

MINUTES OF THE 42ND PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS HELD IN PARMA ON 9-10 SEPTEMBER 2008

AGENDA:

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 - 5.3 Technical guide for the scientific data collection on antimicrobial resistance within the frame work of the use of amts for the decontamination of poultry carcasses
 - 5.4 Use and mode of action of bacteriophages in food production
 - 5.5 *Campylobacter* in broiler meat production
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PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Olivier Andreoletti, Herbert Budka, Sava Buncic, Pierre Colin, John D Collins, Aline De Koeijer, John Griffin, Arie Havelaar, James Hope, Günter Klein, Simone Magnino, Antonio Martínez López, Karsten Noeckler, Christophe Nguyen-The, Miguel Prieto Maradona, Terence Roberts, Ivar Vågsholm and Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch.

EFSA:

Marta Hugas, Fulvio Barizzzone, Ernesto Liebana Criado, Michaela Hempen, Tobin Robinson, Pietro Stella, Eirini Tsigarida, Luis Vivas-Alegre, Per Bergman (item 4.4), Bianca Bottoni (Administrative staff).

European Commission (EC):

DG Health and Consumer Protection: Sabine Osaer.

1. OPENING, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Birgit Noerrung, James McLauchlin and Hilde Kruse.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations of interest.

4. NEW REQUESTS TO EFSA/BIOHAZ

4.1. FOOD IRRADIATION

The Commission requested a scientific opinion on the safety of food irradiation. Since the safety of food irradiation is linked to the efficacy of process, both CEF¹ and BIOHAZ Panels will provide scientific opinions on the chemical safety and on the microbial safety (efficacy) of food irradiation respectively. The EFSA opinions will take into account the relevant literature which has been published after the latest opinion on irradiation for the Scientific Committee on Food. BIOHAZ Secretariat has already produced a draft document on the latest developments on food irradiation while part of literature review will be also outsourced. The opinions will be

¹ Panel on food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings and processing aids

coordinated in terms of timing and cross-referencing. The deadline is 31 December 2009. A WG of BIOHAZ Panel will be created.

4.2. REQUEST FOR A SCIENTIFIC OPINION ON CETYLPYRIDINIUM CHLORIDE (CPC) AS A PRODUCT USED FOR THE PRESERVATION OF RAW POULTRY CARCASSES

The BfR² requested a scientific opinion on Cetylpyridinium Chloride (CPC) as a product used for the preservation of raw poultry carcasses. Currently, BIOHAZ Panel is working on the development of a technical guide on the efficacy and antimicrobial resistance aspects of substances intended to be used to decontaminate carcasses (see item 5.3). After having adopted this guide, EFSA will be in position to assess CPC. Therefore it will be necessary to ensure that the dossier/application contains all the necessary information and data according to the updated guideline. It is noted that there are certain implications when using the term preservation of raw poultry carcasses which are different to those of decontamination.

4.3. REQUEST TO ASSESS EQUIVALENCE OF AUSTRALIAN MONITORING PROGRAMME (ART. 31)

The Commission requested EFSA for a technical assistance (Art. 31 of Reg. 178/2002³) on comparison of the Australian monitoring programme for carcasses and the requirements in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005⁴. The Panel was informed that a WG will be established under the BIOHAZ Unit with the cooperation of the Assessment Methodology Unit.

4.4. MANDATE OF A CONSOLIDATED OPINION ON USE OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANT MARKER GENES (ARM) USED AS MARKER GENES IN GENETICALLY MODIFIED PLANTS

On May 21, 2008 the European Commission (EC) requested EFSA to prepare a consolidated opinion taking into account the previous Opinion of the GMO⁵ Panel on the use of antibiotic resistance genes as marker genes in genetically modified plants⁶ and the statement of the GMO Panel on the safe use of the *nptII* antibiotic resistance marker gene in genetically modified plants⁷. BIOHAZ panel members will be appointed to the WG of GMO Panel and the opinion will be co-adopted by both GMO and BIOHAZ Panels.

