Minutes of the 13th AHAW Network meeting

Held on 12-13 October 2017, Parma, Italy
(Agreed on 30 October 2017)

Participants

- **Network Representatives of Member States (including EFTA Countries):**

Country	**Representative**
Austria	Friedrich Schmoll
Belgium	Kirstine CEULEMANS
Bulgaria	Lilyana POLIHRONOVA
Croatia	Drazen KNEZEVIC
Cyprus	George KRASIAS
Czech Republic	-----
Denmark	Anette BOKLUND
Estonia	Anne-Ly VEETAMM
Finland	Heidi ROSSOW
France	Pascal HENDRIKX
Germany	Carola SAUTER-LOUIS
Greece	-----
Hungary	Melinda KOCSIS
Iceland	Audur ARNTHORSDOTTIR
Ireland	----
Italy	Simona IANNETTI
Latvia	-----
Liechtenstein	-----
Lithuania	-----
Luxembourg	Carlo GEORGES
Malta	-----
Netherlands	Olaf STENVERS
Norway	Dean BAS
Poland	-----
Portugal	Yolanda VAZ
Romania	Marius GRIGORE
Slovakia	Anna ONDREJKOVA
Slovenia	-----
Spain	Beatriz GONZALO MARTINEZ
Sweden	Cecilia HULTEN
Switzerland	Lukas PERLER
United Kingdom	Helen ROBERTS

Participants from Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) countries

Country	Representative
Albania	Ledi PITE
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Dzemil HAJRIC
FYROM	Vanja KONDRATENKO
Montenegro	Drago MAROJEVIC
Serbia	Tamas PETROVIC
Turkey	Yasin SEN

EFSA:

ALPHA Unit: Francesca BALDINELLI, Alessandro BROGLIA, Denise CANDIANI (Chair), Sofie DHOLLANDER, Chiara FABRIS, Andrey GOGIN, Frank VERDONCK, Gabriele ZANCANARO, Nikolaus KRIZ (Head of ALPHA Unit). AFSCO Unit: POTIER RODEIA Sergio, VRACAR Jelena, Mario MONGUIDI, Giancarlo COSTA, Chiara BIANCHI.

WG on Avian Influenza

Preben WILLEBERG, Ian BROWN, Thijs KUIKEN, Cornelia Adlhoch, Adeline HUNEAU SALAUN, Aleksandra MITEVA

Observers

Annika WALLENNORELL, Enisa MILJANIC (Sweden)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

Apologies were received from Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Agreement of the minutes of the 12th meeting of the AHAW Network held on 11-12 May 2017, Parma

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 09 June 2017 and published on the EFSA website.

4. Topics for discussion

1.1. Lumpy Skin Disease

EFSA gave an overview of the recent assessments done on LSD and presented the mathematical model used to follow the outbreaks. A first report was published in March 2017 including an overview of LSD situation in affected

countries in Europe, spatial and temporal dynamics of LSD outbreaks in 2015–2016 in the Balkans, information on the speed of propagation of LSD, vaccination effectiveness and potential adverse effects, climatic influence and vectors. A second report will be delivered at the beginning of 2018 and will include an update of the epidemiological situation related to 2017, an update on the vaccination campaign and possibly an indication of diagnostic tools and surveillance system.

A discussion followed up mentioning the need to clarify the meaning of "affected animals" and the possible discrepancy between reporting of positive cases (i.e. with and without laboratory confirmation). A discussion on the experience from various MSs on the recent outbreaks was also held**.** In Serbia in the beginning of disease outbreaks all LSD cases were clinically and laboratory confirmed. Later on, since the virus spread was very fast, and the new outbreaks arisen on daily manner, and due to the necessity of fast removal of diseased animals as main source of virus for further transmission by vectors, new cases that were reported in the infected area (in 3 km diameter / or in village – town territory with already laboratory confirmed case of LSD) were mainly only be clinically and epidemiologically confirmed as LSD cases by the commission which consisted of state veterinarian (inspector), field veterinarian and veterinary epidemiologist. At the beginning of the disease outbreak, before vaccination was implemented in disease control, the measures for control of disease included: stamping out procedure of all cattle in herd with confirmed case of LSD, regardless of category, age and health status of animals. Since the decision was made for vaccination of cattle in the entire country with vaccine based on Neethling strain, measures to combat the disease were redefined. After conducting vaccination, in case that the clinical manifestation and laboratory confirmation of the disease arose in the previously vaccinated herd, and if more than 28 days passed after the vaccination, only the clinically sick animals were euthanized and safely disposed (modified stamping out). The compensation was given for all animals that were eliminated by stamping out procedure and safely disposed. In Serbia the exact number of LSD cases was reported to the OIE (WAHIS) and EU (ADNS). All the cases were clinically and laboratory or only clinically confirmed as LSD positive cases, as previously explained.
In Montenegro, the compensation was given when vet and farmer confirmed positive cases through lab analysis. A partial stamping out policy was in place, only animals with positive laboratory test were culled..

