

ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH UNIT

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

Minutes of the 53rd plenary meeting of the Scientific Panel on Plant Health

Held on 28-29 January 2015, Parma

(Agreed on 19 March 2015)

Participants

• Panel Members:

Richard Baker, Claude Bragard, Thierry Candresse, Gianni Gilioli, Jean-Claude Gregoire, Michael John Jeger, Olia Evtimova Karadjova, Christer Sven Magnusson, David Makowski, Maria Navajas, Trond Rafoss, Vittorio Rossi, Jan Schans, Gritta Schrader, Gregor Urek, Irene Vloutoglou, Stephan Winter

• EFSA:

Animal and Plant Health Unit: Franck Berthe, Gabor Hollo, Ilaria Inverardi, Virag Kertesz, Svetla Kozelska, Tomasz Oszako, Marco Pautasso, Giuseppe Stancanelli.

• EC representatives:

Pasquale Di Rubbo (DG SANCO)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Panel Chair welcomed the participants to the 53th plenary meeting of the EFSA Plant Health Panel. Apologies were received from Wopke van der Werf and from the EPPO observer Francoise Petter.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes regarding Declarations of Interests (Dols)¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy², EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest (ADol) and the Specific Declarations of Interest (SDol) filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed at this meeting have been identified during the screening process or in the Oral Declarations of Interest (ODol) at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 52nd plenary meeting held on 26-27 November 2014

The minutes were agreed without changes.

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

5. Update on public consultations for discussion and possible endorsement of public consultation reports

Not applicable

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and/or possible adoption/ endorsement

6.1. Risk to plant health posed by *Trichilogaster acaciaelongifoliae* for the EU territory ([EFSA-Q-2014-00241](#)) (first reading)

An update was provided on the draft scientific opinion on the risk to plant health posed by *Trichilogaster acaciaelongifoliae* for the EU territory. EFSA Plant Health Panel was requested by the European Commission to assess the risk to plant health in the EU under the assumption of a voluntary release of the Australian bud-galling wasp *T. acaciaelongifoliae* for the control of the invasive alien plant *Acacia longifolia* in Portugal. The draft opinion will be presented for discussion and possible adoption at next PLH Panel plenary meeting in March 2015.

7. Update on written adoptions

7.1. Pest categorizations of insects listed in Directive 2000/29/EC: *Circulifer haematoceps* and *Circulifer tenellus*; *Spodoptera littoralis*

The opinion on *Spodoptera littoralis* was published on the website on the 20th of January 2015 <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3987.htm>. The opinion on *Circulifer haematoceps* and *C. tenellus* was published on the website on the 23rd of January 2015 <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/it/efsajournal/pub/3988.htm>.

7.2. Statement on the comments by Hattingh et al. (2014) on the EFSA PLH Panel (2014) Scientific Opinion on Citrus Black Spot

The statement was published on the website on the 20th of January 2015 <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3990.htm>.

7.3. *Xylella fastidiosa* pest risk assessment and evaluation of risk reduction options

7.3.1. Report on written adoption procedure

The panel was informed about the follow up of the written adoption of the *Xylella fastidiosa* opinion, which was published on the website on the 6th of January 2015 <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/it/efsajournal/pub/3989.htm>.

7.3.2. Media coverage on *Xylella fastidiosa*

Jan Op Gen Oorth – EFSA Press Officer - informed the Panel about media coverage on *X. fastidiosa* by country. Generally, the topic was described in 60 articles and 5 interviews including the Guardian, BBC, ANSA, Left and Fieragricola Post. Journalists have been generally presenting factual findings and the EFSA PLH Panel Pest Risk Assessment was considered as well done.

7.3.3. Report on presentation and discussion on *Xylella fastidiosa* at Standing Committee on Plant Health

The PAFF Standing Committee well received the pest risk assessment on *X. fastidiosa* prepared by EFSA PLH panel. The work was found extensive and well structured. Questions

regarded the host plants database and the possibility of ranking the host plant species, the use of thermotherapy to control the bacterium in other species than those cited in the opinion, grapevine and pecan walnut, as well as the detection methods.

