

MINUTES OF THE XLII PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

3-4-5 JUNE 2009

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PARTICIPANTS

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

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Xavier Pavard (DG SANCO), Laurence Bonafos (DG SANCO)

EFSA AHAW UNIT: E. Franchi (administrative staff), 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

No member declared any conflict of interest with regard to the items on the agenda. Apologies were received from the following panel members: Ronald Roberts, Patrizia Costa, Albert Osterhaus, Laurence Bonafos (EU) and Stephane de La Rocque (FAO)

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the previous 41st Plenary meeting held in Parma on the 29-30 April 2009 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by Panel members 15 May 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 official from the Commission informed the panel that no new mandates were ready to be discussed.

5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE

5.1. Brucella suis

A last webconference with the WG was organised on the 26th of May 2009. The SO was presented during the Plenary for adoption and conclusions and recommendations were discussed by the Panel. The SO was adopted on the 5th June by unanimity and will be sent for publication on the EFSA website.

5.2. Dairy Cows: Impact of Housing and management on diseases (Ch. 17)

A teleconference was held with some Panel Members to discuss about this chapter before circulation to the panel members. The chapter was submitted and accepted during the Plenary. The relevant conclusions and recommendations will be included for possible adoption into the fifth SO on the overall opinion on dairy cows welfare (see point 5.7)

5.3. Welfare of Dairy Cows: SO based on Leg & Locomotion Problems

The conclusions and recommendations of this SO already accepted in the previous plenary meeting were submitted for possible adoption. The relevant conclusions and recommendations will be included into the fifth SO on the overall risk assessment on dairy cows welfare. The SO was adopted by unanimity and will be sent for publication on the EFSA website.

5.4. Welfare of Dairy Cows: SO based on the RA on Udder Problems

The conclusions and recommendations of this SO already accepted in the previous plenary meeting were submitted for possible adoption. The relevant conclusions and recommendations will be included into the fifth SO on the overall risk assessment on dairy cows welfare. The SO was adopted by unanimity and will be sent for publication on the EFSA website. .

5.5. Welfare of Dairy Cows SO based on RA on metabolic and reproductive problems

The conclusions and recommendations of this SO already accepted in the previous plenary meeting were submitted for possible adoption. The relevant conclusions and recommendations will be included into the fifth SO on the overall risk assessment on dairy cows welfare. The SO was adopted by unanimity and will be sent for publication on the EFSA website.

5.6. Welfare of dairy cows SO based on RA on behaviour, fear and pain

The conclusions and recommendations of this SO already accepted in the previous plenary meeting were submitted for possible adoption. The relevant conclusions and recommendations will be included into the fifth SO on the overall risk assessment on dairy cows welfare. The SO was adopted by unanimity and will be sent for publication on the EFSA website. Six Panel Members agreed a minority opinion on the use of tie stalls, which will be also included in Overall Opinion on dairy cows welfare.

5.7. Dairy Cows: Overall Opinion on Dairy Cow Welfare

The Conclusions and Recommendations from the 4 SOs based on the RAs were identified, and integrated with the other conclusions and recommendations from the Scientific Report of a general nature or not related to any of the RAs, into the “Overall assessment of dairy cow welfare”. The overall opinion was submitted for discussion and possible adoption. C&R were divided into two priority areas: high and low priority. The SO was adopted/ by unanimity and will be sent for publication on the EFSA website. The agreed minority Opinion on the use of tie stalls, from the SO on Behaviour, fear and pain (see 5.6), will be also included in the Overall Opinion on dairy cows welfare.

The panel agreed by unanimity that “in order to allow a categorization of the relevant Conclusions and Recommendations of the scientific opinions a more detailed prioritisation methodology and criteria should be developed. A number of multi-criteria decision-making methods should be established for prioritizing conclusions and recommendations considering, for instance, the existence of strong scientific evidence, frequency of exposure and severity of the consequences, etc. The goal of the prioritisation process will be to identify high, medium or low priority actions for implementation”.

5.8 Fish research priorities

In December 2008, EFSA prepared a document summarising the Panel recommendations on research needs as adopted in the Scientific Opinions on fish welfare (5 husbandry, 1 common, 7 stun and kill, 1 transport from 2003 to 2009). This document was circulated, amended, and after discussion the document was accepted by unanimity as a Panel statement (Question No EFSA-Q-2009-00627). The statement will be published in the EFSA Journal (2009) 1145.

5.9 EFSA internal scientific report on the new influenza A (H1N1)

An EFSA document providing scientific background on the recently emerged form of Influenza caused by a novel H1N1 type virus was presented and discussed. The document was jointly prepared by several EFSA units and will be kept under review. The Panel will be regularly updated as to follow up on further developments.

