

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 114th Plenary meeting

Held on 14-15 November 2018, Parma, (Italy)
(Agreed on 26 November 2018)

Participants Plenary 14-15 November

■ Panel Members

Julio Alvarez, Dominique Bicout, Paolo Calistri (via web, only 14/11), Klaus Depner (only 14/11), Julian Ashley Drewe, Bruno Garin-Bastuji (only 14/11), Jose Luis Gonzales Rojas (via web), Christian Gortazar Schmidt, Virginie Michel, Miguel Angel Miranda, Helen Roberts, Liisa Sihvonen (only 14/11), Hans Spolder, Karl Stahl, Arvo Viltrop, Christoph Winckler

■ EFSA

ALPHA UNIT: Sotiria-Eleni Antoniou, Inma Aznar, Francesca Baldinelli, Alessandro Broglia, Denise Candiani, Andrey Gogin, Rodrigo Guerrero, Nikolaus Kriz, Marie Louise Schneider, Frank Verdonck, Gabriele Zancanaro

BIOCONTAM UNIT: Frank Boelaert, Ernesto Liebana Criado, Winy Messens, Pietro Stella, Yves van der Stede

RASA DPT: Juliane Kleiner

■ EUROPEAN COMMISSION

None

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed the meeting participants. There were no apologies.

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) 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 113th Plenary meeting held on 12-13 September 2018, Parma, (Italy)

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

5. New Mandates

5.1. Art 29 – Welfare at slaughter and killing ([EFSA-M-2018-0182](#), EFSA-Q-2018-00716 till EFSA-Q-2018-722)

The OIE has decided to revise its Terrestrial Animal Health Code and in particular the two chapters on Slaughter of animals (Chapter 7.5) and Killing of animals for disease control purposes (Chapter 7.6).

The Commission would like to request EFSA to review the scientific publications provided in its previous opinions of 2004 and 2006 to provide a sound scientific basis for the future discussions at international level on the welfare of animals in the context of:

- slaughter i.e. killing animals for human consumption (mandate 1)
- other types of killing i.e. killing for other purposes than slaughter (mandate 2).

These are the Terms of Reference of the two mandates:

- Mandate 1: Scientific opinion on the slaughter of animals (killing for human consumption).

This will cover two categories of animals: i) free moving animals (cattle, buffalo, bison, sheep, goats, camelids, deer, horses, pigs, ratites) and ii) animals in crates or containers (i.e. rabbits and domestic birds). It will cover the following processes and issues: arrival of the animals, unloading, lairage, handling and moving of the animals (free moving animals only), restraint, stunning, bleeding, slaughter of pregnant animals (free moving animals only), emergency killing (reasons and conditions under which animals have to be killed outside the normal slaughter line), unacceptable methods, procedures or practices on welfare grounds.

For each process or issue in each category, EFSA will:

- Identify the animal welfare hazards and their possible origins (facilities/equipment, staff),
- Define qualitative or measureable criteria to assess performance on animal welfare (animal based measures),
- Provide preventive and corrective measures to address the hazards identified (through structural or managerial measures),
- Point out specific hazards related to species or types of animals (young, with horns, etc.)

- Mandate 2: Scientific opinion on killing of animals for other purposes than slaughter. This will cover the cases of large scale killings which take place in case of depopulation for disease control purposes and for other similar situations (environmental contamination, disaster management, etc.) outside slaughterhouses and the killing of unproductive animals that might be practiced on-farm (day-old chicks, piglets, pullets, etc.). It will cover the following processes and issues: handling, restraint, stunning, killing, unacceptable

methods, procedures or practices on welfare grounds. For all these processes, same ToRs from mandate 1 apply.

Considering the number of animal species to be covered by these two mandates, the AHAW Panel will divide the work into four species-specific scientific outputs per each mandate, leading to a total of eight outputs to be delivered at different timings starting from September 2019 and ending in December 2020. The scientific opinion on domestic birds will be developed as first while the remainders will be initiated one after the other so to develop the opinions partially in parallel.

Considering the fact that the request from the EU Parliament (see below mandate M-2018-0124) also asks to address the issue of rabbit slaughter, for avoiding duplication of information it was agreed to develop one scientific opinion only about "Rabbit slaughter and killing for reasons other than slaughter" under the frame of this mandate. A question number will be created leading to one output only but linked to both mandates M-2018-0124 and M-2018-0182. The opinion on slaughter of rabbits will be developed within the deadline set by M-2018-0124, i.e. December 2019.

A core working group of "slaughter" experts has been created and members are appointed to deal with all species, additional hearing members to deal with species-specific issues.

5.2. New mandates on African swine fever

The European Commission is in the process of sending two new mandates on African swine fever (ASF) to EFSA. The draft mandates were shared with the Panel and a first discussion took place on the context, the Terms of Reference and a possible methodological approach. The existing working group on ASF will be expanded with a few experts to cover all the expertise required to draft the requested outputs.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption

None

7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

7.1. Art 29 – Welfare of rabbits for meat production ([EFSA-Q-2018-00593](#) and [EFSA-Q-2018-00594](#))

Welfare of farmed rabbits was recently raised and discussed in an EU Parliament meeting and a "Motion for a European parliament resolution on minimum standards for the protection of farm rabbits" (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2017-0011&format=XML&language=EN>) was developed by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development in January 2017. In 2005 and 2006, EFSA has published scientific opinions on i) the impact of housing and husbandry systems on the health and welfare of farmed domestic rabbits and ii) welfare aspects of the main systems of stunning and killing of farmed deer, goats, rabbits, ostriches, ducks and geese, respectively. The EU Parliament therefore requested EFSA to update its scientific opinions on different aspects of health and welfare of rabbits kept for meat production in Europe. Two scientific opinions will be developed:

- The first on health and welfare of rabbit farmed in different production systems, including organic production systems. This will include all aspects related to housing, rearing and nutrition and the effects thereof on rabbit health, welfare and behaviour. Interactions between the different areas will also be addressed.

