

Parma, 18 August 2010
EFSA/CONTAM/1178

**MINUTES OF THE 39TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD FROM 5 TO 6 JULY
2010 IN PARMA**

Agreed on 6 August 2010

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Jan Alexander, Diane Benford, Alan Boobis, Sandra Ceccatelli, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Alessandro Di Domenico, Daniel Doerge¹, Eugenia Dogliotti, Lutz Edler, Peter Farmer, Johanna Fink-Gremmels, Metka Filipič, Peter Fürst, Thierry Guérin, Miroslav Machala, Antonio Mutti, Josef Schlatter (chair), and Rolaf van Leeuwen

EFSA:

Unit on Contaminants (CONTAM unit)

Gina Cioacata, Carolina Di Bona, Jean-Lou Dorne, Mari Eskola, Claudia Heppner, Valentina Mota, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Doina Stoika, and Marc Vandenbroeck

Unit on Data Collection and Exposure (DATEX unit)

Davide Arcella, and Valeriu Curtui

European Commission:

Almut Bitterhof¹ and Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3), Marina Marini¹ (DG Health and Consumers, unit 03)

1. WELCOME

The chair of the CONTAM Panel welcomed the members to the 39th CONTAM plenary meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Helle Katrine Knutsen of the CONTAM Panel.

¹ Only present on 5 July 2010 by phone

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

No revisions were proposed to the draft agenda, and the agenda was adopted.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

EFSA secretariat screened both the annual and specific declarations of interest (ADoI, SDoI) filled in by the scientific experts invited to this meeting in accordance with EFSA's Policy on declarations of interests.

With regard to the ADoI, SDoI and this meeting, no interests were declared by the experts other than those already declared in the ADoI or in a previous SDoI and screened by EFSA in accordance with its Policy on Declaration of Interests and implementing documents thereof.

5. EMERGING MARINE BIOTOXINS: BREVETOXIN GROUP. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the working group (WG) presented the draft opinion related to marine biotoxins in shellfish – brevetoxin group (question number: EFSA-Q-2006-0065I). The CONTAM Panel adopted the opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation to the members of the WG and EFSA staff for the efficient and effective work ensuring the preparation of the draft opinion in a very short timeframe. This was the last opinion in a series of opinions related to the mandate on marine biotoxins.

6. BIOHAZ/CONTAM OPINION RELATED TO RECYCLED HOT WATER. DISCUSSION ON APPROACH TO BE TAKEN

EFSA presented an overview of the slaughtering and meat inspection process in the European Union based on the Commission Regulation 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, Regulation 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of food of animal origin and Regulation 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organization of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. This included an overview of the different hot water cleaning techniques/procedures. The presentation aimed to provide Panel members an overview of the processes as the CONTAM Panel has been asked by EFSA to draft a chapter on the abiotic risks of recycled hot water for the BIOHAZ opinion on the use of recycled hot water as a decontamination technique for carcasses (question number: EFSA-Q-2009-00892). The CONTAM Panel proposed to consider in this chapter surface contamination only with the exception of poultry where also contaminants in the kidneys will be considered because these organs are not removed before applying hot water treatment. The chapter will include also some simple model calculations related to residues of veterinary medicinal products in order to flag potential issues, if

any, as e.g. critical control points. The draft chapter on abiotic risks will be presented for possible adoption at the 40th CONTAM Panel meeting.

7. CONSUMPTION OF SHELLFISH. DISCUSSION ON APPROACH TO BE TAKEN

EFSA was asked by the European Commission to re-consider the consumption figure for shellfish which was applied in the exposure assessment of marine biotoxins in the light of new consumption data provided by some Member States (EFSA-Q-2010-00155). The chair of the WG presented the new consumption data which were submitted to EFSA and the approach to be taken to calculate the overall consumption figure relevant to acute effects. The members of the CONTAM Panel agreed on the approach to be taken and will be asked to adopt the draft statement by written procedure in July 2010. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation to the members of the WG and EFSA staff for the preparatory work related to the draft statement. This was the last task of the WG on marine biotoxins.

8. FEEDBACK FROM EFSA

The members of the CONTAM Panel were informed on the following matters:

- CONTAM Panel meeting 2011**

The members of the CONTAM Panel agreed to change the previously agreed date for the May plenary meeting to the following: 30 May to 1 June 2011.

- Grant and procurement**

Art. 36 grant related to the toxicity of 3-MCPD esters

The 1st interim project report was submitted to EFSA and the related meeting was held in June 2010. The project is on track and it can be anticipated that the results will be delivered within the agreed timeframe (February 2011).