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

6.1. Self-mandate on modelling

The third meeting was in May 18. The guidance is being developed with focus on the glossary, types of models and procedure for developing and incorporating quantitative models in the risk assessments.

6.2. Self-mandate Animal Welfare Risk Assessment Guidelines

The final Report of the project for the development of the transport part of the guidelines was expected to be finished by June 2009, however the Institute dealing with the coordination of the project requested to postpone the deadline until November 2009. The call of proposals for the development of the Housing and Management RA Guidelines is under preparation and should be published by early June 2009.

6.3. Welfare of broilers

The requested tasks for this mandate (M-2009-0087) are to: 1) collect, assess and collate all data available (published and unpublished) on genetics/welfare of broilers (deadline: February 2010), and 2) to produce 2 scientific opinions on i) the impact of the selection of broiler breeder birds (EFSA-Q-2009-00504) and ii) on housing and management of the grand-parent and parent stocks raised and kept for breeding purposes (EFSA-Q-2009-00505). A preparatory meeting was held on the 1st of April with 3 Panel members, EFSA officers and Commission officials. Discussion also covered possible future mandate on resistance to diseases. A letter to the Commission accepting the mandate was sent on April 7th. The chairmen appointed by the panel are: D. Morton (broiler genetics) and J. Hartung (broiler breeders). The two working groups have been created and first meeting is planned from June 30th to July 2nd. A request for assistance will be sent to DATEX to organise a public call for data. This call should be out for early July with a closing date late September. A draft article 36 grant call for proposals is under preparation for launching in June. The grant recipient will assess the data collected to prepare systematic review by the working groups. Deadline for the delivery of grant outcomes is end of January 2010. Deadline for mandate: June 2010.

6.4. Epizootic Haemorrhagic disease

A kick off meeting for the discussion of the TOR is scheduled for the 10/6/09 in Brussels. The chairman has participated in the meeting to discuss the intermediate report presented by the contractor of Art 36 call for EHD. The OIE has nominated an observer for the WG. A list of experts in this field have been invited to submit their CV and DOI. The first WG meeting is planned for the end of June.

6.5. African Swine Fever

A kick-off meeting was organised on 8 May 2009 in Brussels. The ToRs of the mandate were clarified and the strategies to respond to the mandate were discussed.

6.6. Self-mandate on ticks as vectors of animal diseases

The proposal for a self-mandate for AHAW to review the geographical distribution of ticks which have proven involvement in the transmission of animal diseases and zoonosis in Eurasia and to provide a detailed update on the role of the tick vectors in the epidemiology of African Swine Fever (ASF) and Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) in Eurasia was accepted by the Executive Director. In the reply the ED asked to split in two questions/outputs.

The review on the role of ticks in the transmission of ASF in Eurasia will be complementary to the reports already provided by the Art. 36 project (CFP/AHAW/2007/02) and the mandate for AHAW on African Swine Fever (EFSA-Q-2009-00506).

7. MISCELLANEOUS

7.1. Opinions adopted in the web

The five scientific opinion on fish Stunning and killing (tuna and turbot) have been published in the EFSA web.

7.2. Presentation of Expert survey, panel renewal and INEX

Riitta Maijala (Director of Risk assessment) presented the more relevant figures of the Expert survey, the process and details of the panel renewal in EFSA and the Internal and external audit processes engaged in EFSA.

7.3. Explanation of the results of the Questionnaire on the use of extranet

EFSA presented the results of the questionnaire launched to the panel members on the use of extranet. Feedback was very high and summarizing an overall impression is the strong need for more support on an efficient use of the tool. A clearer structure should increase user friendliness and accelerate access to the relevant documents. Remarkably is an additional outcome of this survey: several comments about the need for DoI instructions have been expressed. AHAW will summarize a detailed report and place it in the plenaries extranet workspace.

7.4. Update of the activities of the Advisory Forum on Animal Health

A second meeting of the Advisory Forum representatives on Animal Health took place in Vilnius on 12 May 2009, kindly hosted by the Lithuanian State Food and Veterinary Service. The aim of this meeting was to further enhance exchange of information between EFSA and the Member States in the specific areas of Animal Health and Welfare and therefore strength cooperation. EFSA presented the current tools and projects developed by the Scientific Cooperation and Assistance, relevant for this network on animal health. EFSA also updated the experts on the last year's activities and opinions published by the Animal Health and Welfare panel (AHAW). A Report, containing the results from a questionnaire sent last year to MS, describing the organisation approach and risk assessment procedures applied in Member States in the area of Animal Health and Welfare will be shortly published. The past and future cooperation between EFSA and Member States on animal diseases and welfare was also discussed.

7.5. News on the new Panel 2009-2012

Details on the new panel members and agenda of the inaugural meeting were given to the Panel members by EFSA secretariat.