



Brussels, March 2005

MINUTES OF THE 13th PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Held in Brussels on 9th and 10th March 2005

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies and declaration of interests
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Self tasking issues: Discussion on the BIOHAZ/guidance document on setting microbiological criteria and other food safety objectives
5. Official requests to EFSA
 - 5.1 Presentation of new mandates received from the Commission
 - 5.2 Organization of Working Groups
6. Discussion and possible adoption of opinions
 - 6.1 *Clostridium* in foodstuffs
 - 6.2 Risk assessment of *C. bovis*
 - 6.3 Risk Assessment of *Trichinella*
 - 6.4 Safety vis-à-vis biological risk of biogas and compost treatment standards of Animal by Products (ABP).
 - 6.5 Safety vis-à-vis biological risk of heat treatment of manure.
 - 6.6 Quantitative Risk Assessment for residual BSE risk in bovine derived products. Draft opinion on safety of tallow.
7. Progress reports and discussion on the following mandates:
 - 7.1 Washing of table eggs
 - 7.2 The risk of feeding farmed animals with ready-to-use milk-based products and milk-derived products
 - 7.3 Quantitative Risk Assessment for residual BSE risk. Progress reports on Gelatine, MBM, Vertebral Column, DCP, TCP.
 - 7.4 Quantitative assessment of risk posed to humans by tissues of small ruminants in case BSE is present in these animal populations.
 - 7.5 Assessment of age limit for the removal of certain Specified Risk Material (SRM) in cattle.
8. Recommendations for further research to DG RTD after BIOHAZ opinions.
9. Feed-back by the Chairman on subjects discussed in the SC of interest to the Panel
10. Feed-back by the Panel members attending WG from other Panels
11. AOB
12. Closure of the meeting

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

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

EFSA

Marta Hugas, Bart Goossens, Lucia Pena Alberdi, Dider Verloo and Shamila Nair (Scientific Staff); Angela Cohen (Administrative staff)

Commission

DG Health and Consumer Protection: Taina Sateri, Maija Hatakka, Jean Charles Cavitte (10th March), Koen Van Dyck (9th March).

Observer

Eirini Tsigarida

1. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everybody.

2. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following apologies were received:

Birgit Noerrung, Mac Johnston (9th and 10th), Christian Ducrot (10th), Hilde Kruse (10th), Simone Magnino (10th)

No additional declaration of interests were received.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

4. SELF-TASKING ISSUES

A draft background and terms of Reference on a self-tasking issue: “Microbiological criteria, testing and other objectives” was tabled for adoption. Following discussion several amendments were made and the draft was then adopted. The document will be submitted to the Executive Director for his agreement to establish a Working Group.

5. OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA.

5.1. UK APPLICATION ON MODERATE RISK IN TERMS OF BSE

The BIOHAZ Panel received a follow up on a previous mandate from the COM related to the UK application on moderate risk in terms of BSE. Following this earlier request, on 21 April 2004 the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards concluded that the modelling methodology used to calculate the absolute incidence is statistically sound and that the whole UK cattle population could be considered as OIE moderate BSE risk from a date intermediate between July and December 2004 (EFSA Journal 2004, 55).

This current mandate included updated results of surveillance data as compiled by the UK, supporting their earlier application for moderate risk status in terms of BSE. The data were distributed to the members of the WG that dealt with this question initially and their comments were presented at the Biohaz plenary. The experts considered the comments and the data as provided and concluded that these data confirm the conclusions of the EFSA opinion of April 2004. The experts of the BioHaz Panel confirmed that according to the OIE classification the UK can be considered as a country with a moderate risk status in terms of BSE for its whole cattle population. A statement was then prepared and published on the EFSA web. http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/biohaz/biohaz_documents/catindex_en.html

5.2. REQUEST FOR A SCIENTIFIC OPINION ON THE MAIN SYSTEMS OF STUNNING AND KILLING COMMERCIALY FARMED SPECIES OF DEER, GOATS, RABBITS, OSTRICHES, DUCKS, GEESE AND QUAIL

The above request is being dealt with primarily by the AHAW Panel. The BIOHAZ Panel is asked to answer a specific question in the Terms of Reference about the impact of the stunning/killing methods on the microbiological food safety of the carcass.