1.2. Vector Borne Diseases (VBDs)

EFSA presented the VBD mandate. A scientific opinion ranking 36 VBDs was published in the first half of 2017 together with 36 story maps. EFSA prepared the story maps and filled in the model with data collected from MSs; the model is an online platform that is used for Risk Assessments. Data collection on vectors is achieved by a project financed by EFSA and ECDC (Vectornet). The major focus is on vector distribution i.e. presence data, but also quantitative data on types of vectors and their abundance. Data were collected from harmonised surveillance protocols. Story maps and the scientific opinion are all published on EFSA's website. For each VBD, the story map provides information on geographic distribution of the disease, basic information on health, disease agent, vector species and distribution, transmission, diagnosis, vaccination. This

is the information needed to do a Risk Assessment. The MintRisk tool for rapid risk assessment on vector transmitted diseases was also presented.

A recent published paper about RVF infection in Turkey was also shown and a discussion on available mitigation measures for RVF was held. It was commented that the vector does not presumably exists in United Kingdom although this year they found more invasive vector species. In the Netherlands, a preparedness exercise on RVF with medical doctors was held for developing control guidelines but the final report was not published. In Portugal all vectors were mapped 5 years ago with the intention to update this information from time to time. This could be shared with EFSA.

The representative from Slovakia presented partial results on a project on the spread of harmful organisms in terms of human and animal health such as tick-borne encephalitis virus, Borrelia spp., *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, *Coxiella burnetii*. The aim of the project is the protection of human health and animal health and the use of risk assessment as a basis for future national /regional risk management. One workshop was already held in the context of the EFSA Network on emerging risks and the next will be held in the end of October in Bratislava. The prevalence of various vector borne diseases related to 2015 and 2016 was presented. In 2016 this national project has been incorporated to EFSA catalogue of EU RAA project. The presented results were briefly discussed and other countries expressed the value of the work done so far as it monitors several diseases systematically.

Finally, the Bulgarian member presented a project proposal about a possible cooperation in the Balkans for the prevention and control of exotic transboundary vector borne diseases. The project aims at 1) creating a database on the priority diseases for the Balkan regions, possible vectors and pathways of their introduction and spread, epidemic progression in the context of climatic changes, areas at risk of becoming endemic, country-specific needs for disease prevention and control; 2) development of mathematical models for spread of the vector-borne diseases and platform for information exchange and 3) enhance further collaboration among a network of partners. This is a COST action and Bulgaria is looking for potential project partners from the Balkans (at now, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro agreed to participate). The representative from EFSA's AFSCO Unit explained that they have explored possible sources of funding for MSs and a report on this was recently produced (to be circulated to the AH Network together with these minutes).

1.3. African Swine Fever

The progress of the EFSA ongoing work on African Swine Fever (ASF) was presented. Firstly, an extensive literature search was held on ASF virus characteristics and epidemiology, monitoring and control strategies, and wild boar ecology. Main conclusions were derived related to this section. Secondly, epidemiological data were retrieved from MSs and combined in a single database to perform a spatio-temporal analysis. Finally, an analysis of the risk factors involved in the persistence of the ASF virus in the wild boar population in Estonia was performed using a web-tool. Epidemiological model was used to assess effectiveness of measures implemented by the MSs in order to stop the spread of the sisease.

A workshop on ASF epidemiology in the EU and neighbouring countries took place on 10-11 October 2017 in EFSA and feedback was given. About 30 experts from the EU reference laboratory, scientists and epidemiologists from affected and 'at risk' countries participated. The aim was to discuss and identify lessons learned from the ASF outbreaks in Europe and to list the required scientific activities to improve scientific advice to risk managers in the near future. Conclusions were that there is a need to streamline the level of detail of data submission among MSs and to harmonise (where possible) the data collection on wild boar and domestic pig populations. There is a need to differentiate efficacy of control measures in newly affected areas versus areas affected for several years. Gaps in knowledge were identified for instance related to the proportion of carcasses removal, influence of climate and extreme weather on the ASF control measures (e.g. feeding ban), ecology of wild boar, implementation of baiting and feeding.

