

Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards

Minutes of the 123rd Plenary meeting

Held on 24-25 October 2018, Parma (Italy)

(Agreed on 8 November 2018)

Participants

■ Panel Members:

Ana Allende, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez, Declan Bolton, Sara Bover-Cid, Marianne Chemaly, Robert Davies, Alessandra De Cesare, Lieve Herman, Friederike Hilbert, Konstantinos Koutsoumanis, Roland Lindqvist, Maarten Nauta, Luisa Peixe, Giuseppe Ru (only 24 October), Marion Simmons, Panagiotis Skandamis, Elisabetta Suffredini.

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Not applicable

■ EFSA:

BIOCONTAM Unit: Frank Boelaert, Sandra Correia, Maria Teresa da Silva Felício, Michaela Hempen, Ernesto Liebana, Winy Messens, Angel Ortiz Pelaez, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella.

FIP Unit: Carla Martino (for item 5.2)

COM Unit: Arthur Healy (for item 9.3), Francesca Matteucci (for item 6.1)

RASA Department: Iuliane Kleiner (for item 1)

■ Observers: (In application of the guidelines for Observers¹)

Not applicable

■ Others:

Lucy Robertson (Hearing Expert), Member of EFSA BIOHAZ Working Group on Public health risks associated with food-borne parasites (for item 5.1).

¹<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/stakeholders/observers.html>

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Giuseppe Ru for 25 October.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without further changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Committee/Scientific Panel/ Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes² and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest³, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled in by the Panel Members invited for the present meeting.

No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 122nd Plenary meeting held on 26 and 27 September 2018, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the 122nd Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 11 October 2018.⁴

5. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption or endorsement

5.1. Scientific opinion on public health risks associated with foodborne parasites⁵

The discussions of the draft opinion, which was presented for possible adoption, focussed on comments provided by the panel before and during the meeting. All comments were addressed by changing wording or adding detail to add clarity. The panel concluded that parasites are important foodborne pathogens but owing to their complex lifecycles, varied transmission routes, prolonged periods between infection and symptoms, the actual public health burden and relative importance of different transmission routes are difficult to assess. The Opinion focussed on *Cryptosporidium*, *Toxoplasma gondii* and *Echinococcus*. The last was

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

³<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

⁴<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/180926-0>

⁵<http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00460>

found to be controllable whereas the control of the other two is more difficult. The Opinion discusses various control options as well as detection methods and occurrence of these parasites in food. The panel adopted the Opinion.

5.2. Scientific opinion on the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of the organic acids lactic and acetic acid to reduce microbiological surface contamination on pork carcasses and pork cuts⁶

The last WG meeting of the CEP Panel WG "Evaluation of substances used to reduce microbial contamination from products of animal origin" took place on 3 October 2018 by web-conference. The vice-chair of the WG presented the draft opinion to the BIOHAZ panel, in particular the sections dealing with terms of reference (ToR) 2 and 3. Following discussion, the BIOHAZ Panel endorsed those sections. The opinion was presented for adoption and adopted by the CEP Panel on 25 October 2018.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

6.1. Scientific opinion on *Salmonella* control in poultry flocks and its public health impact⁷

The last WG meeting was held on 11 October 2018 by web-conference. The WG chair presented the draft opinion to the BIOHAZ panel and a discussion took place. For ToR 1, he provided an update of the assessment and the difficulty to propose alternative serovars in the target for breeding flocks of *Gallus gallus*. He presented the data that would be used for the EU-wide source attribution modelling for answering to ToR 2. For ToRs 3-5, the draft assessment was presented and discussed. The Panel Chair insisted to have outputs of the modelling and short and clear replies to all five ToRs by the next plenary meeting. The next meeting of the WG will take place on 5 and 6 November 2018 by web-conference and 21 November 2018 in Parma. The deadline for adoption of this scientific opinion is 31 January 2019.

6.2. Scientific opinion on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA⁸

The last WG meeting was held on 23 October in Parma. The screening phase of the extensive literature search (ELS) for references retrieved between January and June 2018 was finalised and the summary is to be prepared by November to be incorporated in the Panel Statement part 9. The main agreements reached after the meeting of the day before were

⁶ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00666>

⁷ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00692>

⁸ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00684>

presented, mainly concerning the virulence features of *Enterococcus faecium*, and the QPS qualification “Absence of resistance to antimycotics used for medicinal treatment of yeast infections, in cases where viable cells are added to the food or feed chain”. The next meeting will take place on January 2019 (date to be confirmed). The deadline for adoption of this scientific opinion is December 2019.