² BfR - Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (German Risk Assessment group)

³ OJ L31 1.2.2008, p. 1-24

⁴ OJ L338, 22.12.2005, p.1-26

⁵ Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms

⁶ http://www.efsa.eu.int/cs/BlobServer/Scientific_Opinion/opinion_gmo_05_en1.pdf?ssbinary=true

⁷ http://www.efsa.eu.int/cs/BlobServer/Statement/gmo_statement_nptII_.pdf?ssbinary=true

5. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING MANDATES

5.1. FOLLOW-UP OF THE QPS⁸ APPROACH FOR ASSESSING THE SAFETY OF MICROORGANISMS INTENTIONALLY ADDED TO THE FOOD CHAIN

The next meeting will be on 26 September. At the last working group meeting, following the decision to exclude a working group member due to a potential conflict of interests, the experts expressed their concern regarding the lack of clarity as to how the declarations of interest are judged, and what activities are considered to constitute a conflict.

5.2. EXAMINATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS FOR TSE TEST SUITABLE TO ENTER INTO A FORMAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME

The first meeting of the WG was held on 28-29 August. The dossiers provided by the applicants were assessed by the experts according to the requirements of the Commission Call for expression of interest 2007/S204-247339.

5.3. TECHNICAL GUIDE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC DATA COLLECTION ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE USE OF AMTs⁹ FOR THE DECONTAMINATION OF POULTRY CARCASSES

The WG will meet on 23 September.

5.4. USE AND MODE OF ACTION OF BACTERIOPHAGES IN FOOD PRODUCTION

The BIOHAZ Secretariat presented a draft report on the mode of action of bacteriophages. A WG was established which will consider this report and further develop it in accordance with the terms of reference.

5.5. CAMPYLOBACTER IN BROILER MEAT PRODUCTION

A preliminary meeting will be held following the plenary meeting with the Chair of the BIOHAZ Panel and the Chair of the WG to discuss the terms of reference and to identify the nature for the expertise needed.

5.6. PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE OF METICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)

The next meeting of the WG is scheduled in October. The Secretariat informed the Panel members that EMEA¹⁰ has also launched an initiative to assess the risk of MRSA. The Commission suggested that EFSA, EMEA and ECDC provide a joint

⁸ Qualified Presumption of Safety

⁹ Antimicrobial treatments

¹⁰ European Medicines Agency

position report after the adoption of their opinions. EFSA welcomed this suggestion which has the support of the BIOHAZ Panel.

5.7. QUANTITATIVE ESTIMATION OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT OF SETTING A NEW TARGET FOR THE REDUCTION OF *SALMONELLA* IN CERTAIN POULTRY PRODUCTIONS: BREEDING HENS, LAYING HENS AND BROILERS

The first meeting of the WG will be on 7 October.

5.8. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON THE LINK BETWEEN *SALMONELLA* CRITERIA AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE POULTRY PRODUCTION CHAIN

The first meeting of the WG will be held on 3 October.

5.9. TSE INFECTIVITY IN MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS FROM SMALL RUMINANTS

The Chair of the WG on TSE infectivity in milk and milk products from small ruminants presented the draft opinion. The draft text, conclusions and recommendations were considered by the Panel. The opinion will be tabled for possible adoption in October.

5.10. SPECIAL MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK FOR CONSUMERS THROUGH *SALMONELLA* IN TABLE EGGS – E.G. COOLING OF TABLE EGGS

The next meeting is scheduled on 24 September.

5.11. QMRA ON *SALMONELLA* IN SLAUGHTER AND BREEDING PIGS

The next meeting will be held on 15-16 October. A list of the most relevant and practical intervention strategies was developed.

