Network on Risk Assessment in Plant Health
Minutes of the 13th meeting

Held on 4-5 December 2018, Parma (IT)
EFSA M06

(Agreed on 25 April 2019)

Participants

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

Country	Name[1]
Austria	Sylvia BLUEMEL
Belgium	Kristien BRAEKEN
Bulgaria	Irena BOGOEVA
Croatia	Dario IVIC
Denmark	Anne Christine HELMS
Estonia	Birger ILAU
Finland	Juha TUOMOLA
France	Emmanuel GACHET
Germany	Ernst PFEILSTETTER
Greece	Athanasios LAGKOURANIS
Hungary	Gabor HOLLO
Ireland	Oliver MCEVOY
Lithuania	Loreta REZGYTE
Netherlands	Dirk VAN DER GAAG
Poland	Tomasz KALUSKI
Portugal	Claudia SA
Slovakia	Katarina BENOVSKA
United Kingdom	Richard MCINTOSH
Norway	Micael WENDELL

- **Observers:**

Switzerland	Peter KUPFERSCHMIED
European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO)	Françoise PETTER

- **Hearing Experts:**

Christine TAYEH (for item 5.3 of the agenda)

- **European Commission (EC):**

Panagiota MYLONA (DG SANTE)

- **EFSA:**

Animal and Plant Health Unit: Elma BALI, Alice DELBIANCO, Makrina DIAKAKI, Ciro GARDI, Mart KINKAR, Svetla KOZELSKA, Elisabeth MEYER-LANDRUT, Marco PAUTASSO, Stefano PRETI, Riccardo SILIGATO, Sybren VOS, Emanuela TACCI, Gabriele ZANCANARO, Maria Rosaria MANNINO (chair), Giuseppe STANCANELLI (PLH team leader), Nikolaus KRIZ (Head of Unit).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Head of the Animal and Plant Health Unit welcomed the participants.

The chair acknowledged the participants. Apologies were received from Anthemis MELIFRONIDOU (Cyprus), Vaclav STEJSKAL (Czech Republic), Brynjar Omarsson (Iceland), Bruno FARAGLIA (Italy), Liga GRISANE (Latvia), Monique FABER-DECKER (Luxembourg), Marthese LICARI (Malta), Paulina GABOR (Rumania), Anita BENKO (Slovenia), Gerardo SANCHEZ (Spain) and Kristof CAPIEAU (Sweden), Vaclav STEJSKAL (Czech Republic), Alfred KLAY (Switzerland).

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Agreement of the minutes of the 12th meeting of the Network held on 6-7 December 2017, Parma

The minutes of the 12th Network meeting were adopted by written procedure on the 24th of January 2018.

4. Topics for discussion

4.1. Topic n° 3 – World Café discussion groups on Plant health activities

The 5 topics detailed below were presented by members of the EFSA plant health team to participants distributed in 5 groups. The posters presented have been uploaded in the DMS in the relevant folder.

4.1.1. Quantitative pest risk assessment

The new quantitative pest risk assessment methodology developed and already applied in nine pest risk assessments by the EFSA PLH Panel was presented. The Guidance describes the two-phases approach (pest categorization as phase one and pest risk assessment as phase two). The Guidance provides a template for the pest categorisation and describes the use of modelling and expert knowledge elicitation for the pest risk assessment. The Guidance provides support for assessors to provide quantitative estimates and associated uncertainties, regarding all PRA steps and includes guidelines for the quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of risk reducing options (RROs). A two-tiered approach is proposed for the use of expert knowledge elicitation and modelling. The Monte Carlo simulations are used to compare scenarios for relevant factors, e.g. with or without RROs. This guidance provides assistance on how to compare scenarios, to draw conclusions on the magnitude of pest risks and the effectiveness of RROs and on how to communicate assessment results.

The follow-up discussion with the PLH Network members focused mainly on the explanation of the expert knowledge elicitation methodology and the procedure to estimate quantitatively the model parameters and the associated uncertainties using a case study example.

