

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 95th Plenary meeting

**Held on 19- 20 January 2016, Parma
(Agreed on 29 January 2016)**

Participants

- Panel Members
 - Dominique Bicout, Andrew Butterworth, Anette Bøtner, Paolo Calistri, Klaus Depner, Sandra Edwards, Bruno Garin-Bastuji, Margaret Good, Christian Gortazar-Schmidt, Virginie Michel, Miguel Angel Miranda, Simon More, Søren Saxmose Nielsen, Liisa Sihvonen, Hans Spoolder, Jan Arend Stegeman, Mohan Raj, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Antonio Velarde, Preben Willeberg, Christoph Winckler
- Hearing Experts ¹:
 - Christian Ducrot INRA
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:
 - Pierangelo Bernorio (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, Federica Barrucci, Laura Martino
 - BIOHAZ: Pietro Stella
- 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 94th Plenary meeting held on 01 and 02 December 2015, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the 94th Plenary have been agreed by email and published on the EFSA website.

4. New Mandates

None

5. Scientific Opinions presented for endorsement

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

An overview of the feedback provided by the Panel on the draft opinion was presented, i.e. on the need for clarification of the terminology used. In order to achieve this, the Panel suggested a different terminology for some of the concepts ('groups of factors' should be called 'external drivers', 'attributes' should be called 'colony attributes', and 'infectious agents' should be called 'markers of disease'). The Panel also recommended to provide a more clear description of the approach used to characterize the different components of bee health, following a stepwise approach reflecting the hierarchical relation between 'colony attributes', 'indicators' and 'variables', as well as 'external drivers', 'factors' and 'variables'. Moreover, it was recommended to explain the terms used in the opinion in the glossary. The Panel endorsed the draft texts addressing TOR1, TOR2 and TOR3, which, after discussion by the PLH Panel on 27/01/2016, will be shared with the participants of the stakeholder event that will take place in Brussels in mid-April 2016. Regarding TOR4, it was explained that an update will be provided at the next plenary meeting of the Panel.

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

6.1 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 diseases in the framework of the Animal Health Law

The Panel was updated on the state of the art. An ad-hoc WG, chaired by Dominique Bicout, has been established (<https://ess.efsa.europa.eu/doi/doiweb/wg/682171>). During the plenary discussions, the need for further disease-specific expertise during the development of the methodological approach was identified. An update on the ongoing development of the methodological framework aiming at scoring and mapping the relevant criteria of the AHL that will be used to address the ToRs of the mandate was provided to the Panel. An outline of the overall approach was given, paying specific attention to the next steps, milestones and deadlines. The kick-off meeting of the WG will take place mid-February in Brussels. It was pointed out that the combination of the different parameters to assess the criteria for listing (Art.5) would be a key point in the framework development and should be discussed at a very early stage. The Panel will be requested to give a first feedback on the set of sub-criteria/parameters and the proposed scoring/assessment methodology at the plenary meeting in March. A procurement to collect relevant data will be consequently initiated. The Panel suggested that the WG include an evaluation of the variability and the uncertainty linked to the assessment. The Panel agrees on the opportunity to gather consensus on the proposed approach by Public Consultation. However, a first validation of the set of parameters to use in the framework should be performed at an earlier stage by experts on each of the diseases. The Panel highlighted that further clarifications with the Commission will be requested during the development of the opinion as and when needed.

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

The Panel was updated on the working group activities on the mandate on vector-borne diseases. The Panel was informed about the activities of the procurement projects 'VectorNet' and 'DACRAH' that will collect data for the risk assessment. During the March plenary meeting in Brussels, a detailed description of the risk pathways steps and an interpretation of the questions and answers will be discussed.

