

## MINUTES OF THE XL PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

**18-19-20 MARCH 2009**

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

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**OBSERVERS:** Caroline Plante (OIE). Stephane de La Rocque (FAO)

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION:** Xavier Pavard; Laurence Bonafos (DG SANCO)

**EFSA AHAW Unit:** E. Franchi (administrative staff), M. Vilar, A. Afonso, F. Berthe, S. Correia, D. Candiani, F. De Massis, S. Dhollander, M. Georgiev, T. Grudnik, P. Have, O. Ribó, J. Tarres and J. Serratos (scientific coordination).

### **1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Welcome to Ingfrid Slaatto from Norway Food Safety Agency, attending her last meeting in EFSA after being seconded to the AHAW Unit. 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, Albert Osterhaus and Isabel Minguez (DG RTD) .

### **2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted.

### **3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE**

The minutes of the previous 39<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held in Parma on the 28-29 January 2009 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by Panel members on 4 March 2009 and published on the web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

## **4. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES**

### **4.1. New mandates from the Commission**

The Commission officials presented four mandates for submission to EFSA. Two opinions on animal welfare on: i) Influence of the genetic parameters on the welfare and the resistance to stress of commercial broilers and ii) The welfare aspects of the management and housing of grand parents and parent stocks raised and kept for breeding purposes. These mandates had been already discussed with AHAW panel during the last Plenary meeting. Furthermore, two opinions on animal diseases were presented: i) African Swine Fever, and ii) Epizootic Haemorrhagic Diseases.

The new mandates were discussed and the following conclusions were reached: i) for all opinions a specific meeting should be organised with the Commission to clarify the boundaries of the mandates with the relevant scientific panel members and EFSA staff; and ii) all deadlines were considered acceptable, with the exception of EHD (data collection for EHD has been launched in 2008 and which deadline is September 2009 while the mandate requests a scientific opinion by October 2009). Therefore in order to allow the Panel to examine and use data from the scientific report provided by Art 36 in October 2009, EFSA will propose to the Commission that the deadline should be postponed until December of 2009.

#### **4.2. Discussion of a possible Self-mandate on ticks as vectors of animal diseases**

The proposal for a self-mandate was presented for discussion. The previous AHAW opinion on ticks<sup>1</sup> should be taken into consideration and also the grant report<sup>2</sup> under Art.36 that included an evaluation of the distribution of arthropod vectors and their potential for transmitting exotic or emerging vector-borne animal diseases and zoonoses. It is the intention that the structure of the opinion should reflect general perspectives of tick biology whilst maintaining relevance to animal diseases and zoonoses of concern in Europe. The Commission will be consulted for the priorities and for the expectations from an AHAW self-mandate.

The panel expressed the need to focus the self mandate on ticks to specific diseases and particularly ASF to be able to reply as properly as possible to the Commission mandate. The self-mandate will be revised and sent to the Panel for comments (deadline 3 April 2009) in order to prepare the final version to be sent to EFSA for possible acceptance.

### **5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE**

A presentation was done on the general principles and approach followed by all scientific opinions on stunning and killing fish, including the Risk Assessment approach and general conclusions applying to all fish species. Some comments and amendments were made and those modifications will be applied to all fish scientific opinions (including a common glossary, some rewording of tables and editorial changes). A common glossary was agreed for all SO and species-specific words will be added as necessary to each SO. A common Risk Assessment approach was discussed and accepted by the Panel, which will be placed as an appendix to each SO. General conclusions and recommendations were also adopted and will be added to each SO.

#### **5.1. Stunning and Killing of Carp**

The last WG Meeting and transversal WG Meeting were held 19 and 20 February 2009, respectively. The draft SO was sent to the Panel March 6 for discussion and possible adoption. The draft SO was discussed and adopted by unanimity by the AHAW Panel on 20 March.

#### **5.2. Stunning and Killing of Salmon**

The Transversal WG Meeting was held 24 February 2009 and a teleconference to discuss aspects of the SO was held on 9 March. The draft SO was sent to the Panel on March 11 for discussion and possible adoption. The draft SO was discussed and adopted by unanimity by the AHAW Panel on 20 March.

#### **5.3. Stunning and Killing of Eel**

The Transversal WG Meeting was held 25 February 2009 by teleconference. The draft SO was sent to the Panel March 6 for discussion and possible adoption. The SO was discussed and adopted by unanimity by the AHAW Panel on 20 March.

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<sup>1</sup> AHAW opinion on the risk of tick introduction into UK, Republic of Ireland, and Malta as a consequence of abandoning National rules (EFSA-Q-2006-326)

<sup>2</sup> Art. 36 grant (CFP/EFSA/AHAW/2007/02) to review three specific animal diseases (African Horse Sickness, African Swine Fever and Classical Swine Fever) and to provide an evaluation of the distribution of arthropod vectors and their potential for transmitting exotic or emerging vector-borne animal diseases and zoonoses.

#### **5.4. Stunning and Killing of Trout**

The Transversal WG Meeting was held 6 March 2009 by teleconference with the attendance of Panel Members. The draft SO was sent to the Panel March 6 for discussion and possible adoption. The draft SO was discussed and adopted by unanimity by the AHAW Panel on 20 March.

#### **5.5. Stunning and Killing of Sea Bass and Sea Bream**

The Transversal WG Meeting was held 3 March 2009 by teleconference with the attendance of the nominated Panel Members. The draft SO was sent to the Panel March 9 for discussion and possible adoption. The draft SO was discussed and adopted by unanimity by the AHAW Panel on 20 March.