4.1.2. Pest categorisation

In the context of the new plant health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031, the EC requested EFSA to provide 133 pest categorisations of harmful organisms currently listed in the annexes of Council Directive 2000/29/EC for supporting the EU risk managers to revise their listing in the secondary legislation under the new plant health regime. In pest categorisations the pests are characterised in terms of their identity, biology, geographical distribution and regulatory status. Potential pathways for entry are identified and listed, a brief assessment of establishment, spread and impact potentials are given, and finally, potential risk reducing options are listed. With regards to the protected zones (PZ), the criteria are analysed for the PZ instead of the EU territory. In its conclusions, the Plant Health Panel states whether the pest can be considered as potential quarantine pest or potential regulated non-quarantine pest (RNQP) based on the criteria assessed. Within this mandate EFSA is also categorising large taxonomical or commodity groups of pests.

The follow-up discussion focused on groups categorisations, the challenges and difficulties. The example of non-EU fruit viruses was discussed as an example.

4.1.3. *Xylella fastidiosa* global host plants database

The development of the *Xylella fastidiosa* global host plants database is a part of the EFSA activities carried on *X. fastidiosa* after its first detection in EU in October 2013. Since 2015, after the urgent advice and the full pest risk assessment produced to scientifically support the EU risk managers in their decisions, EFSA is developing and maintaining a database of the reported host plants of *X. fastidiosa*

subspecies. EC requested to regularly update the database, including new information as soon as they become available. A systematic approach was applied for this update according to the EFSA guidance on systematic literature review. The new database was published in September 2018, together with interactive reports in the MicroStrategy platform.

The published results and the interactive available tools were presented to the participants. Main points of interest and discussion were the large number of host plants detected worldwide and the association of *X. fastidiosa* subspecies and sequence types with particular host plants. Moreover, the presence or absence of symptoms in infected host plants was discussed as it represents an important factor for *X. fastidiosa* surveillance and detection.

4.1.4. EFSA mandate on EU Priority Pests

In agreement with Article 6(2) of the new plant health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031, the EC has been tasked by the Council and European Parliament to establish a list of Union quarantine pests which qualify as priority pests. The prioritisation is based on the severity of the economic, social and environmental impact that those pests can cause in the Union territory. The EC Directorate-General Joint Research Centre (JRC) is in charge of developing a methodology based on a multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) and composite indicators. In this context EFSA will provide technical and scientific data related to those pests, in particular: i) an indication of the potential capacity of establishment of each of those pests in the Union territory at the level of NUTS2 regions; ii) parameters quantifying the potential consequences of those pests (e.g. crop losses in terms of yield and quality, needs for additional control measures, etc.). Expert knowledge elicitation is the methodology applied by EFSA in order to provide those parameters in a consistent and transparent manner.

The follow-up discussion with the PLH Network members focused mainly on the content of the draft Expert Knowledge Elicitation (EKE) report on Grapevine flavescence dorée phytoplasma that was shown as an example during the presentation. In reply to the question of participants about the availability of the EKEs, EFSA informed that all the EKE reports together with the report on the methodology and the datasheets will be finalised, published and made available online by the 3rd of June 2019.

4.1.5. High-Risk plants and commodity risk assessments

Article 42 of the new plant health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 introduces the concept of High-Risk Plant, defined as a plant, plant product or other object that poses a risk of pests to an unacceptable level for the Union territory. Following a request of the EC, EFSA published a technical report specifying the information required and developed a format for the preparation and submission of dossiers to support third country requests for derogation of import prohibition of high-risk plants, plant products and other objects as foreseen in Article 42(5) of the new regulation. The aim of the dossier is to enable third countries to provide the information required by EFSA to perform a Commodity Risk Assessment for which EFSA was preparing a guidance.

The short presentation during the World Café was aimed to present the role of EFSA in the High-Risk Plant risk assessment. The Technical Report published in

October 2018 was presented, describing the main components of the dossiers that should be submitted by the third countries intending to export into the EU one of the plants listed as High-Risk Plants.

Most of the questions by the participants were on the possible workload for EFSA PLH related to this activity and the time that would be required for performing the risk assessment.

4.2. Topic n° 4 – Update on the progress of Surveillance mandate

The EFSA Art. 31 mandate on pest surveillance and its progress were presented. There were three presentations regarding (i) an overview of the mandate, (ii) survey cards and story maps and (iii) a demonstration of the use of statistic tools for sample size calculations.

