

**MINUTES OF THE XXXVIII PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON
ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE**

11-12 DECEMBER 2008

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PARTICIPANTS

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Xavier Pavard (DG SANCO)

OBSERVER: Caroline Planté (OIE) and Stephane de La Rocque (FAO)

EFSA: Elda Franchi, Katharina Plattner (administrative staff AHAW Unit), Ana Afonso, Sandra Correia Rodeia, Denise Candiani, Fabrizio De Massis, Sofie Dhollander, Milen Georgiev, Tomasz Grudnik; Per Have, Oriol Ribó, Jordi Tarres-Call and Jordi Serratosa (Scientific Coordination AHAW Unit).

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chairman of the Panel welcomed a new scientific staff member of AHAW Unit J. Tarres. No member declared any conflict of interest with regard to the items on the agenda. Apologies were received from the following panel members: Patrizia Costa, Dirk Pfeiffer, Mohan Raj, Mike Sharp.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the previous 37th Plenary meeting held in Parma on the 22-23 October 2008 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by Panel members on 21 November 2008 and published on the web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

4. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES

4.1. New mandates

The Commission official explained the expected scientific opinions on animal diseases and animal welfare and the work programme for 2009/2010. For animal diseases, 4 opinions are planned: 1 for the first semester (ASF) and 3 possible further mandates during 2009 (susceptible aquatic species, AHS, BT). For animal welfare 4 possible opinions are expected in 2009 for deadline in 2010: Impact of genetic selection on broiler welfare; update of broiler welfare; animal welfare indicators; and transport of fish. So far no mandates from the Commission have been submitted yet.

5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE

5.1. General approach on fish welfare including the concept of sentience in fish

A revised draft was distributed to the Panel and members of the ad-hoc working groups on Fish welfare on the 7/11/08, comments were accepted until the deadline of 17/11/08. Panel members were invited to participate in a teleconference on the 18/11. A new version was prepared addressing the received comments and distributed to the Panel on 2/12/08. Panel members were requested to express their vote for adoption or put forward their comments. A teleconference was organized on the 5/12/2008 for discussion of comments received and amendments were introduced into a new version (underlined changes) distributed on the 6/12/08.

The scientific opinion was not discussed because relevant comments were only received on the first day of the plenary meeting. Panel members requested time for evaluating those comments and therefore the discussion was postponed for the plenary meeting in January.

5.2. Classical Swine Fever (CSF)

The draft common Scientific Report and the two opinions concerning the CSF mandate were circulated before plenary to the Panel for comments. A preparatory meeting was held on the 9 and 10 December with some Panel members. The approaches taken, the data collected and the models developed to reply to the 2 ToR of the mandate were explained by the chairman of the WG. A model concerning the surveillance of CSF in wild boar was presented, discussed and agreed to be included in the report. The data on vaccines, vaccination and hunting, were collected through a questionnaire sent to EU Member States. The common Scientific Report, after some amendments, was accepted on the 11 December. This scientific report enabled the Panel to prepare the two scientific opinions as requested by the EU Commission.

5.2.1. Safety of fresh meat from CSF vaccinated pigs (ToR2)

A simulation model was developed to assess the risk that meat from emergency vaccinated pigs contain field virus at slaughter and the effect of diagnostic procedures to decrease this risk. All details concerning the models developed will be annexed to the report. Conclusions and recommendations have been proposed and discussed by the Panel. The scientific opinion was adopted by unanimity.

5.2.2. CSF control/eradication in wild boar (ToR1)

The reply to this ToR was structured according to the different parts of the question: efficacy of the available surveillance, hunting, and vaccination measures (to control and eradicate CSF in feral pig populations); the possible use of new diagnostic tests and vaccines. The model applied to support the reply on the evaluation of the different control measures, was previously developed for a DG Research (EU FP6 project: 5015599). Another model has been developed for the surveillance of CSF in wild boar. All details concerning the models developed will be annexed to the report. The data on vaccines, vaccination and hunting, collected through a questionnaire sent to MS and extracted from the EU CSF of wild boar database, will be annexed to the report. Conclusions and recommendations have been proposed to the Panel. The scientific opinion was adopted by unanimity.

5.3. Welfare of Dairy Cows

The transversal WG meeting was held last 26-27 November. The Draft Scientific Report was reviewed and agreed by the WG. The Scientific report was submitted to the Panel for discussion and finally accepted (with exception of chapter 17 to be completed).

5.3.1. Scientific Opinion based on the four risk assessments

The draft versions of the four scientific opinions corresponding with the Risk Assessments (RAs) on: Leg and Locomotion problems; Udder problems; Reproductive and Metabolic disorders; and Behavioural problems were discussed on 26 November morning. RA scorings and draft RA conclusions for the 4 RAs will be reviewed by each WG Member in order to get the final RAs by mid- December at the latest. After that, the draft RA conclusions will be integrated with the conclusions and recommendations from the data provided in the Scientific Report in order to get the 4 Scientific Opinions and RAs by the end January.