A discussion on ASF control was held and the importance of controlling in the endemic areas was highlighted. It is recognised that early detection and early response is crucial and that hunters are the key people in prevention and control of ASF. Good communication with the hunters is fundamental. In Estonia hunters are kept informed on ASF situation and paid for the removal of carcasses. In Norway, a Risk Assessment has recently been started on wildboars in Norway and addresses how fast a population can establish and spread. This is the first phase of the assessment and will be published in December 2017. The second phase, probably starting in January 2018, will focus on animal and human health (i.e. risk of disease outbreaks and introduction of parasites). ASF will be given special attention in the second phase, with regards to measures to reduce infection, surveillance and mapping programmes.

1.4. Avian Influenza

The working group on AI monitoring joined the Network meeting and participated into the discussion on AI with MS representatives. A presentation on the development of the recent scientific outputs on avian influenza developed by EFSA was held: 1) scientific opinion (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4991/epdf) and 2) scientific and technical assistance for an overview of AI in the period October 2016-August 2017 (https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5018).

The scientific opinion includes sections on AI introduction into the EU and into poultry holdings, AI transmission and spread, mutation from LPAI to HPAI, AI surveillance and aspects of biosecurity.

The draft scientific report covers both human and animal health aspects of 2016-2017 outbreaks in the EU as well as HPAI situation in other continents. The report was published on 16 October as a joint report of EFSA, ECDC and EURL. It is the first report in a series: an update has to be provided every quarter. The very good collaboration between EU institutions and all affected MSs, which provided data and information on AI outbreaks and applied prevention and control measures, was emphasised. The weaknesses of the data collection were thoroughly discussed and proposals for making it more fit for risk factor analysis were identified and discussed in a dedicated session of the meeting (see next point in agenda). The need to collect and record base-line data on the poultry populations at risk of AI was discussed, including a suggested method to collect data from unaffected holdings within protection zones using a matched case-

control design, since the unaffected holdings according to EU regulation were to be visited by Veterinary Service staff anyway.

1.5. Project for *ad hoc* data collection on animal diseases

A discussion was held on data collection and sharing among MSs on animal populations and outbreaks of ASF, LSD and AI. After the experience obtained in drafting the scientific reports on these diseases and the longer experience with the annual reports on *Echinococcus multilocularis*, EFSA is keen to improve the technical aspects of data submission (e.g. automated data validation), provide feedback to MSs following submission of data (i.e. prefilled tables and maps) and stimulate data sharing between MSs. Representatives of the IPA countries expressed their interest and are invited to take part in this initiative. The objective is to improve data quality at national and EU level to facilitate analytical epidemiological analysis (e.g. risk factor analysis and their relative importance) in addition to the descriptive epidemiological analysis that is currently the main outcome. MSs expressed interest in further developing the ideas but indicated that it will be a long process. A summary of the MS feedback will be circulated to the members of the Network.

1.6. Requests for information

- Feedback from G7 meeting "Avian influenza: a global threat"

A specific meeting was organised on AI in Rome on 4 October 2017 within the frame of the G7 meeting. Several international organisations and experts from research organisations presented an overview of the global AI situation, an analysis of the economic impact, role of wild birds, use of molecular tools and recent risk assessments. Surveillance strategies, mutation from low to high pathogenic AI and trade consequences of LPAI were extensively discussed among G7 CVOs, EC, FAO, OIE, EFSA, 25 AI experts, 40 industry and stakeholder representatives.

- Information on webinars on 'Rapid risk assessment tools'

A webinar on rapid risk assessment methodologies developed by MSs will be held on 27 Nov 2017 around 15.30 h CET. The webinar will be advertised online. Participation is possible to everybody who is interested and registered via an online link. An email will be send to the experts of the AHAW Panel and Network informing when online registration will be open. Three rapid risk assessment tools will be presented:

  - Tool for probability of introduction and exposure of Swedish livestock to exotic disease (Cecilia Hulten)
  - Defra rapid risk assessment tool and process (Helen Roberts)
  - MintRisk tool for rapid risk assessment on vector transmitted diseases (Aline de Koeijer)