(i) The interpretation of the mandate was presented defining a statistically sound and risk-based approach for calculating the sample sizes in the context of a detection survey. The outputs in preparation of the project were described, including the 52 pest survey cards, the specific guidelines for the three pilot organisms i.e. *Xylella fastidiosa, Agrilus planipennis* and *Phyllosticta citricarpa*, general guidelines for using the RIBESS tool for sample size calculation, and support to the MSs on the tool-kit for surveillance in the form of workshops.

(ii) With regards to the survey cards which, they will be complemented by a set of story maps, with a story map prepared for each published survey card. Story maps will include a concise description of the information presented in the respective survey card. This output is targeted for practical use by inspectors in the field and will be maintained updated upon publication of new relevant information. The network members were positive about the usefulness of the story maps.

(iii) The working group suggests surveillance to be done based on a statistically sound and risk-based approach. A demonstration was performed on the use of statistical tools for sample size calculations, an essential element of survey design.

To answer the question on how the multi-host plant pests can be addressed, EFSA clarifies that the approach and the related tool can deal with multi-host plant pests in different ways. Examples can be found in the draft Specific Guidelines on CBS and *Xylella fastidiosa*. In general, the host plants have different susceptibilities to the pest. In this case, the plant populations are grouped in clusters characterised by the same probability of being infested and associated to an estimated Relative Risk. The tool takes these values into consideration for the allocation of the sample size in order to achieve the desired confidence. In the same way, this approach addresses the multiple kinds of locations, including places other than the production sites, considering the different probabilities of infestation. Adopting a two-step approach (how many areas to be surveyed, how many plants within the area) the calculation allows to conclude on how many areas should be surveyed. However, the types of areas must be defined a priori.

Various network members suggested that more time is offered in the future for understanding the concepts behind the tool used (RiBESS+), although the

majority agreed that the reasoning behind why such tool would be beneficial during survey design was clear.

4.3. Topic n° 5 – Update on the progress of Horizon scanning mandate

4.3.1 - Media and scientific literature monitoring

EFSA presented an overview of the project including the ongoing collaborations with the EC Directorate-General Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) in the framework of a tasking grant on Horizon scanning.

EFSA is assisted in its tasks by experts in plant health of an EFSA ad hoc working group.

In the framework of the new European Plant Health regime, the EC DG SANTE (Directorate General Health & Food Safety) requested EFSA to carry out a horizon scanning exercise on plant health threats for the European Union territory.

The main output of the project is a monthly newsletter gathering the results of media monitoring on new plant health threats that can be of relevance for EU. This newsletter is monthly presented to the EC and Member State representatives in the PAFF (Plants, Animals, Food and Feed) committee on Plant Health.

The IT platform of MEDISYS (Medical Information System) for the automated screening of media built by JRC was presented as well as the criteria adopted for the human article selection daily carried out for the newsletter preparation.

The ongoing work to build the scientific literature monitoring (scientific sources addition for monitoring by the platform, development of a new template for the scientific newsletter) was presented.

During the discussion clarifications were asked by participants about the pests and sources monitored to better understand to what extent the EFSA Plant Health Newsletter and the EPPO Reporting Service are complementary tools that meet the needs of users. Details were provided by EFSA, which highlighted the characteristics of the MEDISYS platform which performs automatic searches only in publicly accessible sources. The pests monitored are those listed in 2000/29/EC annexes IAI, IAII, IIAI, covered by EU emergency measures, listed by EPPO and not listed pests. News are searched in media and scientific literature but not in social media so far. EFSA does not plan to produce a social media newsletter but will consider in due time how to use the information from social media. The comparison with other monitoring systems (e.g. PestLens) is carried out with the expectation to obtain comparable results.

Clarifications were also provided about the correspondence between "pests" and "categories": one category includes the scientific and common names corresponding to one pest, used as keywords by the platform. There are exceptions for groups of pests, corresponding e.g. to one genus.

Comments were raised on the terminology used to indicate the polyphagia degree of the pests in the list of icons. An alternative formulation will be defined by EFSA.

