



Brussels, 8th July 2004

**MINUTES OF THE 8th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS
Held in Brussels on 7th and 8th of July 2004**

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Official requests to EFSA.
- a. Presentation of new mandates received from the Commission
 - i. Request for advice on general approach of the CRL study (BSsurvE study) Wilesmith Model (EFSA-Q-2004-083). Deadline three months after submission of data.
 - ii. Evaluation of proposal for a different processing method for the production of collagen (EFSA-Q-2004-085). Deadline February 2005.
- b. Organization of Working Groups
5. Progress reports and discussion on the following mandates:
 - a. Antimicrobials to control *Salmonella*
 - b. Vaccines to control *Salmonella*
 - c. *Campylobacter* in animals and foodstuffs
 - d. Microbiological risks in infant foods
 - e. *Bacillus* in foodstuffs
 - f. *Clostridium* in foodstuffs
 - g. Revision of meat inspection for beef
 - h. Risk assessment of *C. bovis*
 - i. Risk assessment of *Trichinella*
 - j. Freezing of cold tolerant strains of *Trichinella* and *C. bovis*
 - k. Stunning of cattle and the risk of BSE
 - l. Quantitative Risk Assessment for residual BSE risk
 - m. Animal By-products
 - i. Safety of vis-à-vis biological risk of biogas and compost treatment standards of ABP.
6. Feed-back by the Chairman on subjects discussed in the SC of interest to the Panel
7. Collaboration with DG RTD
8. Risk Assessment-Risk Management Interface Report
9. Emerging Risks: hazards/risks for consideration
10. Discussion on self tasking issues
11. Dates for plenary meetings in 2005
12. AOB
13. Closure of the meeting

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PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Herbert Budka, Sava Buncic, Pierre Colin, John D. Collins, Christian Ducrot, James Hope, Günter Klein, Hilde Kruse, Ernst Lücker, Simone Magnino, Riitta Liisa Maijala, Antonio Martínez López, Christophe Nguyen-The, Birgit Noerrung, Servé Notermans, George-John Nychas, Maurice Pensaert, Terence Roberts Ivar Vågsholm, Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch

Apologies

Mac Johnston OBE

EFSA

Marta Hugas, Bart Goossens, Shamila Nair, Pia Mäkelä, (Scientific Staff)
Angela Cohen (Administrative staff)

Commission

DG Health and Consumer Protection: J-C Cavitte, S. Idei, K. Van Dyck (7th July), Maija Hatakka (8th July)
DG RTD Jeremy Bray: (8th July)

1. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everybody.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were sent by Prof M Johnston who on this day was being awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) in recognition of his work on food safety.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

By agreement, a discussion on Declarations of Interest of Panel members was added. Also, a new item was added to the agenda relating to feedback from BIOHAZ members in other working groups (WG) (please see item 6.2). The amended agenda was then adopted. The Panel noted the adoption of the minutes of the previous plenary meeting by written procedure. There were no further Expressions of Interest.

4. OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA

Three new requests were received from DG Sanco (2) and the French Permanent Representation to the European Union (1).

4.1. Request for advice on general approach of the CRL study (BSsurvE study) (project leader Prof. John Wilesmith)), Wilesmith Model (EFSA-Q-2004-083). Deadline three months after submission of data.

COM is asking for 'advice' on a methodology and therefore this question will be dealt with by a separate WG which will be composed as soon as possible. A first meeting will be organized in week 37 i.e. 6-10 September. COM is requesting an answer at the latest by the end of October which will be respected as far as possible.

4.2. Evaluation of proposal for a different processing method for the production of collagen (EFSA-Q-2004-085). Deadline February 2005.

This subject was discussed and in general it was felt that this might be the first in a series of many applications from industry in which companies seek approval of different processes. The panel members expressed concern that such applications for approval of processes should be considered as being outside the scope of the panel and that another option, such as the proposed Scientific Expert Services (SES) in EFSA, might be more appropriate. This might be a better way of dealing with this and other proposals from industry and would allow the panel more time to consider other issues of concern. However, as this issue is related to food safety, it was agreed that, until such support services are in place, this mandate will be dealt with by the Panel. A working group will be composed and a suggested date for a first meeting will be in week 39 i.e. 20-24 September 2004. It is planned to reply to the mandate within the given deadline.

