

Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards

Minutes of the 126th Plenary meeting

Held on 6-7 March 2019, Parma (Italy)

(Agreed on 21 March 2019)

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, Panagiotis Skandamis, Elisabetta Suffredini.

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Kris De Smet (for item 7.1 by web-conference)

Athanasiros Raikos, Halvard Kvamsdal, Anne-Laure Gassin, Marina Marini (for item 8.4 by web-conference)

■ EFSA:

BIOCONTAM Unit: Frank Boelaert, Sandra Correia, Maria Teresa da Silva Felício, Michaela Hempen, Maria Francesca Iulietto, Winy Messens, Angel Ortiz Pelaez, Valentina Rizzi, Mirko Rossi, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella

AHAW Unit: Alessandro Broglia (for item 7.1)

FIP Unit: Carla Martino (for item 9.4)

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

Not applicable

■ Others:

Not applicable

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

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Marion Simmons.

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 125th Plenary meeting held on 16 and 17 January 2019, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the 125th Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 31 January 2018.⁴

5. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption or endorsement

No scientific outputs were submitted for possible adoption or endorsement.

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 EFSA⁵

Last meeting was held on 21 January by web-conference. New ELS was launched in February (articles published between July and December 2018. References screening at title/abstract level are to be finalised by middle March. Machine learning techniques (MLT) screening have been included in the ELS process for yeasts and *Bacillus* spp. Data extraction

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/190116>

⁵ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00684>

phase is to be finalised beginning of April and its summary will be incorporated in the Panel Statement part 10 beginning of May. Structure of the opinion concerning the assessment of the QPS list will be improved. The next working group (WG) meeting will be held on 21 PM and 22 May in Valencia. 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 2019⁶

Last meeting was held on 21 January by web-conference. New ELS was launched in February (articles published between July and December 2018). References screening at title/abstract level is to be finalised by middle March. MLT screening have been included in the ELS process for yeasts and *Bacillus* spp. Data extraction phase is to be finalised beginning of April and its summary will be incorporated in the Panel Statement part 10 beginning of May. Between September 2018 and March 2018, the QPS notification list was updated with 34 microorganisms from applications for market authorisation. Of these, 15 biological agents already had QPS status, 12 were excluded from the QPS exercise by the previous QPS mandate (7 filamentous fungi) or from further evaluations within the current mandate (five notifications of *Escherichia coli*). Six taxonomic units are to be evaluated for the first time: *Sphingomonas elodea*, *Gluconobacter frateurii*, *Corynebacterium ammoniagenes*, *Burkholderia ubonensis*, *Phaeodactylum tricornutum*, *Microbacterium foliorum* and *Euglena gracilis*. The deadline for adoption of this Panel Statement is June 2019.

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 STEC⁷

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the progress of work made. A very preliminary version of the draft opinion was shared with the Panel to collect views on the approaches presented to answer all ToRs. The feedback was very positive and the Panel agreed with these approaches. It was also agreed that for this mandate the uncertainties and uncertainty analysis should only be developed for ToR3 (analyse available data on human foodborne STEC cases in the EU and rank different food commodities based on the public health risk). The next WG meetings will take place on 8 March in Parma and on 2 May 2019 as a web conference. The deadline for the adoption of this scientific opinion is at the plenary meeting on 11-12 December 2019.

⁶ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00831>

⁷ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00293>

6.4. Scientific opinion on the application and use of next generation sequencing (including whole genome sequencing) for risk assessment for foodborne microorganisms⁸

The next WG meeting will take place on 12 March 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 production⁹

The last WG meeting was held on 4 March 2019 in Parma. The discussions during this meeting focussed on the methodology to be applied to estimate the effect of interventions targeting a reduction of *Campylobacter* prevalence in broiler flocks and a reduction of *Campylobacter* concentration in broiler caecal content. A quantitative approach will be followed as far as possible using population-attributable fractions for the prevalence-based interventions and consumer-phase model and dose-response model for the concentration-based interventions. This opinion will implement the EFSA uncertainty guidance,¹⁰ receiving support from the SCER Unit and cross-cutting WG on Uncertainty. The next meeting is on 7 May 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 cervids¹¹

The Chair of the WG was not present so the member of the Panel also member of the WG reported on the work progress. The last meeting took place on 24-25 January 2019 as a 1.5 day physical meeting in Parma, and since then a number of tasks have been completed: the request data to research groups on transmission studies to characterize CWD field isolates from cases in Norway, Finland and North America; the update the updates of the literature searches included in CWD I opinion (2017-2018) on in vivo, in vitro transmission studies of TSE in animal models exploring the zoonotic potential of CWD and the review of previous EFSA opinions on transmissibility of CWD to other species (host range). Other tasks are ongoing like the ToR3 that will be approached by a combination of the description of risk factors extracted from literature and published reports linked to conceptual maps in two different scenarios, based on the contagiousness of the different presentations of the disease in Europe. The chair of the Panel enquired about ToR2 and how the estimation of the risk of transmission to humans will be conducted. It was clarified that there will not be a quantitative estimation of the risk but only the

⁸ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00397>

⁹ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00676>

¹⁰ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5123>

¹¹ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00763>

qualitative assessment of the exposure of humans to infected through the consumption of meat and meat products of cervids. The next meeting will be a web-conference on Tuesday 26 March.