The Panel discussed the issue and it was agreed to postpone the establishment of a WG until the methodology is identified by the AHAW Panel. The BIOHAZ Panel will then comment on the public health aspects.

5.3. REQUEST FOR AN OPINION ON RISK MITIGATION, OPTIONS OF *SALMONELLA* IN PIG PRODUCTION

An officer from DG SANCO explained the mandate which was then discussed in the plenary. Sources of scientific information and reports from several member states were identified that could be useful in answering part of the Terms of Reference (ToR). Some clarifications were requested for the mandate; the secretariat will address a letter to the European Commission asking for amendments on the ToR agreed during the plenary.

An “ad hoc” working group will be established comprising members of the BIOHAZ panel, the AHAW Panel and external experts. The first meeting of the WG will be held in May in Parma. The “core” group of members of the BIOHAZ will have a preparatory meeting during its plenary in April in Valencia.

5.4. REQUEST FOR A RISK ASSESSMENT OF A REDUCED INSPECTION SYSTEM FOR PIGS SLAUGHTERED IN AREAS WITH A VERY LOW PREVALENCE OF *TRICHINELLA*

The plenary discussed the mandate received. This is to be considered as a follow-up of a previous mandate (EFSA-Q-2004-017). An *ad-hoc* WG will be established composed by members of the BIOHAZ Panel, a member of the AHAW Panel and external experts. The first meeting will take place in Brussels on the 21st of April.

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF OPINIONS

6.1. *CLOSTRIDIUM* IN FOODSTUFFS

The Rapporteur presented the amended draft document. During the Plenary, modifications were made to the style and text of the conclusions. The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

6.2. RISK ASSESSMENT OF A SIMPLIFIED MEAT INSPECTION FOR THE PRESENCE OF *CYSTICERCUS* CYSTS IN VEAL CALVES KEPT UNDER SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS

The opinion had been adopted during the last BIOHAZ plenary in January but adoption of the summary had been deferred to his plenary. The amended summary was introduced, discussed and adopted following some minor editorial comments.

6.3. RISK ASSESSMENT OF A REVISED INSPECTION OF SLAUGHTER ANIMALS IN AREAS WITH LOW PREVALENCE OF *TRICHINELLA*

The chair/Rapporteur presented the draft opinion to the Panel. The Panel members suggested editorial and structural changes to the body of the text. These will be incorporated into the revised version and circulated prior to official adoption of the document. The opinion was adopted subjected to these amendments.

6.4. SAFETY VIS-À-VIS BIOLOGICAL RISK OF BIOGAS AND COMPOST TREATMENT STANDARDS OF ANIMAL BY PRODUCTS (ABP)

The draft opinion and report were presented by the Scientific Coordinator. The documents were discussed and remarks of the experts were noted. The documents were referred back to the Working Group, where the comments from experts will be further discussed. In addition, it was mentioned that the European Commission will send an official letter extending the mandate and will also search for additional up-to-date information which could also be taken into account for future work. The next WG meeting is foreseen for 13 May.

6.5. SAFETY VIS-À-VIS BIOLOGICAL RISK OF HEAT TREATMENT OF MANURE.

The draft opinion was presented by the rapporteur of the Working Group. The documents were discussed and remarks of the experts were noted. The documents were referred back to the WG where the comments from experts will be further discussed. In addition, it was mentioned that the European Commission will send an official letter extending the mandate and will also seek additional up-to-date information and further data from Member States, which could also be taken into account. The next WG meeting is foreseen for 13 May.

6.6. QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT FOR RESIDUAL BSE RISK IN BOVINE DERIVED PRODUCTS. DRAFT OPINION ON SAFETY OF TALLOW.

Following presentation of a progress report, further discussion on this item was deferred to the next plenary.

7. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING MANDATES:

7.1. WASHING OF TABLE EGGS

The last meeting of the working group took place at the beginning of March. The chair/rapporteur presented the progress made so far in the draft opinion. The plenary asked for a clearer introduction, focusing on “table eggs” in order to be consistent with the mandate received. The next meeting of the WG is scheduled for the 19th of April in Brussels.