#### **5.6. Welfare of Dairy Cows: SO based on the RA on Udder Problems**

The conclusions and recommendations of the SO on Udder problems were discussed and accepted until Chapter 13. As done for the SO on leg and locomotion it was agreed that final adoption will be in June at the latest when the other three opinions and the final assessment will be discussed for possible adoption. The remaining SOs will be modified according to the discussions and sent again to the Panel before the end on March. The deadline for comments from the Panel Member is 20 April

#### **5.7. Welfare of Dairy Cows SO based on RA on metabolic and reproductive disorders**

Due to the lack of time this SO was not discussed.

#### **5.8. Welfare of dairy cows SO based on RA on behaviour, fear and pain**

Due to the lack of time this SO was not discussed.

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

#### **6.1. Welfare of Dairy Cows**

##### ***6.1.1. Scientific Report Chapter 17 on impact of Housing and management and diseases in dairy cows***

The Scientific Report was accepted by the Panel except Chapter 17 on disease. This chapter is being completed and will be submitted to the Panel for acceptance as soon as possible.

##### ***6.1.2. Scientific Opinion on overall dairy cow welfare assessment***

The Conclusions from the 4 SOs will be integrated with the conclusions and recommendations from the Scientific Report not linked with any other specific issue, into the fifth SO on the "Overall assessment of dairy cow welfare". The overall assessment will be submitted for possible adoption at the plenary meeting no later than June 2009 for possible adoption.

#### **6.2. Stunning and Killing of fish species**

##### ***6.2.1. Fish stunning and Killing Turbot***

A WG Meeting was held on 10-11 March 2009. Next WG Meeting will be held next 2-3 April. The Transversal WG Meeting will be held in April by teleconference with the attendance of the

Panel Members. There is the intention to submit the draft SO to the panel for discussion during the April plenary Meeting.

#### **6.2.2. Fish Stunning and Killing Tuna Fish**

The transversal WG Meeting was held on March 10 2009 by teleconference with the attendance of the Panel Members, the final meeting of the WG is planned for April 1 2009. There is the intention to submit the draft SO to the panel for discussion during the April Plenary Meeting.

#### **6.3. *Brucella suis***

The last meeting was held on 16 and 17 March 2009, to discuss the draft risk profile and to present the first results of the literature review for assessing the suitability of diagnostic tests for porcine brucellosis. The chairman of the WG presented the current status of the opinion, its challenges and approaches. The panel agreed on the current methodology.

#### **6.4. Document on modelling in Animal health**

The first meeting was held on the 27 February 2009, the background and terms of reference were discussed and clarified. The approach to reply to each ToR was discussed. It is intended by the WG to present, if possible, a preliminary document to the Panel during June's plenary.

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

EFSA (BIOHAZ) scientific opinion has been adopted on the 5 March 2009. The AHAW panel member who was invited to participate in this WG mainly focused on the transmission pathways and vectors, husbandry systems, hygiene and prevention measures, airborne transmission and the sampling of LA-MRSA. A common document with EMEA and ECDC will now be produced.

#### **6.6. 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 final report of the project related to the stunning and killing aspects was submitted last 19 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 April 2009.

### **7. MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **7.1. Previously adopted opinions**

General approach to fish welfare and to the concept of sentience in fish was published on the web.

#### **7.2. Fish research priorities**

In December 2008, a meeting in Brussels was organized by DG MARE to identify and discuss research priorities in the field of fish welfare for the next EU research programme. EFSA

attended this meeting and reported on AHAW previous opinions on the matter. EFSA prepared a working document to present the Panel's recommendations as established by the adopted scientific opinions on fish (including the 2009 SOs on stunning and killing). This document was circulated and discussed during two meetings (web-conferences) and it was agreed to draft an AHAW statement. It was also agreed to include in this statement a text concerning the current lack of knowledge on stunning and killing methods in fish. A final version was circulated for possible adoption in March, but due to the lack of time the document was not discussed and it is postponed until the April Plenary

### **7.3. Letters received by EFSA concerning previous opinions**

#### **7.3.1. Letter from VLA Weybridge on the opinion Brucellosis diagnostic methods**

EFSA received a letter from VLA Weybridge, submitting further data on the specificity on VLA cELISA and requesting an update of the opinion on the performance of Brucellosis diagnostic methods for cattle and small ruminants (EFSA-Q-2005-060)

Additional clarification about the methodology used to generate of these data was then requested from VLA in order for the AHAW Panel to assess the relevance of the new study. The reply from VLA was presented to the Panel, which recommended that EFSA should ask the Commission if they are interested in an assessment of these new data. In case of any action the Community Reference Laboratory should also be included. After the reply of the COM the Panel will reconsider if it is necessary to involve the former brucellosis WG in the assessment of the new data.

#### **7.3.2. Letter received from the National Veterinary Institute (SVA) on the Scientific Report on "Tuberculosis testing on Deer"**

EFSA received a letter from Swedish National Veterinary Institute (SVA) on the Scientific Report on "Tuberculosis testing on Deer" (EFSA-Q-2006-179). A draft reply has been prepared and distributed to the Panel for comments. After acceptance, the letter will be sent on behalf of the Panel.

### **7.4. Panel renewals update**

The first plenary meeting for the new Panel will take place in Parma the 2-3 July 2009 in Parma.

### **7.5. Risk Assessment in the Plant Health Unit**

The Panel agreed to invite the Plant Health Unit to make a presentation about the risk assessment methodology followed in the PLH Panel at the next possible plenary meeting according their availability.

### **7.6. Next Plenary Meeting**

Next plenary meeting will take place in Parma on **29-30 April** (1<sup>st</sup> day from 09.00 to 18.00h and 2<sup>nd</sup> day from 8.30-15.30) in EFSA.