

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 94th Plenary meeting

**Held on 1- 2 December 2015, Parma
(Agreed on 21 December 2015)**

Participants

- Panel Members
Dominique Bicout, Andrew Butterworth, Anette Bøtner, Paolo Calistri, Klaus Depner, Sandra Edwards, Bruno Garin-Bastuji, Margret Good, Christian Gortazar-Schmidt, Virginie Michel, Miguel Angel Miranda, Simon More, Søren Saxmose Nielsen, Liisa Sihvonen, Hans Spoolder, Jan Arend Stegeman, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Preben Willeberg, Christoph Winckler
- Hearing Experts ¹:
Christian Ducrot INRA
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:
Francisco Reviriego Gordejo, Barbara Logar, Pier Paolo Bernorio, Laszlo Kuster, Helene Klein, Marina Marini (DG SANTE)
- EFSA:
ALPHA Unit: Francesca Baldinelli, Franck Berthe, Denise Candiani, Edoardo Carnesecchi, Sofie Dhollander, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Andrey Gogin, Eliana Lima, Francesca Porta, Frank Verdonck, Matthew Watts, Gabriele Zancanaro
AMU Unit: Elisa Aiassa
- Others:
Not Applicable

¹ 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.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Agreement of the minutes of the 93rd Plenary meeting held on 20 and 21 October 2015, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the 93rd Plenary have been agreed by email and published on the EFSA website.

4. New Mandates

4.1 Scientific opinion on Aujeszky's disease, Enzootic bovine leukosis, Bovine viral diarrhoea, Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, Paratuberculosis and Koi herpes virus disease for the listing and categorisation of animal disease in the framework of the Animal Health Law ([EFSA-Q-2015-00713](#))

The mandate was presented by DG SANTE. It was clarified that the diseases should first be assessed following the criteria in Article 6 of the Animal health Law (AHL). In the next step their eligibility for being listed should be assessed using criteria of Article 5. For those diseases found eligible to be listed, an assessment of compliance with Annex III criteria should be provided, together with a list of animal species that should be considered candidates for listing. The EC expressed a positive view regarding a potential tiered approach to the request, which could consist of first providing an assessment of which diseases fulfil the criteria for listing and consecutively proceed with the assessment of the criteria for categorisation. It was underlined that the listing and the categorization of the diseases itself is a task for the risk manager. It was further clarified that the term disease is used to cover infection or infestation with a disease agent. It was suggested to establish an ad-hoc working group (WG) and to organise its first meeting in Brussels.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption

5.1 Scientific Opinion on Echinococcus multilocularis infection in animals ([EFSA-Q-2014-00728](#))

The opinion was discussed by the Panel and adopted unanimously.

5.2 Scientific opinion concerning the risk of survival, establishment and spread of the small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) in the EU ([EFSA-Q-2014-00938](#))

A few remaining comments were discussed by the Panel. It was for instance agreed to include some sentences to clarify which epidemiological data would be required to improve our understanding of SHB introduction, survival, spread and establishment in Europe. It was also clarified that the opportunity maps present possible completion of the SHB life cycle across Europe, but that the beetle could survive everywhere if shelter, for instance within a honey bee colony, could be found. This is stated in the body text of the opinion. Finally, the scientific opinion was unanimously adopted.

6. Feedback from the ad-hoc Working Groups of the AHAW Panel

6.1 Scientific opinion on health of honey bee colonies ([EFSA-Q-2015-00047](#))

An update of WG activities was provided to the Panel as well as an outline of the draft opinion. The background of the mandate was explained and it was indicated to the Panel where review would be required after circulation of the draft text on TORs 1-2-3 around mid-January. The draft text on TORs 1-2-3 will be scheduled on the agenda of the AHAW and PLH Plenary meetings in January. A workshop will be organised to gather the views of stakeholders on how to measure the health status of a managed honey bee colony in field conditions. The WG will be reinforced by one or two statisticians to address TOR4. Hans Spoolder and Miguel Angel Miranda volunteered to be deep reader of the opinion.

6.2 Scientific opinion on entry routes into the EU of vector borne disease ([EFSA-Q-2014-00187](#))

During the previous plenary, it had been agreed that the negative impact of animal welfare will be addressed as a combination of the case-level of discomfort and the case-duration of discomfort. During this plenary it was further discussed how the level and duration of discomfort could be scored and combined. It was decided that a further in-depth discussion is needed with the welfare experts of the Panel to agree on the scores and combination method.

Additionally, the issue of undocumented trade for the import assessment was discussed, and the possibility to organise an EKE workshop to try to quantify the volumes and drivers of undocumented movements. Considering the available resources and time for the import assessment, it was decided that

only legal trade should be considered, with a high uncertainty around the estimates of total trade (i.e. documented and undocumented).