8. New External Mandates / Progress report

8.1. Pest categorizations and pest risk assessments of plant pests listed in Directive 2000/29/EC:

- a. **Analysis and discussion on PLH Panel pest categorization scientific opinions and feedback received from the Working Group on Annexes of the Council Directive 2000/29/EC (Section II – Listing of Harmful Organisms) and from the STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANTS, ANIMALS, FOOD AND FEED (PAFF) Section Plant Health**

Mr. Pasquale Di Rubbo from DG SANCO Plant health Unit informed the panel was about the follow up of the pest categorisation scientific opinions delivered in 2014. Based on recommendations produced by the Working Group on Annexes of the Council Directive 2000/29/EC - Section II – and on discussion at the PAFF Standing Committee, the 40 pests analysed by EFSA in 2014 will be considered as follows: 1. Union Quarantine; 2. Protected Zone Quarantine; 3. Regulated Non-Quarantine or 4. Deregulation. Only pest considered for Union Quarantine will require a pest risk assessment by EFSA. The information provided in the published EFSA PLH Panel pest categorisations were found relevant, fit for purpose and supportive to the decision by risk managers

b. Planned pest risk assessments

Recommendations of 3 PAFF Committee Section Plant Health meetings revealed the necessity of the continuation of Pest Risk Assessment (PRA) for some pests, including *Diaporthe vaccinii*, *Eotetranychus lewisi*, Grapevine Flavescence doree, *Ceratocystis platani* and *Radopholus similis*.

- c. **Development of fit for purpose risk assessment methodologies and process to update EU listing of regulated plant pests: discussion on approach, methods and template (EFSA-Q-2014-00351)**

A plan to develop a template and agree methodologies for the new by this WG was presented and agreed by the Panel. The approach chosen was to prepare this for presentation and discussion within the new PLH panel starting in July 2015.

8.2. Risk to plant health by soil and growing media ([EFSA-Q-2013-00405](#)): progress report and databases demonstration

A presentation was given on the progresses by the WG. An inventory of soil and growing media and associated pests was built by an outsourced project based on the review of abstracts of publications. Following the in depth analyses of these results, the Panel acknowledges the difficulty of generating an up to date complete list of existing soil and growing media considering: (i) the very large number of products being used to grow plants, (ii) the new growing media components being identified continuously and the new mixtures used as substrate for cultivation, and (iii) the difficulty to distinguish clearly between fertilizers, growth enhancers and growing media components. Compost alone can already show big differences in the potential association with plant pests depending on the temperature reached during the composting processes. Additionally, different types of organic matter (e.g. pine bark, plant species like buckwheat or sunflower) may stimulate or inhibit growth of different bacteria, fungi or oomycetes.

In this context, a new strategy was discussed to address the first item of the Terms of Reference i.e. provide scientific advice on the risks to plant health posed by soil or growing medium attached to plants for planting, as commodities and as a contaminant on imported consignments. The risk assessment could be based on examples chosen as case studies extracted from the inventories provided by the contractor. These data will serve to demonstrate whether positive associations between investigated growing media and pests can be found.

9. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/the Scientific Panel, EFSA, the European Commission

9.1. Scientific Committee and other Scientific Panels

a. SC WG on Review of Guidance documents

Activity in relation to the new template has been conducted by the Scientific Committee (SC) WG on Review of Guidance documents, aiming at standardising the format of the opinions that appear at the EFSA Journal. The template was circulated in September 2014 and as no real problem was identified it should be used from now on putting more attention to the methodology and interpretation of the terms of reference. The SC WG was also discussing what should be the life span of the EFSA guidance documents and with which frequency they should be revised.

b. SC WG on Emerging Risks

The WG is divided in two subgroups, one on biological risks and the other on chemical risks, the former involving the area of plant health. Their focus is on the identification of potential drivers that could end up as emerging risks. The Panel was informed about the difficulty of identifying specific potential drivers in plant health. During the plenary meeting this issue was discussed in detail based on the presentation prepared by PLH Panel member Jan Schans – member of this SC WG. The Panel discussed whether should establish monitoring procedures or develop certain routine actions to pay more attention to the current plant health risk situation and identification of emerging risks e.g. unexpected outbreaks of pests or significant exposure to newly identified hazards. The Panel proposed to invite at a next meeting Francoise Petter, observer from the EPPO, to present the procedure for adding or removing organisms from EPPO Alert list. Within the future Panel activities, a self-task on emerging plant health risks could be developed keeping into consideration the activities already taken by other parties, such as EU Commission, National Plant Protection Organisations and EPPO.

c. SC WG on Environmental risk assessment

The PLH Panel was informed about the on-going activities and their relationship with plant health. Three SC draft opinions on ERA will be presented for commenting at the Plenary meeting of PLH Panel in March 2015. There are several important aspects for PLH Panel are important, particularly with regard the environmental risk assessment for endangered species. Pests are considered to be recognized as stressors (driving forces) in modelling in eco-regions or landscape level The 3 SC draft opinions will be sent for to PLH Panel comments by 10 March and feedback is expected following the PLH panel plenary discussion by end March.

d. SC WG on Uncertainty

The WG is working on harmonising the approach taken in different EFSA Panels to address uncertainty in risk assessment for food and feed safety and animal and plant health by

developing general EFSA guidance on Uncertainty. The future guidance considers descriptive and quantitative methods. The WG is also considering semi-quantitative approach to address uncertainty. The guidance should be consistent across EFSA activity and will be soon completed for public consultation. The rapporteur of the SC WG will be invited to come to the Panel to present it.