7.2. THE RISK OF FEEDING FARMED ANIMALS WITH READY-TO-USE MILK-BASED PRODUCTS AND MILK-DERIVED PRODUCTS

Following the last Plenary, an informal meeting with the officials of the European Commission and EFSA had been scheduled to clarify the mandate and the concerns of the mandate on Animal Health and Public Health. The secretariat explained to the Panel that the mandate has been split in two main areas; the BIOHAZ Panel is now asked to address the part of the mandate dealing with Animal By-Products: dairy milk products that could have an impact on Public Health. An “ad-hoc” WG will be established with BIOHAZ members, a member of the FEEDAP Panel and external experts. The first meeting will take place in Valencia on the 29th of April.

7.3. QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT FOR RESIDUAL BSE RISK. PROGRESS REPORTS ON GELATINE, MBM, VERTEBRAL COLUMN, DCP, TCP.

The chairman of the Working Group informed the Panel that the last meeting had been held on 1-2 March and that good progress had been made on the documents. For the QRA on Tallow, the document is still circulating for comments by the members of the WG and it is anticipated that a draft will be presented at the next plenary. A further document and a letter from the feed industry were tabled and

discussed in the light of the cross-contamination of feeding stuffs with MBM and its relation with the feed ban for MBM in feed for food animals currently in place. In addition to this letter, information was provided from other sources including an oral question of a Member of the Parliament on the zero-tolerance and detection methods. This information will be discussed further at the next meeting of the QRA WG on 18 April.

7.4. QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF RISK POSED TO HUMANS BY TISSUES OF SMALL RUMINANTS IN CASE BSE IS PRESENT IN THESE ANIMAL POPULATIONS.

The chairman of the WG briefed the other members of the Panel on the discussion held during the last meeting of the BSE-Goat WG on 8 March 2005. Feed-back was provided on the actions taken since the last meeting (11 January 2005) in order to collect more data which would allow the WG to carry out a Quantitative Risk Assessment related to the safety of goat meat and goat meat products. The outcome of this consultation was rather limited apart from the fact that it may be anticipated that more epidemiological data will become available in the next six months when the results of the initiated increased testing (EC Regulation 36/2005) and the three step testing scheme (EC regulation 214/2005) become available. It is expected that no additional pathogenicity data will become available in the next six months to support a QRA. As an intermediate conclusion it was stated that for the moment it is not possible for the WG to carry out a Quantitative Risk Assessment. At this stage, guidelines could be issued which could then be used to make an estimate of a QRA in goats using data available for sheep. However there will still be major limitations since this estimate could only be based on an analogy to sheep and not on goat-based data. The next meeting is foreseen on 12 May 2005.

7.5. ASSESSMENT OF AGE LIMIT FOR THE REMOVAL OF CERTAIN SPECIFIED RISK MATERIAL (SRM) IN CATTLE.

The chairman of the WG briefed the Panel members on the outcome of the last meeting held on 4th of February 2005. A draft has been prepared and contains a part based on the data available from experimental infection and pathogenicity studies and on a second part on epidemiological data. Currently a written consultation period is on-going between the members of the Working Group and a draft report will be prepared and presented to the next Plenary meeting on 27-28 April 2005.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH TO DG RTD AFTER BIOHAZ OPINIONS

The secretariat tabled additional main recommendations for further research identified in the opinions adopted in the last plenary. Those recommendations will be sent to DG research for their consideration for inclusion in future calls for framework programmes.

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

The chair briefed the Panel with the items discussed at the last Scientific Committee meeting held in Brussels on 28th of February - 1st March.

(http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/sc_commitee/sc_meetings/catindex_en.html)

10. FEED-BACK BY THE PANEL MEMBERS ATTENDING WG FROM OTHER PANELS

Several Panel members attending WGs of other Scientific Panels and the Scientific Committee briefed the panel on the progress status of the questions.

11. AOB

The timetable for the next plenary meeting to be held in Valencia on 27-28 of April was discussed. Information on the venue, transport and hotels was given.

12. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The meeting was closed at 15.00