4.3. Question received from the French Permanent Representation to the European Commission (EFSA-Q-2004-093). Letter RE 1799 – TO3EZ141/TMVB (29-06-2004).

This is the first EFSA question to come from a Member State. In their letter the French authorities asked EFSA to give an opinion on the risk for consumers contained in bovine products originating from Portugal. It specifically refers to the AFSSA opinion of 10 November 2003 entitled: "The comparative evaluation of the health risk connected with consumption of Portuguese beef and bovine products, eligible for the DBES, and French beef and bovine products". The AFSSA opinion concludes that the risk from consumption of Portuguese products is higher when compared to the risk of consuming the same products of French origin and it therefore suggests not lifting the restrictive measures as currently in place. It was noted that the data used for the AFSSA November 2003 opinion were data as available during the testing of 2002 whereas more recent data are now available, i.e. for 2003 and first part of 2004 (June 04). Therefore, it was considered valid, in reviewing the AFSSA opinion and replying to this mandate, to also take into account the more recent data and information. It was further agreed that EFSA, in its reply to the French Perm. Rep., will ask for some additional clarifications on this question and its underlying background. Also COM will be contacted in order to receive an update of the available data and information on the BSE situation in Portugal and the accompanying measures. It is anticipated that an expert WG will be formed to review the AFSSA opinion and all new information on the subject. A first meeting will be organized in August 2004 in order to allow the draft opinion to be discussed at the plenary meeting of the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards in September 2004.

5. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING MANDATES

5.1. Antimicrobials to control *Salmonella*

Chapter 1 in the new draft opinion provides a common background for both opinions (5.1. and 5.2) as agreed previously at the 7th plenary. The different chapters of the draft document were discussed addressing the Terms of Reference (ToR). Discussion revolved around the evidence for horizontal transfer of resistance genes and the medical use of antibiotics as a source of resistance. The working group will take account of the ToR, when finalising the conclusions and recommendations. The breeding of poultry and turkeys are to be considered when addressing the conclusions.

5.2. Vaccines to control *Salmonella*

The Chairman of the working group presented the draft document. Discussion centred on the stability of new vaccines, the terminology used to describe vaccines (killed, live, attenuated and inactivated), and the possible conclusions to address the ToR.

Both opinions 5.1 and 5.2 will be submitted for possible adoption in the next BIOHAZ Plenary to be held on 8th and 9th of September.

5.3. *Campylobacter* in animals and foodstuffs

This working group will have their third meeting on the 9th July. The Chair of the working group discussed the progress made on the draft document. The draft opinion comprises chapters on the causative agent, the food categories that pose a significant risk and the different control options for each specific food category. The WG will focus on the importance of poultry as a major source of sporadic cases. Due to the plasticity of the genome of *Campylobacter*, the difficulties of linking human diseases to the source were highlighted. A new draft will be presented to the plenary in October for information and discussion.

5.4. Microbiological risks in infant foods

The Chairman of the working group briefed the panel on the progress made and presented the draft document. The panel discussed the outline of the document which will now be revised. It was agreed to forward the draft opinion, when ready, to the Nutrition Panel for comments and suggestions. The draft opinion will be presented for discussion and possible adoption at the next Plenary in September.

5.5. *Bacillus* in foodstuffs

The Chairman of the working group briefed the panel on the draft document and outlined the different chapters addressing the ToR. Outbreaks caused by *Bacillus cereus*, numbers in foods at risk, and the reservoirs were discussed as part of the draft document. Discussion addressed the potential of certain strains of *B. cereus* to cause disease. A draft opinion for information and discussion will be presented at the October plenary.

5.6. *Clostridium* in foodstuffs

The Chairman of the working group briefed the panel on the progress made with the draft document. The hazards presented by different species in the food chain were discussed. It appeared that challenge testing could be an option for different types of food. A draft for consideration will be presented to the October plenary.

5.7. Revision of meat inspection for beef

No meetings had been scheduled since the last plenary meeting. The next meeting will be held in August.

5.8. Inspection of slaughter animals in areas with low prevalence of *C. bovis* in veal calves

No meetings had been scheduled since the last plenary meeting. The next meeting will be held in September. Questions 5.7 and 5.8 are being handled by the same Working group.

5.9. Inspection of slaughter animals in areas with low prevalence of *Trichinella* in pigs

The Chairman of the working group presented the progress made after the first meeting. Two working group meetings have been scheduled for October and December in order to advance the draft document. It is intended to present a first draft at the plenary in January, 2005.

