

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 101st Plenary meeting

Held on 29-30 November 2016, Parma, (Italy)

(Agreed on 16 December 2016)

Participants

■ Panel Members

Anette Bøtner, Dominique Bicot, Andy Butterworth, Paolo Calistri, Klaus Depner, Sandra Edwards, Bruno Garin-Bastuji, Margaret Good, Christian Gortazar Schmidt, Virginie Michel, Miguel Angel Miranda, Simon John More, Mohan Raj, Søren Saxmose Nielsen, Hans Spoolder, Jan Arend Stegeman, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Antonio Velarde Calvo, Preben Willeberg, Christoph Winckler

■ EFSA

ALPHA UNIT: Francesca Baldinelli, Beatriz Beltran-Beck, Alessandro Broglia, Denise Candiani, Ewelina Czwieniczek, Sofie Dhollander, Chiara Fabris, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Andrey Gogin, Joana Morgado, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Sara Tramontini, Frank Verdonck, Gabriele Zancanaro

■ EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Pierangelo Bernorio, Laszlo Kuster, Barbara Logar, Laura Perez Alvarez, Maria Pittman, Stanislav Ralchev (DG SANTE)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed the meeting participants. Apologies were received by Liisa Sihvonen. Paolo Calistri participated only in the discussions on the bluetongue mandate.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests (DoI), EFSA screened the Annual (ADoI) and Specific Declaration of Interest (SDoI) provided by the Panel Members for the present meeting. The Panel members were asked to confirm that no further interests had to be declared in the context of the agenda of the meeting. No conflict of interest has been identified.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 99th Plenary meeting held on 18 and 19 October 2016, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the previous plenary meeting have been adopted by written procedure.

5. New Mandates

The EC introduced the urgent request on avian influenza to the Panel. The main question to be addressed is whether the four Decisions based on HPAI H5N1 detections in wild birds can be implemented equally for the currently circulating HPAI H5N8. It was agreed that a Statement from the AHAW Panel will be generated as a reply to this request. This document will give preliminary answers to TOR2 of the mandate received in 2015, which could be used to manage the current HPAI H5N8 outbreaks. A more detailed and structured analysis will be described in the scientific opinion that will be published in 2017. The main biosecurity measures will be identified that can be applied in poultry holdings, taking into account different AI entry pathways. The Panel provided input in the identification and description of the main biosecurity measures. A brief description will be included on the biosecurity measures that could be implemented in backyard flocks. The Statement will provide practical guidance where considered relevant, for instance regarding confinement of poultry. The annexes describing the criteria to identify risk areas will also be assessed. The objective is to publish the Statement before the Christmas holidays.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption/endorsement

- **Request for a 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 (EFSA-Q-2015-00216)**

The scientific opinion was endorsed at the last Plenary in October. However, subsequent to this, among the RONAFA WG there has been considerable discussion about our interpretations of the studies concerning organic farming and AMR. It was therefore decided to go back to the primary literature, and complete a detailed literature review. This was done with the support of EFSA's Assessment Methodology Unit.

The section was therefore revised, and currently includes substantial background information, including the 3 review articles (as previously) plus 42 primary research articles. The papers were reviewed in detail, with particular attention to the region (EU/EEA/Swiss studies or not), the type of study (cross-sectional, longitudinal - all are observational), the methods of analysis (whether farm- [and if relevant store-] level clustering was accounted for during analysis; control for confounders) and biological relevance (studies that look for multiple or multidrug testing rather than a single AM). Following this work, the conclusions and recommendations related to this chapter are very similar to previously, but with more comprehensive information about study limitations.

The Panel endorsed this new version of the chapter and the revised conclusions and recommendations.

The RONAFA scientific opinion is to be adopted by EFSA's BIOHAZ Panel in the beginning of December and by the EMA Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) in mid-December.

7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

a. Scientific opinion on Bluetongue (EFSA-Q-2016-00160)

The mandate from the Commission on Bluetongue (BT) includes 5 TORs. Two opinions will be produced to answer the mandate. The first one covering ToR 1-3 was tabled for discussion in November 29-30 and will be tabled for adoption in January 2017. The second opinion covering the ToR 4-5 will be presented for adoption in June 2017.

The draft opinion has been circulated to the Panel two weeks before the meeting and presented at the plenary for thorough discussion. Comments provided by the Panel were discussed and addressed; conclusions and recommendations related to each section were discussed. The main comments concerned the conclusions related to the section on the revision of the criteria for BT surveillance. The Panel advised to present only the sound and concise conclusion that can be derived from the assessment of that section, and leave side considerations to the body text. It was agreed that these conclusions will be revised and circulated before Christmas, to speed up the endorsement of the draft. For the other sections, i.e. maternal immunity and vaccines and on vector ecology and control, comments were provided to improving the clarity of the statements.

