

Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards

Minutes of the 125th Plenary meeting

Held on 16-17 January 2019, Parma (Italy)

(Agreed on 31 January 2019)

Participants

■ Panel Members:

Ana Allende, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez (only 16 January), 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, Marion Simmons, Panagiotis Skandamis, Elisabetta Suffredini.

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Paolo Caricato, Marina Marini (for item 7.1 by web-conference)

■ EFSA:

BIOCONTAM Unit: Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil, Frank Boelaert, Sandra Correia, Maria Teresa da Silva Felício, Michaela Hempen, Maria Francesca Iulietto, Ernesto Liebana, Winy Messens, Angel Ortiz Pelaez, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella,

COM: Francesca Matteucci (for item 5.1)

SCER: Raquel Garcia Matas, Caroline Merten (for item 9.2)

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

Not applicable

■ Others:

Andrew Hart (hearing expert, for item 9.2)

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

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez for 17 January.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without further changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence² and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management³, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 124th Plenary meeting held on 5 and 6 December 2018, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the 123rd Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 20 December 2018.⁴

5. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption or endorsement

5.1. Scientific opinion on *Salmonella* control in poultry flocks and its public health impact⁵

The last WG meeting was held on 12 December 2018 by web-conference. The WG Chair presented the draft opinion for possible adoption to the BIOHAZ panel. The discussions focussed on comments provided by the panel before and during the meeting. All comments were addressed. The conclusions and recommendations were discussed in detail. The Panel concluded that there is justification to retain three out of the five targets currently in place for breeding flocks of *Gallus gallus* (*S. Enteritidis*, *S. Typhimurium* and *S. Infantis*) and add two new ones (*S. Kentucky* and either *S. Heidelberg*, *S. Thompson* or a variable one in national prevalence targets). Achievement of a 1% target for the current target serovars in laying hen flocks would reduce the layer-associated human

² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/181205>

⁵ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00692>

salmonellosis true cases by about 50%. A review of risk factors for *Salmonella* in laying hens revealed that overall evidence points to a lower occurrence in non-cage compared to cage systems. The evidence that outdoor access affects the occurrence of *Salmonella* is inconclusive for laying hen and broiler flocks. Based on scientific evidence, the impact of current *Salmonella* control programmes on the prevalence of *Campylobacter* in broiler flocks at the holding and on broiler meat at the end of the slaughter process is considered to be limited. The panel adopted the Opinion.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

6.1. Scientific opinion on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA⁶

The last WG meeting was held on 23 October in Parma. An extensive literature search (ELS) for references retrieved between January and June 2018 was finalised and the summary included in the Panel Statement part 9. New ELS to be launched in January (articles published between July and December 2018). Data extraction phase to be finalised in April and its summary to be incorporated in the Panel Statement part 10. The next WG meeting will be held by web meeting on 21 January. The description of the background of QPS approach is still to be improved. The deadline for adoption of this scientific opinion is December 2019.

6.2. Statement on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feed as notified to EFSA. 10: Suitability of taxonomic units notified to EFSA until March 2019⁷

The new ELS is to be launched in January (articles published between July and December 2018). Data extraction phase to be finalised in April and its summary to be incorporated in the Panel Statement part 10. Between October and December 2018, the QPS notification list was updated with 21 microorganisms from applications for market authorisation. Of these, 9 biological agents already had QPS status, 10 were excluded from the QPS exercise by the previous QPS mandate (6 filamentous fungi) or from further evaluations within the current mandate (four notifications of *Escherichia coli*). *Sphingomonas elodea* and *Gluconobacter frateurii* were evaluated for the first time. The deadline for adoption of this statement is June 2019.

⁶<http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00684>

⁷<http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00831>

6.3. Scientific opinion on the pathogenicity assessment of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and the public health risk posed by contamination of food with STEC⁸

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the progress of work made with the finalisation of the questionnaires produced by the WG on STEC monitoring in humans and STEC monitoring in food/feed/animals. The consultations to MSs via EFSA's Zoonoses network and the network of VTEC NRLs have been launched as well as the consultation via ECDC's FWD network. The STEC data requested to ECDC has been delivered to EFSA and provided to the WG. The next WG meetings will take place as web conferences on 23 January 2019 (sub WG) and 1 February 2019 (full WG). The deadline for the adoption of this scientific opinion is at the plenary meeting on 11-12 December 2019.

6.4. Scientific opinion on the application and use of next generation sequencing (including whole genome sequencing) for risk assessment for foodborne microorganisms⁹

The next WG meeting will take place on 29-30 January 2019 in Parma. The deadline for adoption of this opinion is the October 2019 plenary meeting.