9.2. Update on publications related to PLH Panel activity

9.2.1. EFSA presentation at COST action meeting on biocontrol of weeds

The Conference and Workshop entitled “Invasive plants management success and regulation” brought together participants of the COST SMARTER network who work on invasive species management with stakeholders and external experts. The meeting took place at the COST Office on the 21-22 January 2015. The aim of the meeting was to progress the discussion on the regulation of biological control agents of invasive plants in Europe. The Conference formed the introduction to the workshops by sketching the current problems in management and regulation. Marco Pautasso from EFSA presented the ongoing mandate and WG activities on the plant health risk of the bud gall wasp *Trichilogaster acaciaelongifoliae* which is considered for release in Portugal to control the invasive *Acacia longifolia*.

9.3. EFSA

9.3.1. EFSA research priorities in Horizon 2020 related to the Plant Health Panel

Suggested research priority topics for H2020 include:

- Development of sentinel plant systems for detection of potentially invasive tree pests and pathogens
- Building genomic resources of plant pests and pathogens to track and study pathways of introduction
- Use of next generation sequencing technologies to determine centres of diversity of plant pests and pathogens
- Development of environmentally friendly protocols for the control and management of invasive plant pests and pathogens

The above research topics were selected using the criteria as follows:

- High/unclear risk level,
- Broad/European wide perspective,
- Popularity of issue,
- Limited previous research/knowledge,
- Links to Europe 2020/Horizon 2020 strategy issues.

Retained topics from H2020 of relevance to PLH are:

- *Increasing production efficiency and coping with climate change, while ensuring sustainability and resilience*
- Development of environmentally friendly protocols for the control and management of invasive plant pests and pathogens
 - *Improving scientific tools and methods to support policy making and regulatory needs*
 - *Integrated risk-benefit analysis*
 - *Understanding disease*
- Emerging infectious diseases as a result of new farming systems and climate change
 - *Empowerment of rural areas, support to policies and rural innovation*

Develop methods for a holistic approach on the environmental impact of farming practices, crop threats (e.g. plant pests and diseases, climate change effects as drought, desertification, floods etc.) and threat mitigation measures (e.g. plant protection products, resistant plant varieties, fertilisers, irrigation, etc.) to biodiversity and ecosystem services

9.3.2. EFSA database on apple fruit pests

The terms of reference of the mandate were presented. In the framework of preparatory work for international free trade agreement, EFSA was requested to collect data and information on the pests and diseases of apple fruit present in the EU, by setting up a database with regard to:

- Prevalence and distribution in the EU MS,
- Regulatory status in the EU,
- Biology, e.g., lifecycle, host range, plant parts affected and symptoms/damage, means of dispersal/spread,
- Consequences, expressed in terms of loss of yield or quality in affected areas (including ranking of the pests in relation to their potential for causing consequences),
- Methods used for surveillance, detection or diagnosis, if applicable,
- Control measures applied in affected areas,

The data model has now been structured and the final database is expected to be delivered by end 2015, together with EndNote files and final report.

9.3.3. Update on EFSA outsourced projects

The Panel was informed about on-going and planned outsourcing projects:

Projects focused on **methodology**:

- Media monitoring for PLH emerging risks,
- QPA Food – Quantitative pathway analysis pest entry in food products,
- PPM-Pirates Quantitative pathway analysis pest entry non-food products,
- Inventory of spread models for pest RA.

Projects focused on **data**:

- Collection of data and information with ELS approach for the EU-28 regarding EU pests and pathogens of apple fruit
- Framework contract for Statistics and data management,
- Framework contract for Systematic Literature Review,
- Framework contract for data generation, compilation and interpretation

9.4. European Commission

10. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

XVIII International Plant Protection Congress (IPPC) will be held in Berlin from 24.08.-27.08.2015. The program of activities being developed jointly by the German organisations (DPG, JKI and IVA) together with the International Association for the Plant Protection Sciences (IAPPS) covers all aspects of plant protection. EFSA and PLH Panel are invited to attend and to contribute.

3rd Global Science Conference “Climate Smart Agriculture 2015” will address key research issues, gather CSA facts and figures from developing and developed countries and support a collaborative effort with broad social participation. Special attention will be given to vulnerable countries and populations.

11. Any Other Business

A representative from the EFSA Corporate Services, Anna Campanini, explained the updated EFSA rules for travel organisations.

11.2 Next Plenary meeting

It was agreed that the next plenary meeting will be 18 March (full day) and 19 March (morning session).