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 processing¹²

The WG Chair informed that the WG composition is nearly completed. The first WG meeting will take place on 18 March 2019 in Parma. The deadline for adoption is March 2020.

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

The WG Chair informed that the WG is still being composed and that the first WG meeting has tentatively been scheduled on 25 March 2019. The deadline for adoption is March 2020.

7. New Mandates

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

EFSA Secretariat presented to the Panel the background and terms of reference of this mandate, received on 31 January 2019. The Panel chair nominated Friederike Hilbert 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 BIOHAZ Panel is the leading panel for this mandate and specific sections will be endorsed by AHAW and CONTAM Panel. The Panel chair also nominated AHAW panel member Bruno Garin-Bastuji as vice-Chair of this WG (conditional to screening and approval of his declaration of interests).

The BIOHAZ Panel briefly discussed with the European Commission the terms of reference. The EC clarified that EFSA is asked to assess the effectiveness of post-mortem inspection in terms of its sensitivity in detecting the diseases/conditions listed in the mandate. The EC confirmed that an evaluation of public and animal health risk is not required to answer the terms of reference.

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

8.1. Scientific Committee

¹² <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-01006>

The 92nd Plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) took place on 19-21 February 2019.¹³ The BIOHAZ Panel chair briefly reported the topics discussed at the SC meeting. The next SC meeting will take place on 24 April 2019.

8.2. Scientific Networks on BSE-TSE and MRA

The next MRA network meeting will be on 21-22 May 2019 in Parma. The next BSE-TSE Network meeting will be on 14-15 October 2019 in Parma.

8.3. Update on Rapid Outbreak Assessments and related activities

EFSA Secretariat indicated that a Rapid Outbreak Assessment related to multi-country outbreak of *Salmonella Poona* was being finalised and would be published soon.¹⁴

8.4. European Commission

The Panel discussed with the European Commission a draft mandate in relation to the date marking and related food information.

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 indicated that the draft proposal for a self-task activity on the role played by environment in the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance through the food chain, which was agreed by the Panel in previous plenary meetings, is now undergoing the internal approval process in EFSA. No other topics were discussed.

9.2. Follow-up of the training on the implementation of the guidance on uncertainty analysis in scientific assessments

The training for the BIOHAZ Panel took place on 5-6 March 2019. The BIOHAZ Panel reviewed the outcome of the training and initiated discussions on the practical implementation of the guidance in BIOHAZ mandates, which might vary depending on the type of mandate and terms of reference, respective deadlines and resources available. This will be discussed further in the next plenary meetings.

9.3. Request to participate in the EMA expert group on the establishment of the criteria for the designation of antimicrobials to be reserved for humans

EFSA Secretariat explained that EFSA has been requested by EMA to nominate an EFSA representative to participate in the work of an EMA expert group on the establishment of the criteria for the designation of

¹³ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/190219>

¹⁴ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/en-1594>

antimicrobials to be reserved for humans. The BIOHAZ Panel discussed the request to participate in the above mentioned EMA activity during its plenary meeting of 6-7 March 2019 and the BIOHAZ Panel member Luisa Peixe was nominated as representative from EFSA in the EMA expert group.

9.4. Discussion on the assessment of applications for substances for the removal of microbial surface contamination of foods of animal origin

During the discussion held at the previous BIOHAZ plenary meeting related to 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, several questions were formulated. The vice-chair of the standing WG of the CEP Panel on the evaluation of substances used to reduce microbial contamination from products of animal origin presented those questions. After discussion, an agreement was reached on how to address them.

10. Any other business

EFSA Secretariat informed the Panel on EFSA internal criteria for defining authorship of models published in EFSA Knowledge Junction.

The Panel was also informed on an upcoming survey to assess the efficiency, relevance and added value of the annual European Union Summary Reports on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks and on antimicrobial resistance. Panel members agreed to be addressed by such survey.

EFSA Secretariat informed the Panel about the rejection by EFSA of the mandate referring to the request for a 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 stock.¹⁶

The Panel was also informed on the signature of the contract for an EFSA procurement activity on the application of next generation sequencing on Norovirus.

The Panel agreed to hold the next plenary meeting on 11 April 2019 by web-conference.

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

¹⁶ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00667>