6.5. Scientific opinion providing an update and review of control options for *Campylobacter* in broilers at primary production¹⁰

The first WG meeting was held on 4th December 2018 in Parma. A modelling approach for estimating the impact of control measures aiming at flock prevalence and *Campylobacter* concentrations in intestinal content on human campylobacteriosis was suggested and agreed. This opinion will implement the EFSA uncertainty guidance,¹¹ receiving support from the SCER Unit and cross-cutting WG on Uncertainty. The next meeting is on 31 January 2019. The deadline for adoption is January 2020.

6.6. Scientific opinion on an update of the scientific opinion on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in cervids¹²

The Chair of the working group (WG) reminded the Panel the terms of reference of this mandate, and presented the work progress since the first meeting that took place on 4 December: the EC replied to the request for clarification of the terms transmissibility and pathogenicity as in ToR1; the data collection continues following the request to 17 research groups

⁸ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00293>

⁹ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00397>

¹⁰ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00676>

¹¹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5123>

¹² <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00763>

from 8 countries that are characterizing European and North American isolates of CWD; one of the literature reviews of the CWD I opinion has been updated; and a summary of studies exploring the zoonotic potential of CWD has been compiled. The chair reported that the approach to ToR3 will be quite generic describing the identified risk pathways and assess their likelihood of occurrence. The second meeting will take place on 24-25 January 2019 as a 1.5 day physical meeting in Parma.

6.7. Request for a scientific opinion on the public health risk posed by *Listeria monocytogenes* in frozen fruit and vegetables including herbs, blanched during processing¹³

The WG is currently being established. The deadline for adoption is March 2020.

7. New Mandates

7.1. Request for a scientific opinion on the use of the so called "tubs" for transporting and storing fresh fishery products

EFSA Secretariat presented to the Panel the background and terms of reference of this mandate, received on 15 January 2019. The Panel chair nominated Sara Bover-Cid as Chair of the *ad hoc* WG which will be established for this mandate (conditional to screening and approval of her declaration of interests). The Panel briefly discussed with the European Commission the terms of reference.

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

No update.

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 on the application at stake. The Panel briefly discussed the EFSA guidance on the submission of data for the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of substances for the removal of microbial surface contamination of foods of animal origin intended for human consumption¹⁵.

¹³ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-01006>

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

¹⁵ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1544>

8.2. EFSA including its Working Groups and Networks

8.2.1. Scientific Networks on BSE-TSE and MRA

No update. The next MRA network meeting will be on 21-22 May 2019. The next BSE-TSE Network meeting will be in October 2019 (date to be defined).

8.2.2. Update on Rapid Outbreak Assessments and related activities

No update.

8.2.3. Scientific and technical assistance on harmonized monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria transmitted through food¹⁶

EFSA Secretariat presented an update on the progress of the scientific report. The mandate asked EFSA to update previous technical specifications on monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in food-producing animals and food taking into account new scientific developments, and should address the possible use of molecular typing methods.

8.2.4. Third Joint Inter-agency Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance Analysis (JIACRA) Report¹⁷

EFSA Secretariat explained that the European Commission asked ECDC, EFSA and EMA to update the previous JIACRA Reports, analyzing data for the period 2016-2018. This activity will start in the coming months, and a report is expected for December 2020.

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 BIOHAZ self-tasks

EFSA Secretariat updated the Panel on the internal approval process for the draft proposal for a self-task activity on the role played by of environment in the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance through the food chain, which was agreed by the Panel at the previous plenary meeting. The Panel was informed of a recent reflection paper from EMA, which is currently available on EMA website for public consultation.

¹⁶ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00051>

¹⁷ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00135>

9.2. Update/preparation of the training on the implementation of the guidance on uncertainty analysis in scientific assessments

The training is expected to take place on 5-6 March 2019. Hearing expert Andrew Hart (trainer of the future training) introduced to the panel and staff the guidance document on uncertainty and a draft checklist for the application of the guidance. He summarised the outcome of a preparatory meeting held on 15 January 2019 with a subgroup of Panel experts and EFSA staff and with the other trainer (Peter Craig). He introduced how the training will be run, discussed with the Panel the expectations from the training, and agreed with the Panel that some material will be shared with training participants for preparation ahead of the training.

9.3. EU Summary Report on trends and sources of zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks in 2017

EFSA Secretariat addressed the Panel with a presentation on findings reported in the EU summary report on trends and sources of zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks in 2017. The report was published on 12 December 2018¹⁸. The presentation also explained how the zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks monitoring data are collected and what the Panel can expect when receiving such data to be used in BIOHAZ assessments.

10. Any other business

The chair informed the Panel on the opportunity of having a plenary by web-conference, when no documents need to be adopted or discussed thoroughly. This will be discussed further during the next plenary meeting.

¹⁸ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5500>