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. The overall structure of the opinion being drafted by the RONAFA WG was presented in detail since the AHAW reflections in terms of holistic approach do not apply to such structure. In addition, specific points about chapter 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 (RONAFA WG member) and Panel members were discussed. A detailed discussion was held on chapter 3.3 (related to ToR5 to recommend options to reduce AM usage including advantages and disadvantages of each option and to identify the circumstances where continued use is needed). Clarifications were provided by Pietro Stella (PS) from the BIOHAZ Panel: instead of providing recommendations on precise measures to reduce AM usage, a holistic/integrated approach including several approaches should be proposed. It was further clarified that the RONAFA WG is yet to discuss ToR 5, which is expected to provide overall recommendations after having analysed all measures used/alternatives described in the previous sections addressing ToR 1-4. The preliminary points discussed by the AHAW Panel are relevant points to raise at the RONAFA WG meeting in London (4-5th February).

- Recommended options: under ToR5 both new alternative measures and measures that have been already applied in some countries and which are judged to be effective can be recommended.
- Advantages/disadvantages: for the different recommended options that the WG will formulate, advantages and disadvantages should be discussed, including the impact on animal health and welfare; for this the contribution from AHAW will be needed.
- Conditions under which continued need of AM is identified: while a list of all diseases or circumstances where antimicrobials are needed cannot be delivered, an approach to assess this need can be provided. This task should be carried out together by AHAW and the other RONAFA WG members.
- Interpretations on ToR5 in the text of the opinion: comments from AHAW to improve the current draft text in the document should be provided.

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

The Panel was updated on the quantitative model developed in order to assess i) the risk of introduction of AI via wild birds in EU and into poultry holding, and ii) the uncertainty of such estimate. The main steps and the main aspects of the model were presented. The Panel highlighted the importance of considering the type of poultry holdings (e.g. backyard,

commercial) and the species of poultry kept in a holding (e.g. geese, duck, chicken) as factors affecting the probability by a farm to become infected. The criteria used to select specific EU areas as scenario areas for the model were discussed. It was agreed to not consider the South of Spain as a model scenario, even if extensive wetland area are present, as their role in spill-over to residential wild birds is negligible. The Panel pointed out sources of information (published and not published) for data, and highlighted that the contribution of humans in transferring HPAIV from wetlands into a farm may be more significant than that by wild birds.

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, which requests 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. The approaches for ToR1 and for ToR3 were presented with special view to the uncertainty assessment methodology. To gather data relevant for ToR1, a questionnaire will be disseminated to slaughterhouses about the prevalence of pregnant animals that are slaughtered in EU. The results will be discussed in an Expert Knowledge Elicitation (EKE) workshop (EKE 1 to be held in May 16) where the uncertainty around the estimates will be discussed. For ToR3, results from an outsourced literature review will be discussed in a second EKE workshop (EKE 2 to be held in beginning of July 16). Virginie Michel gave a brief update of the work done by the INRA expert group working on conscience of animals. INRA WG representatives will be invited to the EKE 2 workshop to present the outcomes of their work.

7. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

7.1 Disease impact assessment framework

An overview of contents (methodological approach and results) of the framework on disease impact assessment was presented to the Panel. The Panel was updated on progress made concerning the matching of criteria extracted from the selected studies with those of AHL Art.6, and agreed on the next steps: i) selecting the most appropriate extracted criteria by each Art.6 criterion; ii) elaborating a scoring method by criterion.

The Panel agreed to use the framework as part of the methodological approach to the mandate 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 diseases in the framework of the Animal Health Law ([EFSA-Q-2015-00713](#)). Therefore, the framework will be

further discussed within the respective ad-hoc WG in its kick-off meeting in February.

7.2 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.

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

A survey that has been prepared by the EFSA AMU unit to identify needs for further enhancing the production of evidence-based scientific assessments has been completed by Members of the Panel and the AHAW Team in December 2015. The results of the survey were presented and discussed. A single AHAW Panel response to the survey was agreed and submitted during the meeting.

8. Any other business

The AHAW Panel plenary meeting dates for 2017 were agreed.