Art. 36 grant related to survey on ergot alkaloids

The university of Ghent (Belgium) was selected to conduct a survey on ergot alkaloid concentrations in wheat and rye samples used for human and animal consumption. The kick-off meeting will be held in July 2010.

Art. 36 grant related to an experimental study on the uptake of coccidiostats in vegetables

An invitation to submit a project proposal for an experimental study related to the presence of coccidiostats in poultry litter from chicken, the possible presence of coccidiostats in compost and possible uptake into vegetables is currently published on the EFSA webpage². The deadline to submit proposals for this Art. 36 call is 31 August 2010.

² Available at URL: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/art36grants/article36/cfpefsacontam201002.htm>

Procurement : T-2/HT-2 toxins

Two procurement projects related to gathering of information on the occurrence and toxicity of T-2/HT-2 toxins were successfully completed by RIKILT and FoBIG, respectively³. Both external reports are published on the EFSA webpage and can be used as preparatory work for an upcoming request (see item 11.1).

• Other matters

Call for experts for Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee

EFSA has published two calls for experts on its webpage⁴. One call relates to the 2nd mandate of the Panel on food additives and nutrient sources added to food (ANS) and the Panel on food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings and processing aids (CEF). The other call relates to the expansion of a reserve list for the other eight Scientific Panels and the Scientific Committee due to vacancies in the various Panels including the CONTAM Panel. The appointment of experts for the eight Scientific Panels and the Scientific Committee will only last until the 3rd mandate of these Scientific Panels/Scientific Committee is completed (e.g. CONTAM June 2012). The deadline for submitting applications is 15 September 2010. It is foreseen that the new members of the various Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee will be appointed by the EFSA's Management Board in March 2011.

Revision of the expert compensation guide

EFSA will revise the expert compensation guide in July 2010 in order to take into account the new daily special indemnities of 385€ which came into force on 1 July 2010. In addition, other modifications/clarifications will be made including the possibility to appoint more than three rapporteurs for an opinion respecting however an upper ceiling.

CONTAM unit - staffing

The filling of three vacant posts in the CONTAM unit is ongoing. The Selection Committee finalised its work related to the contact agent FG IV call and was able to establish a reserve list for the consideration by the Executive Director of EFSA. The work of the Selection Committee related to a senior toxicologist post is ongoing as well as the interviews for a seconded national expert. In the event that these posts are filled, it can be anticipated that the respective staff will join the CONTAM unit during the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2010.

In addition, an extra-ordinary trainee was allocated to the CONTAM unit due to EFSA's work in connection with Europass. The best PhD student was offered an award as well as a four month traineeship at EFSA. Due to the candidate's expertise

³ Available at URL: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/66e.htm> and <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/65e.htm>

⁴ Available at URL: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/corporate100610.htm>

in mycotoxins, EFSA's Management Team offered to place the trainee in the CONTAM unit.

Expert biography

Experts were thanked for submitting a short biography using the EFSA standard template. The biographies will be published on the EFSA webpage by 15 July 2010.

Information exchange platform (IEP)

Experts were thanked for having provided feedback related to a questionnaire concerning the IEP. The aim is to explore how the IEP is being used, its benefits and whether any technical improvements are needed. The invitation to provide feedback is open until 9 July 2010.

9. FEEDBACK FROM THE LAST SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes of the plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) held on 29 June 2010 will be available on the EFSA web page in the near future.

The chair pointed the following items out:

- SC opinion on risk-benefit assessment was adopted,
- SCAF unit of EFSA is currently collecting research proposals of the respective panels in order to come up with a common document to be submitted to DG Research by end of September 2010. It was agreed that the CONTAM unit will collect information related to research needs presented in nearly 80 risk assessments carried out by the CONTAM Panel and will provide a summary to the 40th plenary meeting in order to facilitate the CONTAM Panel's work related to the submission of research proposals in the area of contaminants in food and feed.
- In connection with the SC meeting, a half day seminar on "Trends and developments in risk assessment" was held on 30 June 2010 in Parma. The presentations of this workshop will be made available to members of the CONTAM Panel members via the CONTAM workspace.

10. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION SERVICES ON MATTERS RELATING TO CONTAM

The European Commission informed the CONTAM Panel that EFSA will receive a request with a short deadline to re-assess the established health based guidance value for cadmium in view of the recent evaluation of cadmium at the 73rd meeting of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA). The CONTAM Panel established a tolerable weekly intake for cadmium of 2.5 µg/kg body weight and the JECFA established a provisional tolerable monthly intake for cadmium of 25 µg/kg body weight. The CONTAM Panel pointed out that it is possible to revisit its modelling section but an assessment of the differences between these two

toxicological values is not possible as long as the JECFA monograph, containing the scientific details, is not available.