The 4 SOs will be probably submitted to the Panel for possible adoption during the March 2009 Plenary, particularly as the Commission asked for priority to be given to the 5 SOs on Stunning

and killing of fish due in March 2009, and that there was not a problem to extend the deadline on the Dairy Cows mandate until June 2009.

5.3.2. *Scientific Opinion on overall dairy cow welfare assessment*

The Conclusions from the 4 Scientific Opinions will be integrated, with the other hazards identified at the Scientific Report, to the fifth SO on the Overall Assessment of Dairy Cows Welfare. The overall Assessment will be submitted to the Panel for possible adoption in June 09 the latest.

6. WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF THE SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS AND REPORTS

6.1. *Stunning and Killing of 8 species of Farmed Fish*

The kick-off meeting of the Salmon, Tuna and Eel WGs was held last 17 October. The kick-off meeting of the Carp WG was held last 24 November, and the Sea Bass/Bream WG 8 December. During the kick-off meetings EFSA procedures and the RA approach were explained, tasks were assigned to each WG expert and next meeting dates were fixed (2-3 meetings for each WG). Kick-off meetings of the remaining WGs were also fixed: Trout 22-23rd January; and Turbot 27 January. David Morton presented the overall approach taken in all risk assessments for the 7 scientific opinions to the panel members for discussion. The approach and the workplan were agreed by the Panel.

6.2. *Brucella suis*

The basic request for this mandate is an assessment of the risk of *Brucella suis* spreading within and between EU MS through the movement of trade in porcine animals and their germplasm, and possibly the marketing of animal products. The Opinion should also evaluate the performance of available tests for porcine Brucellosis in terms of sensitivity and specificity, to provide a basis to justify their possible inclusion in the EU legislation on intra-Community trade in pigs and their germplasm. The first meeting with all the WG members was held on the 4-5 of November and a meeting of the subgroup on risk profiling was held on the 9 December. A meeting of the subgroup on diagnostic tests is to be held on 17 December, to discuss the literature review for assessing the suitability of diagnostic tests for porcine brucellosis. Another meeting has already been scheduled for the 30 January, 2009. The chairman of the WG presented the current framework of the opinion, challenges and approach. The panel agreed on the current methodology.

6.3. *Self-mandate Animal Welfare*

The EFSA self-mandate on the development of the RA Guidelines for AW will be partly carried out through grants under Article 36. The AW issues to be considered in the Guidelines have been divided in three main categories: stunning and killing; transport; and housing and management. The draft final report of the project related to the stunning and killing aspects was submitted for comments in order to send the final report by December 2008.

The final Report of the project for the development of the transport part of the guidelines is to be finished by June 2009.

The call of proposals for the development of the Housing and Management RA Guidelines is under preparation and should be published by Jan/Feb 2009.

6.4. Document on modelling

The background and terms of reference were presented to the Panel by M. Greiner. It was agreed that they should be proposed as a self-mandate to EFSA hierarchy for possible inclusion on the Work program 2009.

6.5. Public Health significance of meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

EFSA (BIOHAZ) and EMEA have been exchanging draft reports of their respective mandates in order to identify any future problem areas. The 4th WG meeting was held on the 3 December and the next will be on the 8 January. The first reading of the opinion will be done at the BIOHAZ Plenary meeting on 10 -11 December 2008, with adoption at the plenary meeting on 21-22 January 2009.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

7.1. Fish research priorities

A meeting in Brussels was organized by DG MARE, SANCO, and RTD to discuss the proposal for research for the next EU research programme. EFSA attended and prepared a document including all the adopted recommendations of the previous scientific opinions on fish and this document will be circulated on January for discussion and possible acceptance. In addition, the published recommendation the Panel should identify other areas for future research which have not been dealt in the past and could become important.

7.2. Previous adopted opinions

The adopted opinions in September on Sea bass and gilthead sea bream welfare, Welfare of carp and the “risk of bluetongue transmission during transit” have been published on the EFSA web.

7.3. Panel renewals

The EFSA secretariat presented information about the procedures for the selection of new Panel members in 2009, as well as the final date for the current member's term, and the first meeting date for new Panel members. The first plenary meeting for the new Panel will be decided by EFSA but will be at the end of June or beginning of July

7.4. Next Plenary Meeting

Next plenary meeting will take place in Parma on **28 –29 January** (1st day from 09.00 to 18.00h and 2nd day from 8.30-15.00).

It was also informed that the dates for the plenary meeting in 2009 agreed by all panel members were: i) 28-29 January ii) 18-19 March iii) 29-30 April and the last one on iv) 3, 4, 5 June.