between systems will be assured by the use of a common taxonomy.

5.13 Feedback from 2013 reporting season

The chair gave an update on the number of MSs and non-MSs using DCF for data submission in the period 2011-2013. A summary was also presented on data migration problems, mainly related to the different structure of tables in the web application compared to the DCF data models. Some solutions to these issues will be provided in 2014 through amendment of business rules both in DCF and for data migration. In addition, guidelines will be revised to improve clarity on data reporting. No changes to data models are planned for 2014 reporting season, even though it was suggested to simplify the data model for text forms. The proposal to organise a specific training on the use of DCF was supported by most of MSs.

5.14 Move to DCF reporting, supporting grants and contracts

The chair updated the TF on the grants to support both the preparation and submission via DCF of zoonoses data, and historical data updates. In total, 14 countries have grants or contracts for XML submission and 6 countries for updating historical data. A new call will be launched in 2014 to provide support to additional countries.

The issue related to some problems in amending historical data from 2008 and older years was discussed. It will be addressed internally with IT colleagues and all possible solutions will be investigated.

5.15 Changes to reporting applications and data migration process

Mario Monguidi explained briefly the process of DCF data submission and data migration from DCF to the web application. The plan of changes for the next reporting season was presented. The major change regards a new set of business rules to enhance pre-validation in DCF accordingly to Zoonoses Web Application constraints and minimize migration errors. Improvements are foreseen about feed back and communications to users. After data migration, web application tables will be locked. Additional changes will regard the structure of some tables and the presence of new tables.

In January 2014 the TF will be consulted on the new guidance documents and business rules. The finalised documents will be available in March, together with the updated application.

5.16 Update on data warehouse project

The chair updated the TF about the project on the EFSA's DWH access rules. Following the consultation of EFSA's data collection networks, EFSA still needs to go to the SCoFCAH in

order to consult the MSs regarding all data collections. The TF will be informed when the item is on the agenda of SCoFCAH.

Fabrizio Abbinante informed that a pilot on DWH will be run in 2014 and TF members will be contacted to express their interest in participating in this DWH pilot. The DWH should be fully in place in 2015.

5.17 Presentation from Czech Republic on sero-survey of cysticercus in bovine animals

Petr Satran from the Czech Republic gave a presentation on a survey on *Cysticercus* in bovine animals carried out in the country. Comparison of results from a serological method (ELISA antibodies test) with findings of the traditional meat inspection was presented.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Dates for next meetings

The following preliminary dates for the 2014 meetings of the TF were agreed:

- 27-28 February 2014: specific TF meeting on antimicrobial resistance in Parma;
- 19-20 March 2014: TF meeting on zoonoses in Parma;
- 25 March 2014: IT training in Parma;
- 18-19 June 2014: specific TF meeting on foodborne outbreaks in Parma;
- 21-22 October 2014: TF meeting on zoonoses in Parma.

7. Conclusion(s)

The chair briefly summarised the main decisions and outcomes of the meeting.

8. Closure of the meeting

The meeting was closed and the chair thanked the TF members for excellent collaboration during the past 9 years.