- **Scientific opinion on entry routes into the EU of vector borne diseases (EFSA-Q-2014-00187)**

The preliminary output of the risk assessment of 5 vector-borne diseases was presented to the Panel. The Panel has been updated on the progress made on the characterisation of these 5 diseases through the map journals. The links to 5 draft map journals were shared with the Panel, and one example was presented during the plenary meeting. A short presentation was given on the visualisation of the systematic review outputs using micro strategy. The Panel agreed on the presentation of the characterisation of the diseases and the risk assessment in the map journals, and the presentation of the ranking in the scientific opinion. The Panel suggested that dead end host pathways should be excluded from the risk pathways for introduction (e.g. through movement of potentially infected horses for WNV). Since the model is mainly developed for vector borne diseases, for diseases with direct transmission, the model output is misleading. It was suggested to present these outputs nonetheless in the results of the risk assessment, and to compare them with the outcomes of other risk assessment (e.g. on ASF) and discuss the limitations of the model for this type of diseases, namely its focus of vectorial transmission.

The results of the risk assessment of the remaining 31 diseases will be presented in the January plenary.

In addition, a presentation was given on the vector borne disease activities of the Plant Health Panel, in which an overview of plant health relevant vectors and the pathogens they transmit to plants was provided.

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

- **Scientific opinion on avian influenza (EFSA-Q-2015-00214)**

The Panel agreed with WG suggestion to use the epizootic model (that has been established to assess the risk of HPAI entry into a poultry holding) to assess also the risk of LPAI entry into a poultry holding. An EKE would be required to inform the parameters reflecting LPAI biology. This approach considers the worst case scenario represented by the introduction of a new LPAI virus. A detailed analysis of the model assumptions is required to check if they are valid in an LPAI context. Developing a model that would reflect the introduction of an endemic LPAI virus would take a lot of time, in addition, there is only limited information available to inform the model parameters. A few LPAI outbreaks have been well described, but it is likely that many LPAI infections are not detected and/or not reported.

- **Scientific Opinion on the listing and categorisation of animal diseases in the framework of the new Animal Health Law (EFSA-Q-2015-00713; EFSA-Q-2016-00156)**

The Panel has been updated on the AHL mandate with regard to the state of the completion of the fact-sheets (20 delivered, 3 approved, 17 under revision) and the planning of the expert judgement (EJ).

Experts have been trained on the EJ using the example of EBL which was assessed according to the art.5 and art.9 criteria of the AHL. For this purpose, the experts received the documents for the training (questions, evidence and instructions) one week before the plenary. At the training they provided their individual judgement on art.5 and art.9 criteria/questions. Questions where no consensus was reached during the phase of individual judgement were further discussed.

Experts gave their suggestions on how to improve different aspect of the EJ. They recommended providing the judges not only with the evidence mapped by question but also with the disease fact-sheet. The meaning and the interpretation of some art.5 and art.9 criteria were clarified: when assessing the impact of the disease on a system this should be interpreted as the impact only due to the disease and infection, but not due to the control measure, unless stated otherwise. Art.9 criteria/questions refer to the EU regardless of whether 'in the Union' is mentioned in the question or not. It was suggested to identify the interdependent questions, and then to give specific instructions on how to answer them. Moreover experts indicated the need to add the parameter 'case morbidity rate' to the mapping referring to question 5B art.9 (significant impact of the disease on animal welfare by causing suffering of large amount of animals). The experts agreed in providing the reasoning only for the non-consensus answers that will be identified by EFSA after the individual judgement, as a basis for discussion in the collective judgement.

- **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)**

A short update on the state of art of this scientific opinion was presented. Following the agreement with the requestors of the mandate to proceed with the development of ToR ToR4 (methods for stunning and killing of foetuses) and ToR5 (methods for establishing gestational age at slaughter) it was agreed to convene additional WG meetings before completion of the opinion (deadline May 2017). The next WG meeting will be held on 6-7 December 16.

- **Scientific opinion concerning the use of low atmosphere pressure system (LAPS) for stunning poultry (EFSA-Q-2016-00327)**

The Panel was informed about the status of the draft opinion. A letter will be sent to the applicants requesting them to submit to EFSA the missing information/data as agreed at the previous plenary meeting.

9. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

- **Request for scientific and technical assistance on Lumpy Skin Disease**

An update was given about current state of the project and the next steps. The Panel was informed about similar activities on LSD that have been promoted by other groups, such as EUFMD, FAO, Warwick University. The EC has been informed and EFSA will try to interact with all these stakeholders and try to find synergies avoiding duplication.

- **Request for a scientific and technical assistance and a scientific opinion concerning the risk of survival, establishment and spread of *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal) in the EU**

The panel was informed that the kick-off meeting of the working group will be held on 6-7 December 2016. The composition of the WG and the meeting agenda were briefly presented.

- **Request for a scientific and technical assistance on ASF**

The Panel was updated about the content of the draft scientific report, its main findings and conclusions. The feedback received from the peer reviewers was discussed.

Any other business

The dates of the 2017 AHAW Panel plenary meetings were re-discussed. It was agreed to hold an additional plenary meeting on 4-5 April and to postpone the June plenary meeting to 29-30 June 2017.