5.12. FOOD SAFETY ASPECTS FROM THE WELFARE OF DAIRY COWS

The risk factors for animal welfare will be identified by the AHAW Panel and then the WG from the BIOHAZ Panel will assess their relevance from a food safety perspective. A draft document on the food safety aspects from welfare of dairy cows will be presented at the next BIOHAZ Plenary meeting.

5.13. FOOD SAFETY ASPECTS FROM THE WELFARE OF FARMED FISH

The Animal Health and Welfare Panel (AHAW) is addressing the animal welfare aspects of aquaculture production systems for atlantic salmon¹¹, gilthead sea bream/sea bass, rainbow trout, carp and European eel into five separate scientific opinions. The BIOHAZ opinion will focus on the food safety relevance of pre-harvest factors relating to the welfare of the above fish species, incorporating all husbandry aspects identified by the adopted opinions of AHAW Panel. The opinions on carp and European eel will probably be adopted in October by the AHAW Panel. BIOHAZ will produce a consolidated opinion on food safety aspects in relation to these fish species which is expected to be adopted in December.

6. FEED BACK FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND FROM OTHER WGS

The 31st Plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee was held on 15-16 July¹².

6.1. RISK BENEFIT ANALYSIS

There had been no update to report.

7. STANDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA:

7.1. FOOD SAFETY ISSUES OF AVIAN INFLUENZA

There had been no recent indications of food safety concerns. The current research activities in the field of Avian Influenza funded at EU level, which could have a direct or indirect relationship, were presented. Currently, there is no evidence of newly funded projects in the context of the 7th EU Research Framework Programme on AI with a potential direct or indirect relationship with food safety. It was noted that there is still a need for addressing some data gaps related to food safety issues of Avian Influenza.

7.2. EMERGING RISKS

The definition of Emerging Risks that has been adopted by the Scientific Committee at its plenary meeting of 9-10 July 2007 was discussed¹³. This is being taken into consideration by the EFSA Scientific Cooperation working group (ESCO) on Emerging Risks. Further discussion will follow at future Plenary meetings.

¹¹ Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on animal welfare aspects of husbandry systems for farmed Atlantic salmon. Adopted on 19 June 2008. http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902014109.htm

¹² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178718510757.htm

¹³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178628825155.htm

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1. STRATEGIC PLAN

The draft EFSA's Strategic Plan for 2009 – 2013 was presented. The Panel members were invited to provide comments to the BIOHAZ Secretariat.

8.2. TRANSPARENCY IN RISK ASSESSMENT – DRAFT OPINION FROM SC

The latest draft opinion of the Scientific Committee (SC) Working Group on transparency in risk assessment-scientific aspects was presented. It was suggested to develop in the Annex a check list which will demonstrate that the most important issues to be taken into consideration in order to guarantee transparency were addressed adequately.

8.3. BIOHAZ FORWARD LOOKING THOUGHTS

The Panel agreed that the draft document on "BIOHAZ's forward looking thoughts" would now be further developed as a statement of the Panel concerning the prospective challenges facing the EFSA's BIOHAZ Panel during the next 10 years. The statement will be adopted by written procedure.

8.4. PUBLISHED DEFINITIONS FOR THE EFSA'S SCIENTIFIC OUTPUTS

The document defines the EFSA's scientific outputs, such as opinions and statements of Scientific Committees/Panels, guidance documents of EFSA and other scientific outputs.

8.5. MEDIA HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND THE PANELS

The objective of the guidelines on media handling is to provide directions between EFSA and the Scientific Committees and the Panels and their working groups. The guidelines were noted.

8.6. SCIENTIFIC COLLOQUIUM ON *CAMPYLOBACTER*

The 12th Scientific Colloquium on assessing the health benefits of controlling *Campylobacter* in the food chain will be organised by EFSA on 4-5 December 2008 in Rome. The Colloquium will be structured in a way to provide for in-depth discussion in break-out groups, alternated by short plenary sessions, with a view to making recommendations for risk assessment in *Campylobacter*.

9. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The meeting closed at 13.30.