6.3 Joint EFSA and EMA scientific opinion on measures to reduce the need to use antimicrobial agents in animal husbandry in the European Union and the resulting impacts on food safety (RONAFA) ([EFSA-Q-2015-00216](#))

The expected AHAW contribution to the RONAFA opinion was discussed. In particular, the structure for chapters 1.8 (Circumstances and diseases of food animal production where antimicrobials are most intensively used) and 3.2 (Possible alternatives to reduce the need for and the use of antimicrobials) drafted by Christian Ducrot (former AHAW Panel member appointed to the RONAFA WG) was presented. Changes to the chapter structure were agreed. For chapter 3.2 it was agreed to provide examples for identifying both the drivers for anti-microbial usage and the solutions for reducing the need of antimicrobials. In addition, the Panel is requested to revise chapter 3.2.5 and 3.2.6 on vaccination and disease eradication programs. The need for an ad-hoc WG with additional expertise to properly contribute to this opinion was identified, particularly on Livestock production systems; Livestock diseases (infectious, production), including veterinary epidemiology; Disease control under farm conditions; Animal welfare; Social sciences.

6.4 Scientific opinion on avian influenza (HPAI) ([EFSA-Q-2015-00214](#))

The Panel agreed with the approach suggested by the WG and described in the section 'data and methodologies' of the draft opinion that has been circulated in preparation of this December Plenary meeting. A workshop on the role of wild birds in the introduction of HPAI will be organised. Instead of the qualitative risk and uncertainty scoring that has been used in the past (e.g. opinions on ASF, SHB), a quantitative scoring will be applied as this facilitates a better combination of several scores into an aggregated score. The Panel considers the AI mandate a test case for the use of a quantitative scoring.

6.5 Scientific opinion on animal welfare aspects in respect of the slaughter or killing of pregnant livestock animals (cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses) ([EFSA-Q-2015-00477](#))

The approach to the ToRs was discussed, particularly in relation to ToR3 requesting to assess if fetuses are able to experience pain. Controversy results from the fact that scientific evidence can be found about the existence of nociceptors, but it still remains unclear at what developmental stage fetuses have such anatomical structures and whether they have the capacity to interpret pain related signals. During the Plenary meeting of September it had been agreed to set up an ad-hoc WG, and Christoph Winckler was appointed as a chair. The need of considering expertise from

human medicine/ life sciences (e.g. fetal/ neonatal physiology, developmental physiology, embryology) in developing ToR3 was discussed. In the context of ToR3, it was agreed to investigate other negative welfare outcomes (such as distress and discomfort) in addition to pain.

7. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

7.1 Disease impact assessment framework

Progress made in developing a framework of disease impact assessment was presented to the Panel. The Panel was provided with a description of the principal methods allowing for a relative and an overall aggregation of the scores, and with an overview of standardized topics and areas and the number of criteria for the possible combinations of topics and areas. The framework is intended to be used in the context of the new mandate (EFSA-Q-2015-00713) for the assessment of seven animal diseases in view of their listing and categorization in the AHL. The criteria laid down in the AHL Art. 6, 5 and 8 were presented with the aim of focusing the framework on the needs of the mandate. Moreover, the Panel was provided with some examples on criteria extracted from the selected studies matching those of Art. 6.

The panel recommended keeping the framework sufficiently generic and flexible since it should allow dealing with a range of different diseases. Regarding the presented topics, it was suggested to deal with the economic aspect in a general way. Those Criteria of the framework, that correspond to the criteria of AHL Art. 6, should be identified, and translated into questions and sub-questions. The framework should provide a relative aggregation method by criterion, not an overall aggregation method across criteria. It was suggested to first define the questions and connected data needs for each criterion and then proceed with collecting data for these, while developing the aggregation method in parallel. Congruence of criteria used in the VBD opinion and in the framework should be maintained where relevant. This would also provide synergies in collecting data for both opinions.

It was also suggested to submit the disease impact assessment framework for public consultation.

7.2 Scientific Network on Risk Assessment in Animal Health and Welfare

i. Need for harmonization of EEG analysis and interpretation in assessing unconsciousness

The Panel discussed the proposal to develop a guidance note for EEG analysis and interpretation in assessing unconsciousness that had been raised at the AHAW Network meeting in November 2015. The concern that such a guidance note might pose a limitation to research was raised. On the other hand, it was felt that an assessment of the different EEG endpoints could be useful.

ii. African swine fever cooperation with Baltic countries and Poland

The Panel was updated on the outcomes of the recent workshop and the next steps of the cooperation project. It was agreed to send the workshop report to the Panel for information.

iii. Bluetongue

An overview of the scientific outputs of the AHAW Panel on Bluetongue was presented. The Panel discussed scientific issues of the disease with respect to the ongoing outbreak of BTV8 in France. It was stated that the role of wild fauna in BT epidemiology and the links between vectors of wildlife and vectors of livestock need to be better understood. The vector-proof stable-concept should be reviewed; experience from South Africa with African Horse Sickness might be useful. It was noted that little progress regarding *Culicoides* vectors has been achieved since the 2007/8 outbreaks.

iv. HPAI outbreak in France

The Panel was updated on the ongoing outbreak of HPAI in France and the risk assessments ANSES is currently preparing in this context.

7.3 Follow-up of Prometheus: Discussion on EFSA needs as to further enhance the production of evidence-based scientific assessments

The survey that has been prepared by the EFSA AMU unit to identify needs for further enhancing the production of evidence-based scientific assessments was presented. Members of the Panel and the AHAW Team were requested to complete the survey by 15 December. Results of the survey will be discussed at the January Plenary meeting.

8. Any other business

None