5.10. Freezing of cold tolerant strains of *Trichinella* and *C. bovis*

The Chairman of the working group briefed the panel on the first meeting of this WG. The contributions are being compiled into a draft document and a preliminary draft will be presented at the September plenary for discussion and possible adoption.

5.11. Stunning of cattle and the risk of BSE

The Chairman of the WG gave an update on the on-going work. Two meetings on this mandate were held so far i.e. 5 May and 14 June. He briefly presented the mandate and illustrated the intended structure of the report. The next WG meeting is scheduled for 13 September. A first draft will be presented to the plenary meeting in October 2004 (20-21).

5.12. Quantitative Risk Assessment for residual BSE risk

The Chairman of the WG gave an overview of the work on this mandate so far. An earlier meeting was held on 12 February and the next meeting is scheduled for the day following this plenary i.e. 9 July. DNV is to give a presentation on the calculations as carried out based on the assumptions as contained in the 'Dormont report'. These were discussed and agreed upon during the plenary meeting of April 2004.

The dates for future meetings during which work on the mandate and related opinions will be initiated, are scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday 13 October 2004
- Monday and Tuesday 29 and 30 November 2004

5.13. Animal By-products

The next meeting of this WG is scheduled for 16 August. The mandate on biogas and compost treatment standards will be discussed. A first draft is to be presented at the plenary in October 2004, if available.

6. FEED-BACK BY THE CHAIRMAN ON SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN THE SC OF INTEREST TO THE PANEL

6.1. Feedback from the SC

The Chairman reported that while no further meeting of the Scientific Committee had been held since the last plenary, that committee's working party on emerging risks had requested each panel to submit examples of issues that should be regarded as emerging risks, for consideration.

6.2. Feedback from panel members attending working groups of other panels

Panel members involved in working groups of other panels briefed the BIOHAZ panel on the different questions being addressed.

The panel member enrolled in the Animal Health and Animal Welfare (AHAW) working group on Laying Hens presented the current draft report for information and discussion. The panel agreed that the last bullet point of the mandate on the safety of eggs could either be linked to the BIOHAZ panel as adopting an opinion on the microbiological safety of the eggs produced from different rearing systems of laying hens or could be a matter for the Scientific Committee (SC) since the question is within the scope of three panels.

Feedback was provided by a panel member involved in two working groups – Avian Influenza and Rift Valley Fever (meeting scheduled for 16th August) of the AHAW Panel.

The member of the panel assisting the Exposure Assessment Working Group briefed the panel on a document being prepared on "Uncertainty as a Factor in Risk Assessment". This working group will now include an expert on body weight which is an issue that is to be considered as an uncertainty factor. The definitions of uncertainty and variability were discussed.

7. COLLABORATION WITH DG RTD

A representative from DG Research (RTD) (European Commission), presented projects funded by DG RTD with respect to food safety issues related to TSE's. The panel welcomed this interaction with DG RTD and looked forward to future consultations on current and proposed projects. A broader discussion on interaction between the BioHaz and RTD will be discussed at the September plenary.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT-RISK MANAGEMENT INTERFACE REPORT

A survey report form was distributed by the secretariat to the panel members together with the request to provide feed-back for the Scientific Committee before the 1st of September, 2004.

9. EMERGING RISKS: HAZARDS/RISKS FOR CONSIDERATION

Several potential subjects were discussed in terms of emerging risks or hazards for consideration. Among those for consideration were: Antibiotic resistance in the background of global trade, noroviruses and other viruses, Hepatitis E which has recently been linked to the consumption of boar and deer meat; and new technologies for food processing that could influence food safety and mode of consumption of food. A list of subjects based on the panel's discussions is to be forwarded to the Scientific Committee in the following week.

10. DISCUSSION ON SELF TASKING ISSUES

This item was deferred for discussion at the next plenary.

11. DATES FOR PLENARY MEETINGS IN 2005

Dates for plenary meetings in 2005 were discussed and potential locations were suggested by different panel members.

12. AOB

The panel agreed to consider the interface between the zoonoses reporting unit at EFSA and the newly established European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in Stockholm so as to address any implications that may arise regarding the nature and quality of the data available for assessment by the panel.

13. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The meeting was closed at 15.45.