

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 115th Plenary meeting

Held on 23-24 January 2019, Parma, (Italy)
(Agreed on 08 February 2019)

Participants Plenary 23-24 January 2019

■ Panel Members

Julio Alvarez, Dominique Bicout, Paolo Calistri (only 23/01), Klaus Depner (only 23/01), Julian Ashley Drewe, Bruno Garin-Bastuji, Jose Luis Gonzales Rojas, Virginie Michel (chair), Miguel Angel Miranda (only 24/01), Helen Roberts, Liisa Sihvonen, Hans Spoolder, Karl Ståhl, Arvo Viltrop, Christoph Winckler

■ EFSA

ALPHA UNIT: Sotiria-Eleni Antoniou, Inma Aznar, Francesca Baldinelli, Alessandro Broglia (by skype), Denise Candiani, Sofie Dhollander, Andrey Gogin, Rodrigo Guerrero, Nikolaus Kriz, Marie Louise Schneider, Yves Van der Stede

■ EUROPEAN COMMISSION

None

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed the meeting participants. Apologies were received from Søren Saxmose Nielsen (chair, both days), Christian Gortazar Schmidt (both days), Paolo Calistri (for 24/01), Klaus Depner (for 24/01) and Miguel Angel Miranda (for 23/01). Virginie was replacing Søren Saxmose Nielsen as chair.

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 114th Plenary meeting held on 14-15 November 2018, Parma, (Italy)

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

5. New Mandates Art 29 – Request for Scientific opinion ASF risk assessment in south-eastern Europe and Ranking of matrices

The new mandate (Art. 29) was shared with the Panel and a thorough discussion took place on the TORs and the proposed methodologies from the WG were discussed with the Panel.

In relation to RA in SE Europe it was clarified that EFSA should not assess from where to where ASF was introduced but highlight the factors that may impact the perpetuation inside the countries, once introduced and the further spread from SE Europe (Greece, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, Albania and Kosovo) to the rest of the EU. EFSA will collect as much as possible the relevant data of potential factors that may influence the spread and perpetuation of ASF in SE Europe and to the rest of the EU. Based on this information a narrative section will be provided in the opinion. It was also discussed how the risk of introduction should be expressed taking into account the uncertainty assessment.

In relation to the ranking of the matrices, it was discussed during the plenary that this assessment should consider a retrospective analysis of matrices (including pig feed or final feed products containing (spray-dried) plasma as sources of introduction of ASF in pig farms, or to wild boar populations, demonstrated by the field evidence when possible, or rely on the available literature or expert opinion where no field evidence is available. A method (individual scoring of the extended working group and the Panel) for this assessment was proposed and discussed.

5.2. Art 29 - ASF gap analysis

The new mandate (Art. 29) was shared with the Panel and a thorough discussion took place on the TORs and the proposed methodology from the WG was proposed and discussed with the Panel. This mandate requires to review the most important research gaps to address the needs of risk managers involved in the prevention and control of ASF. It is envisaged to send out emails to the most important stakeholder groups involved in risk management and list their answers in the Scientific Report.

The possible output of this assessment was discussed as well as the target respondents for the structured questionnaire to retrieve information on research gaps.

The panel Chair nominated Christian Gortazar Schmidt as Chair and Arvo Viltrop as Vice Chair for the standing working group on ASF.

5.3. Art 31 – Scientific and technical assistance: epidemiological follow up of the ASF outbreaks in Europe (EPI-4 report)

The approach to be taken to analyse the risk factors involved in the occurrence, spread and persistence of ASF in Romania in the domestic population were discussed. A case-control study will be conducted and if possible combined with an entomological survey to study the potential role of vectors in the transmission of ASF in the affected areas. The five TORs for the EPI-4 report were discussed in detail.

No major changes in the methodology used for the descriptive epidemiology section of the EPI -3 report is foreseen. Updates should be provided for new affected areas and the

recommendations provided in the EPI 3 report should be confirmed if they are still relevant or they should be updated.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption

None

7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

7.1. 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 requested 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 i) slaughter i.e. killing animals for human consumption (mandate 1) and, ii) other types of killing, i.e. killing for other purposes than slaughter (mandate 2).

The TORs of the two mandates are:

- 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.

The AHAW Panel decided to 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 first together with the one on rabbit slaughter (which will respond to the mandate EFSA-M-2018-0182 and to mandate EFSA-M-2018-0124 – see under point 7.2 of this document).

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.

