



SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

MINUTES OF THE 97TH PLENARY MEETING

**Held on 18-20 March 2019, Parma (Italy)
(Agreed on 11 April 2019)**

Participants

■ Panel Members:

Margherita Bignami, Laurent Bodin, Kevin Chipman, Jesús Del Mazo, Bettina Grasl-Kraupp¹, Christer Hogstrand, Ron Hoogenboom, Jean-Charles Leblanc², Carlo Nebbia³, Elsa Nielsen, Evangelia Ntzani², Annette Petersen³, Salomon Sand, Dieter Schrenk, Tanja Schwerdtle, Christiane Vleminckx and Heather Wallace.

■ Hearing Experts⁴:

Lars Barregård and Thorhallur Halldorsson (for Item 6.2)

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Frans Verstraete and Veerle Vaheusden² (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit E2)

■ EFSA:

■ BIOCONTAM Unit:

Katleen Baert, Marco Binaglia, Anna Christodoulidou, Karen Mackay, Kelly Niermans, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, and Hans Steinkellner.

¹ Attendance on 18-19 March only.

² Attendance by audioweb-conference.

³ Attendance on 19-20 March only.

⁴ As defined in Article 17 of the Decision of the Executive Director concerning the selection of members of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Panels, and the selection of external experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work:
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/expertselection.pdf>.



- **DATA Unit:**
Claudia Cascio (for Item 6.4)
- **SCER Unit:**
Angelo Maggiore (for Item 7)
- **Observers:**
Not applicable
Not applicable

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair of the CONTAM Panel welcomed the participants.

Apologies were received from Ernesto Liebana Criado and Elena Rovesti (BIOCONTAM Unit), and Marina Marini (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, unit D1).

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes

3. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence⁵ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management⁶, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Working Group 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 96th Plenary meeting held on 29-31 January 2019.

The minutes of the 96th Plenary meeting held on 29-31 January 2019 were agreed by written procedure on 21 February 2019.

5. Report on written procedures since 96th Plenary meeting

The following request from the European Commission was discussed by written procedure:

- Request for an update of the EFSA scientific opinion on the evaluation of substances as acceptable previous cargoes for edible fats and oils (EFSA-Q-2019-001307).

⁵ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

⁶ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf

⁷ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-001307>



The Panel agreed to set up an ad hoc WG Working Group and following a consultation with the CONTAM secretariat, the Panel Chair nominated Christiane Vleminckx as WG Chair.

In relation to the request for a Scientific Opinion on the risks for animal health related to the presence of nitrites and nitrates in feed (EFSA-Q-2019-000988), following a consultation with the CONTAM Secretariat, the Panel Chair nominated Christer Hogstrand and Carlo Nebbia as Chair and vice-Chair of the WG, respectively.

6. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

6.1. Draft Scientific Opinion on the human health risks related to the presence of cyanogenic glycosides in foods other than raw apricot kernels (EFSA-Q-2016-00802)⁹

The Chair of the WG on hydrocyanic acid in food introduced the draft EFSA report on the public consultation on the opinion and the opinion that was updated taking into account these comments. The Panel discussed both documents and in particular, the issue of potential chronic toxicity of cyanide. The Panel adopted the opinion and endorsed the report that will be published together with it. The Chair of the Panel thanked the WG and EFSA staff for their work.

6.2. Draft Scientific opinion on the risk to human health related to the presence of perfluoroalkyl substances, other than perfluorooctane sulfonate and perfluorooctanoic acid, in food (EFSA-Q-2017-00549)¹⁰

The Chair of the WG on Perfluoroalkyl substances in food presented the possible endpoints/critical effects from human observational studies and animal toxicology studies to be used in the risk assessment. The possible approaches for the risk characterisation were also discussed, using either human or experimental animal data. Although the endpoint vaccination response in humans was favoured by some Panel members, it would be necessary to understand if a precise mode of action for this effect in humans could be identified based on experimental animal studies. Furthermore, with regards to animal toxicity studies, immunotoxicity and reproductive & developmental toxicity endpoints should be further evaluated. It was agreed that the endpoint of liver growth and hypertrophy in experimental animals should not be used further in the assessment, as this finding has no relevance for humans. If the human endpoint of vaccination response is selected, then the dose response analysis for the other selected human endpoints should still be performed in order to understand if the point of departure for vaccination response would also be protective for these two endpoints. There was not enough time to discuss the sections of the opinion sent for discussion and/or endorsement. As the draft opinion will now include a review of conclusions from the opinion on PFOS and PFOA in food, which was adopted in 2018 (EFSA-Q-2015-00526), it was agreed that the draft opinion should be re-titled as follows: Scientific opinion on the risk to human health related to the presence of perfluoroalkyl substances in food.