6.3. Statement on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA. 9: Suitability of taxonomic units notified to EFSA until September 2018⁹

The last meeting was held on 23 October in Parma. The summary of the ELS for references retrieved between January and June 2018 will be finalised middle of November and will be incorporated in this Panel Statement. The QPS notification list was updated with 59 microorganisms (received between April and September 2018). From these, 39 biological agents already had QPS status, 16 were excluded of the QPS exercise from the previous QPS mandate (6 filamentous fungi) or from further evaluations within the current mandate (3 notifications of *Enterococcus faecium* and 7 of *Escherichia coli*). One taxonomic unit was (re)evaluated: *Pseudomonas fluorescens* (2 notifications) had been previously evaluated in 2016, and was now re-evaluated within this mandate, and *Mycobacterium setense* and *Komagataeibacter sucrofermentans* were evaluated for the first time. The procedure to follow in cases of notifications received linked to the new regulation on novel foods was agreed with the Panel. The next meeting will take place on January 2019 (date to be confirmed). The deadline for adoption of this statement is December 2018.

6.4. Scientific opinion on the pathogenicity assessment of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and the public health risk posed by contamination of food with STEC¹⁰

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the progress of work made during the physical WG meeting in Parma on 23 October showing the preliminary table of contents of the draft opinion. The WG aims to answer the ToRs of this mandate using documents and relevant data from EFSA’s zoonoses database and ECDC’s TESSy database covering the period from 2012 to 2017. The molecular approach proposed in the 2013 STC opinion for the categorisation of STEC will be updated considering the recent literature and currently available data characterising the human STEC isolates (virulence genes and outcome of infection). Preliminary approaches to address all ToRs of this mandate were presented to the Panel. The next WG meeting will take place on 20 November, as a web-conference. The EC has agreed

⁹ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00830>

¹⁰ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00293>

to extend the original deadline for the adoption of this scientific opinion (end of September 2019) to the plenary meeting on 11-12 December 2019.

6.5. Scientific opinion on the application and use of next generation sequencing (including whole genome sequencing) for risk assessment for foodborne microorganisms¹¹

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the progress of work made during the first physical WG meeting on 19 October 2018 in Parma. The interpretation of the ToRs has been clarified in the WG and the approach to answer these will be based on non-systematic review of recent relevant literature as well as on the outcome of relevant research projects. Efforts will be made to perform a SWOT analysis of NGS-based methodologies. The next WG meeting will take place on 28 November, as a web-conference. The deadline for adoption of this opinion is the October 2019 plenary meeting.

6.6. Scientific opinion providing an update and review of control options for *Campylobacter* in broilers at primary production¹²

The WG is currently being established and a first meeting is planned for December 2018. The deadline for adoption is January 2020.

6.7. Scientific opinion on an update of the scientific opinion on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in cervids¹³

The Chair of the working group (WG) presented to the Panel the terms of reference of this mandate, received on 24 September 2018. The charter was approved on 4 October 2018. The chair also presented the criteria set to select the external experts of the WG and the proposed composition of the WG, pending approval of their DoI. The first meeting will take place on 4 December as a physical meeting in Parma and the second in January as a 1.5 day physical meeting in Parma.

7. New Mandates

No new mandates were received.

8. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission

8.1. Scientific Committee and other Scientific Panels

8.1.1. Scientific Committee

¹¹ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00397>

¹² <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00676>

¹³ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00763>

The 91st Plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) will take place on 21 November 2018.

8.1.2. Scientific opinion on the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of lactic acid to reduce microbiological surface contamination on carcasses from wild game and small stock¹⁴

No update.

8.2. EFSA including its Working Groups and Networks

8.2.1. Scientific Networks on BSE-TSE and MRA

EFSA Secretariat reported on the recent annual meeting of the BSE/TSE network that took place on 15-16 October at EFSA in Parma. There was a good turnout and the feedback from participants has been positive. There was a special session on CWD where all countries conducting surveillance reported the work in progress, the usual mix of fixed presentations (EFSA, EC, OIE, TSE EUSR) and *ad hoc* presentation from invited external speakers. The next MRA network meeting will be on 21-22 May 2019.

8.2.2. Update on Rapid Outbreak Assessments and related activities

No update.

8.3. European Commission

No update.

9. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

9.1. Topics of scientific concern in the area of biological hazards and possible priorities for BIOHAZ self-tasking work in the future

The Panel briefly discussed a proposal for a self-task activity on the role of environment in the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

9.2. Training on the implementation of the guidance on uncertainty analysis in scientific assessments

EFSA Secretariat updated the Panel on the organisation of the training to be delivered to the Panel on the implementation of the EFSA Guidelines on Uncertainty analysis in scientific assessments. The training is expected to take place in March 2019. The Panel selected possible case-studies to be used during such training.

9.3. BIOHAZ Opinions in the EFSA Journal

¹⁴ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00667>

EFSA Secretariat (COM Unit) presented to the Panel an overview on BIOHAZ publications on the EFSA Journal along the years, and access to them and to the EFSA Journal globally.

10. Any other business

The Panel Chair reminded the Panel about the possibility for the Panel and respective WGs to draft scientific papers based on BIOHAZ scientific opinions. The EFSA Secretariat explained to the Panel best practices in relation to drafting and authorship of such papers.

The EFSA Secretariat updated the BIOHAZ Panel on practices concerning chairing EFSA WG meetings. These are chaired by the WG chair for whole-WG meetings and by EFSA staff for sub-WG meetings.