The members of the CONTAM Panel were informed on the follow up of its scientific advice:

- *Marine biotoxins in shellfish*

After a favourable technical vote regarding the replacement of the mouse bioassay for the detection of marine biotoxins was given last year, developments on the validation of methods were discussed at the Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) meeting of 22 June 2010. A possible adoption of these methods can be anticipated by the end of 2010. The follow up of the outcome of the emerging marine biotoxins has not yet started at the SCoFCAH meeting.

- *Arsenic in food*

EFSA presented the outcome of the risk assessment as regards arsenic in food at the Member States Expert Committee meeting in February 2010. The discussions are ongoing related to the follow up of this risk assessment. The initial discussion indicated that it is appropriate to consider the setting of maximum levels for arsenic in rice.

- *Evaluation of substances as acceptable previous cargoes for edible fats and oils*

The EFSA opinion was used as the basis to establish the position of the European Commission in relation to the list of acceptable previous cargoes which is under discussion in the framework of Codex Alimentarius. The next session of the Codex Committee for Fats and Oils is scheduled to take place in February 2011. In order to update the current legislation a follow-up mandate will soon be sent to EFSA.

- *Lead in food*

EFSA presented the outcome of the risk assessment as regards lead in food at the Member States Expert Committee meeting on 1 June 2010. The discussion with Member States on the possible follow-up has not yet started.

- *Eyjafjallajökull volcano eruption in Iceland*

As the statement of EFSA related to the possible risks for public and animal health from the contamination of the feed and food chain due to possible ash-fall following the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland indicated a negligible risk, the European Commission considered that there was no need for risk management measures to be taken as regards feed and food.

- *Toxicity of Ochratoxin A*

As the statement of the CONTAM Panel related to recent scientific information on the toxicity of Ochratoxin A indicated no change to its previous risk assessment related to Ochratoxin A also no need has arisen to revise the current EU legislation.

- *Seeds of Ambrosia spp. in animal feed*

The outcome of the opinion related to the effect on public or animal health or on the environment on the presence of seeds of *Ambrosia* spp. in animal feed which was adopted by the CONTAM, NDA and PHL Panel was discussed at the SCoFCAH on Animal Nutrition meeting of 16 June 2010. In a first exchange of views several delegations favoured the setting of a maximum level for Ambrosia seeds in relevant feed materials and bird feed, combined with measures to be taken by the feed business operators as regards transport, storage and screening to avoid contamination and dissemination of Ambrosia seeds. The discussions will continue in view of adopting possible measures before the end of the year.

11. WORKING PROGRAMME

11.1. OFFICIAL REQUEST TO EFSA FOR CONTAM PANEL

The following requests for a risk assessment were received by EFSA and allocated to the CONTAM Panel:

- Zearalenone in wheat bran,
- Dioxins in liver of sheep and venison,
- *Alternaria* spp. in food and feed,
- T-2/HT-2 in food and feed,
- Morphine in poppy seeds.

The CONTAM Panel had no initial comments to the terms of reference and proposed to initiate working groups for all these requests. The European Commission indicated that ten additional requests are in preparation and will be submitted to EFSA soon. Therefore, the members of the CONTAM Panel proposed that the Secretariat should circulate an overview of the revised work programme. CONTAM Panel members are invited to indicate their interest to chair WGs and/or to become a member of the new WGs.

In addition, the CONTAM Panel was informed that EFSA is in the process of replying to the terms of reference related to the meat inspection mandate. The CONTAM Panel asked for further revisions related to the terms of reference, particularly aspects concerning the risks for public health related to chemicals (e.g. residues of veterinary drugs and contaminants). The Secretariat will still try to accommodate these proposed changes into the EFSA reply letter.

A possible self-mandate in the area of fresh water microcystins will be considered by the CONTAM Panel once more information is collected by some Panel members.

11.2. UPDATE FROM THE WG BROMINATED FLAME RETARDANTS

The chair of the WG on brominated flame retardants informed the members of the CONTAM Panel about the ongoing progress of the two opinions related to polybrominated biphenyls and polybrominated diphenylethers. Still some

considerable amount of work has to be carried out in order to present these two opinions for possible adoption in September 2010.

11.2 WG MEETINGS OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF INTEREST TO CONTAM PANEL

The members were informed that the newly set up SC WG on default assumptions will have its first meeting in July 2010, and that the SC WG on terminology will have its first meeting in September 2010.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.