The last WG on "slaughter" took place on 21-22 January 2019. The working group met to work on both the opinion on rabbit slaughter (EFSA-Q-2018-00909) and the one on poultry slaughter (EFSA-Q-2018-00715). In both cases, the methodology for answering the TORs was presented and will involve the update of literature of EFSA's opinions from 2004 and 2005 and the development of a complete matrix showing the links between the welfare problems, animal based measures, hazards, the origin of welfare problems, preventive and corrective measures.

In addition an EKE will be organised on indicators of unconsciousness for rabbits.

It was also decided and agreed that the WG will assess all methods used for stunning animals, including those foreseen in EC Reg. 1099/2009 but also those under development for which scientific evidence is available. In addition, it was agreed that the list of unacceptable slaughter methods will be based on welfare grounds solely.

7.2. Art 29 – Welfare of rabbits for meat production (EFSA-M-2018-0124: EFSA-Q-2018-00593 and EFSA-Q-2018-00594)

This request is from the EU Parliament and also asks to address the issue of rabbit slaughter. To avoid 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.

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 rabbits 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 last WG meeting for the opinion on welfare of rabbits on-farm took place on 14-15 January 2019. The methodology for the EKE (estimation of prevalence and duration for each welfare consequence (n=20) for the different housing systems (n=6) without inclusion of severity) was discussed and agreed during the panel meeting. The EKE involves a survey addressed to rabbit health and welfare specialists (e.g. researchers, farmers, official vets, industry). A model for the stratification of experts (e.g. aimed at safeguarding a sufficient number of experts answering for the housing systems in question while taking different European regions and professional background into account) has been proposed and agreed. It was agreed to translate the questionnaire in accordance with the main rabbit production areas. Finally, a technical hearing meeting will be held in order to discuss the estimates received and to assess severity levels for each welfare consequence. The Panel agreed on the approach. The next WG meeting will be held in the February 2019.

8. Updates on ongoing mandates

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

The Panel was informed via the briefing notes and a presentation on the most recent activities of the last report on AI monitoring and on activities planned for 2019.

8.2. 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 and short presentation on the upcoming activities for AI surveillance and its data collection.

8.3. Art 31 - Mandate on Lumpy Skin Disease ([EFSA-Q-2018-00289](#))

The Panel discussed the most recent report. Written comments were collected and will be included. Main discussion was about the results of the serosurvey conducted in FYROM, about the interpretation of the OD values. Still the data have to be confirmed by FYROM, thus this section is provisional. Updated draft report, including the section about estimation of the within-herd spread based on the mathematical model, will be circulated by beginning of February.

8.4. 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 and a short presentation (publication of the country cards).

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

9.1. EFSA including its Working Groups /Task Forces

Request for a scientific opinion on the evaluation of public and animal health risks in case of a delayed post-mortem inspection in ungulates.

The Panel was informed about an upcoming opinion on the evaluation of public and animal health risks in case of a delayed post-mortem inspection (up to 24h or 72h after

slaughter or arrival in game-handling establishment) of ungulates in any slaughterhouse or game-handling establishment. This mandate will be received by BIOHAZ panel and requires input from AHAW panel based on the animal diseases listed in Article 5 of Regulation EU 2016/429.

9.2. European Commission

None

10. Discussion on implementation of uncertainty guidance documents in AHAW output

The draft checklist (uncertainty) was discussed with Panel. It was agreed that in next plenary meeting a thorough discussion will take place on how this checklist should be implemented (example Varroa in bees). It was agreed that this checklist could already be distributed to the WG chairpersons to raise awareness on this and to use it for ongoing mandates.

11. Any other business

11.1. 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 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 established by contribution in Uncertainty working group (see point 11.2).

Dr Hans Spoolder informed the Panel that his institution - Wageningen (NL) together with University of Aarhus (DK) and FLI (DE) - was assigned the role of first "European Animal Welfare Reference Centre" (EURCAW), as mandated by the EU Commission for a period of 5 years. Legal background for the establishment of EURCAW is EU Reg 625/2017 on official controls. The scope of the centre is to provide scientific and technical expertise, develop animal welfare indicators, develop methods of assessment and improvement, support scientific and technical studies, promote training in Member States and non-EU Countries and ultimately disseminate research findings and technical innovations. This first centre will be dedicated to the welfare of pigs, being this a priority for the enforcement of EU Directive 120/2008.

11.2. Interaction EFSA-EC before, during and after mandate

The panel members discussed how the process of refining the TORs could be improved at an earlier stage of the mandate. In addition, different ways were discussed and agreed on how the output of AHAW Panel could be evaluated with relation to impact and/or quality.

11.3. Open plenary AHAW March 2019

The panel members were informed about the guidelines for observes for open plenary meetings (Article 28(9)(f) of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002).