- The second opinion will focus on stunning and killing methods for rabbits and will be developed under the frame of M-2018-0182 as mentioned above.

The first WG meeting for the opinion on welfare of rabbit on-farm was held on 16-17 October 2018. The target animal population and husbandry systems of interest were defined as well as the most common welfare consequences. The methodological approach was established. Health and welfare of rabbits in different production systems will be described based on the severity and prevalence of animal welfare consequences. For this purpose, an EKE approach will be developed involving a survey addressed to rabbit health and welfare specialists (e.g. researchers, farmers, official vets, industry). Respondents to the survey will firstly be asked to indicate their estimates for the severity of each predefined welfare consequence for rabbits irrespectively of the husbandry systems and secondly to estimate the prevalence of each consequence in the different systems. The Panel was requested to carefully consider this approach since some discussion took place after the first WG meeting, in particular related to several aspects of the EKE methodology. In particular, the EKE might not be able to cover in full all relevant husbandry systems and further features increasing the variation of systems thus not being representative of the situation in practice across Europe. Other concerns related to the number of experts that will finally respond and to the stratification of experts (e.g. whether a sufficient number of experts will answer for a particular husbandry system) as well as to the fact that results are based on the personal perceptions of respondents rather than the effective knowledge of all welfare consequences. Actions were proposed by the WG to address these points. In particular, a "matrix of expertise" expected from the survey respondents will be created as a tool to make sure to cover all necessary expertise. An attempt to better characterise the most relevant systems in terms of e.g. reproductive cycles or feeding strategies will be done although the number of systems might increase resulting in a longer survey. During the period when the survey will take place, the responses will be continuously monitored, checked against the matrix of expertise and eventually more reminders will be sent to ensure enough answers about all systems will be achieved. Finally, a technical hearing meeting will be held and some time will be allocated to revise the outcomes of the survey. The Panel agreed on the approach. The next WG meeting will be held in the beginning of December 2018.

7.2. **BIOHAZ Panel scientific opinion on *Salmonella* control in poultry flocks (EFSA-Q-2017-00692)**

The chapters of the draft opinion related to welfare aspects were reviewed by the AHAZ Panel members and specific comments were discussed in detail. For instance, some text was included to describe the limitations of the data provided by the identified studies and approximate uncertainty probability terms were introduced into the conclusions.

The next meetings of the WG will take place on 21 November 2018 in Parma and 12 December 2018 by web meeting. The scientific opinion will be tabled for adoption by the BIOHAZ panel at the plenary meeting on 16-17 January 2019. The deadline for adoption of this scientific opinion is 31 January 2019.

8. Updates on ongoing mandates

8.1. Art 31 – African Swine Fever (EFSA-Q-2018-00471)

The main outcomes of the most recent scientific report were presented to the Panel.

8.2. Art. 31 - Scientific and technical assistance on avian influenza monitoring (EFSA-Q-2018-00747 & EFSA-Q-2018-00504)

The Panel was informed on the most recent activities via the briefing notes.

8.3. Art. 31 - Scientific and technical assistance on avian influenza surveillance ([EFSA-Q-2017-00829](#))

The Panel was informed on the most recent activities via the briefing notes.

8.4. Art 31 - Mandate on Lumpy Skin Disease ([EFSA-Q-2018-00289](#))
The Panel was informed on the most recent activities via the briefing notes.

8.5. Data collection on animal diseases and surveillance (SIGMA) ([EFSA-Q-2018-00080](#))

The Panel was informed on the most recent activities via the briefing notes.

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

9.1. EFSA including its Working Groups /Task Forces

None besides Salmonella mandate (see 7.2)

9.2. European Commission

None

10. Any other business

10.1. EU summary report on zoonoses

An overview of the main changes in the reporting over the last years and the most important results of the 2017 data were presented to the Panel.

10.2. Use of guidance documents in AHAW outputs

An overview of AHAW-specific and cross-cutting EFSA guidance documents was presented to the Panel.

10.3. Collaboration with other Panels

The minutes of the most recent meetings of the Plant Health and BIOHAZ Panels and the Scientific Committee were provided to the AHAW Panel. The most recent outputs, current activities and upcoming requests of the BIOHAZ and BIOMO teams were presented. The AHAW Panel is interested to further explore collaborations with the BIOHAZ Panel, in particular on methodologies that are common across both Panels (e.g. surveillance, risk factor analysis and implementation of uncertainty analysis). Further collaboration between the AHAW Panel and the Scientific Committee on uncertainty analysis is considered very useful. There are currently no activities in the Plant Health Panel to which the AHAW Panel could contribute. The chair of the AHAW Panel will express these views when cross-Panel collaboration will be discussed during the next meeting of the Scientific Committee.