⁸ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00098>

⁹ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00802>

¹⁰ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2017-00549>



6.3. Draft Scientific opinion on the risks for animal and human health related to the presence of glycoalkaloids in feed and food, in particular in potatoes and potato-derived products (EFSA-Q-2016-00240)¹¹

The Chair of the WG on Glycoalkaloids in feed and food presented, for discussion, the section of the draft opinion on toxicokinetics in experimental animals and humans. The Panel made suggestions to those sections. In addition, a presentation was given by the WG Chair on the possible approach to take for the human and farm animals risk assessment. The draft opinion will be presented again at the next Plenary meetings.

6.4. Draft scientific opinion on the risks for animal and human health related to the presence of quinolizidine alkaloids in feed and food, in particular in lupins and lupin-derived products (EFSA-Q-2016-00239)¹²

The Chair of the WG on quinolizidine alkaloids in feed and food presented, for discussion, the sections of the draft opinion on supporting information on the assessment, adverse effects in farm and companion animals and occurrence data. The Panel made suggestions to those sections and the draft opinion will be presented again at the next Plenary meeting.

7. Presentation on EFSA project on Climate Change (CLEFSA)

The scope of the EFSA project on climate change and the methodology applied to identify and prioritize the possible emerging issues related to food and feed safety, plant and animal health, and nutritional quality, were presented to the CONTAM Panel. Around 50 possible signals of climate change-related emerging risks in the area of chemical contaminants were collected through different initiatives and support from the experts in the Panel was requested to score and characterize them in line with the developed methodology. It was agreed that possible expressions of interest to be involved in the project will be communicated to EFSA and the results of the scoring will be discussed in the CONTAM Panel.

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

8.1. European Commission

The European Commission representative gave an update on the activities of the European Commission in relation to the scientific opinions of the CONTAM Panel. Several amendments of current legislation are under discussion with the Member States as an outcome of the CONTAM Panel scientific opinions. Possible future mandates in the area of responsibility of the CONTAM Panel were also mentioned. A short overview on the currently on-going reform of the General Food Law and the increasing responsibilities of EFSA was also provided.

8.2. CONTAM Panel Working Groups

■ Update from WG on Chlorinated paraffins in food and feed

The Chair of the WG gave a presentation on the possible approach to take for the human and farm animals risk assessment related to the presence of chlorinated paraffins in food

¹¹ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00240>

¹² <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2016-00239>



and feed. The feedback from the Panel will be taken into consideration and the draft opinion will be presented again at the next Plenary meeting.

- **Update from WG on Ochratoxin A in food**

The Chair of the WG updated the Panel on the approach taken by the WG regarding the discussion on the genotoxic and carcinogenic modes of action (MoA) of ochratoxin A. The compound is a kidney carcinogen in rodents but the MoA is not yet fully elucidated. A detailed presentation was given on the data supporting different potential MoAs. The CONTAM Panel discussed the issue and it was agreed that while the WG should investigate the issue further and also work further on the other parts of the opinion, it is adequate to consult the Genotoxicity WG of the Scientific Committee.

- **Update from WG on Aflatoxins in food**

The Chair of the WG informed the Panel that the work is progressing well.

- **Update from the WG on Glycoalkaloids in food and feed**

See item 6.3.

- **Update from WG on Quinolizidine alkaloids in food and feed**

See item 6.4.

- **Update from WG on Perfluoroalkyl substances in food**

See item 6.2.

- **Update from WG on Hydrocyanic acid in food**

See item 6.1.

8.3. EFSA

The CONTAM Team Leader informed that EFSA received a new mandate issued by the European Commission on the update of the EFSA Scientific Opinion on the risks to public health related to the presence of nickel in food and drinking water. The mandate will be shared with the Panel via written procedure.

The CONTAM Team Leader informed that a draft note reflecting the discussion on the possible practices to reduce the length and improve the clarity and consistency of Panel outputs was prepared as agreed at the previous plenary meeting. The draft note will be distributed by written procedure to the Panel for comments and possible endorsement.

8.4. Scientific Committee and Working Groups of interest to the CONTAM Panel

The main points discussed at the 92nd meeting of the EFSA Scientific Committee¹³ were reported by Christer Hogstrand (vice-Chair of the CONTAM Panel) and by the CONTAM Team Leader, who attended on behalf of the CONTAM Panel Chair. In particular the adoption of the Scientific Committee Guidance on harmonised methodologies for human health, animal health and ecological risk assessment of combined exposure to multiple chemicals "mixtures", the discussion on the comments received from the public consultation on the

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



draft Guidance on the use of the Toxicological Threshold of Concern approach in food safety assessment and a general discussion on the guidance life cycle and way of working of the Scientific Panel were mentioned. An update was given on the activity of the WG on Genotoxicity.

9. Any Other Business

Not applicable