The steps of the Horizon scanning exercise requested by EC to EFSA were clarified: the monitoring will allow to find news on pests not yet regulated, these pests will be ranked, and results submitted to risk managers to decide further actions (e.g. pest categorisation, enhancement of surveillance at the EU borders or on the EU territory). It was clarified that in any case the ranking exercise does not replace the pest categorisation or the risk assessment. These complementary studies can then be carried out at the request of risk managers to clarify the risks represented by the pests of potential interest to the EU territory.

More than 50 new pests were found since the beginning of the exercise, but probably more will be identified when the scientific literature monitoring will be stabilized.

4.3.2. - Network contribution to the ontology and sources

EFSA presented the ongoing work on ontology and source updating for which the input of network members was requested. EFSA thanked the network members who sent their contributions on common names of a first batch of 70 pests.

EFSA underlined the interest of extending the monitored sources based on inputs that may be provided by the network members on sources known as relevant in plant health at a national level.

To complete the work of updating pest common names, EFSA proposed to send an Excel file containing the scientific names of other pests monitored and for information the pest common names from the EPPO Global Database that are already added as keywords in MEDISYS.

The participants agreed to provide EFSA with their contribution.

4.3.3. – Methodology for pest ranking

The ANSES partner of EFSA in the tasking grant on Horizon scanning presented a review of pest ranking models in use in European countries and a proposal for a ranking system of pests identified via the Horizon scanning project.

4.3.3.1. – A review of pest ranking models in European countries

The systems developed in Belgium, France, Finland, Netherlands, Norway and United Kingdom were presented and reviewed following indicators related to purposes, pest characteristics, patterns and features of the systems, scoring methods, ranking criteria, missing data, uncertainties, validation, ranking scenarios and weighting.

In conclusion of the review, recommendations in view of the adoption of a system to be applied at EU level were presented. They include the availability of resources for updating and running the system, the structuration of data in order to be reused, the interest of considering all the steps of a PRA avoiding redundancy.

4.3.3.2. – A proposal for a ranking system of "new or emerging pests" identified via Horizon scanning

The characteristics of pests to be ranked (taxonomy, occurrence in EU, data availability) as well as the main features of the proposed system were presented. They include for example the genericity of the methodology that should be adapted to rank a large variety of pests and the acceptable level of detail for pest trait description to avoid complexity and improve the system simplicity and

timeliness. The three steps of the proposed system were presented: "answer questions" which includes the descriptions of criteria and the scoring systems, "construct matrix" and "analyse matrix" using the PROMETHEE method (via the interface VISUAL PROMETHEE).

The draft proposal was presented to the EC DG SANTE and to MS representatives at the October 2018 meeting of the PAFF committee on Plant Health. The comments received as well as the results of a first ranking test carried out on 10 pests resulted in criteria and scoring modifications.

The next steps of the project were presented. The system will be run by different assessors using the same data and with different scenarios. The range of pests will be enlarged to all not regulated pests identified through the horizon scanning exercise.

Participants agreed on the importance of focusing on the simplicity and speed of the classification system to be adopted.

Clarifications were provided following comments from participants on the management of missing data and their effect on the ranking results, on the scenarios to run for ranking pests already present in EU, on the quantification of import data, on the scoring of water as mean of natural spread, on the ranking purpose which is intended to help and inform EC and MS in their decisions.

ANSES explained how the scores are defined and clarified the absence of impact of different ranges of score in different criteria. This is due to the normalisation of the net flow scale (scores between -1 and +1) and to the application of a preference function in VISUAL PROMETHEE. Moreover, the use of the preference function among the six proposed shapes can render a criterion more or less discriminant by stressing on little differences when the scores are low or reducing the importance of little differences when the scores are high for example.

Weighting of criteria and running several scenarios based on different combinations of criteria weighting is a means of bringing out the "core pests" (pests that are always among the top pests whenever the weighting is) among the pull of ranked pests.

4.4   Topic n° 6 – Items suggested by Member States

No items were suggested by Member States.

5. Date for next meeting

The 1st Network workshop on *Xylella fastidiosa* surveillance to be scheduled in March 2019 was announced to the participants.

EFSA communicated place and dates of the 14th PLH Network meeting: 3-4 December 2019, Parma (IT).

6. Closure of the meeting

The Chair closed the meeting.