

Parma, 13 May 2011
EFSA/CONTAM/1394

**MINUTES OF THE 44TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD FROM
22 TO 24 MARCH 2011 IN PARMA**

Agreed on 6 May 2011

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Jan Alexander, Diane Benford¹, Alan Boobis¹, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Alessandro Di Domenico, Daniel Doerge, Eugenia Dogliotti², Lutz Edler, Peter Farmer, Johanna Fink-Gremmels, Metka Filipič, Peter Fürst, Thierry Guérin, Helle Katrine Knutzen, Miroslav Machala, Antonio Mutti, Josef Schlatter (chair), and Rolaf van Leeuwen

EFSA:

Unit on Contaminants (CONTAM unit)

Katleen Baert, Marco Binaglia, Gina Cioacata, Carolina Di Bona, Mari Eskola, Claudia Heppner, Valentina Mota, Silvia Nicolau Solano, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Doina Stoika and Elena Zeraschi

Unit on Data Collection and Exposure (DATEX unit)

Alessandro Carletti, and Elena Scaravelli

European Commission:

Frank Swartenbroux (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3),

1. WELCOME

The chair of the CONTAM Panel welcomed the members to the 44th CONTAM plenary meeting. Katleen Baert and Silvia Nicolau Solano who had recently joined the Unit on Contaminants at EFSA, were introduced to the members of the CONTAM Panel.

¹ Only present from 23 to 24 March 2011

² Only present from 22 to 23 March 2011

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sandra Ceccatelli of the CONTAM Panel and from Almut Bitterhof and Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3), and Marina Marini (DG Health and Consumers, unit 03) of the European Commission.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The draft agenda was adopted.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) and/or Specific Declaration of interest (SDoI) filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed in this meeting were identified during the screening process.

5. ORAL TOXICITY OF ENDOSULFAN IN FISH. DRAFT STATEMENT

EFSA was asked by the European Commission to assess recent information on oral toxicity of endosulfan in fish (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-00968) and if necessary to update its opinion on endosulfan as an undesirable substance in animal feed which was adopted by the CONTAM Panel on 20 June 2005 and updated on 10 April 2006. The request was allocated to the CONTAM Panel. The CONTAM Panel asked the CONTAM unit to prepare a draft statement related to new data on oral toxicity of endosulfan in fish. EFSA presented the draft statement and the CONTAM Panel concluded that the recent information on toxicity of endosulfan in fish does not change the conclusions on toxicity in fish drawn in its previous opinion. The CONTAM Panel adopted the statement subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation to the EFSA staff for the preparatory work on the draft statement.

6. MEAT INSPECTION – CONTAMINANTS. APPROACH DISCUSSION

In May 2010 the European Commission submitted a mandate to EFSA (M-2010-0232) to cover different aspects of meat inspection. EFSA is requested to issue several scientific opinions related to the inspection of meat in different species by taking into account a risk-based approach. The mandate was allocated to the BIOHAZ, AWAH and CONTAM Panels and asks for delivery of a joint scientific opinion for the respective animal species. In addition, technical reports on harmonised epidemiological criteria for specific hazards for public health will be prepared by the Zoonoses and AMU unit of EFSA. The first scientific opinion will be in relation to meat inspection for domestic swine. The remaining scientific opinions will address meat inspection for poultry, bovine animals over six weeks old, bovine

animals under six weeks old, domestic sheep and goats, farmed game and domestic solipeds.

The chair of the CONTAM working group (WG) meat inspection – contaminants presented the approach how the mandate will be addressed (regarding meat inspection in domestic swine). In this 1st step in the process of the establishment of a risk based inspection system, only a qualitative assessment considering the potential use of unauthorised or prohibited substances, the likelihood of occurrence of residues of veterinary drugs and chemical contaminants in pork and pork-products, and the use of food chain information data will be presented. In this approach, data from the annual reports of the MS will be included. The members of the CONTAM Panel agreed on the approach presented to identify and rank hazard in meat in relation to public health, and proposed improvements for the inspection of meat at the European level. The draft chapter of the Opinion on contaminants in relation to meat inspection for domestic swine (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-01019) will be presented for possible adoption at the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011).

7. DIOXINS AND DIOXIN-LIKE PCBs IN LIVER FROM SHEEP AND VENISON. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the CONTAM WG dioxins in sheep liver presented the draft opinion on dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in liver from sheep and venison (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-00959). The European Commission (EC) had asked EFSA to assess the risk for public health based on dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs concentrations found in liver of sheep and venison. Specifically, the opinion should address the following points: i) is there a potential increase in consumer health risk for subgroups of the population consuming such products, ii) explore possible reasons for the findings of high levels of dioxins and PCBs in liver from sheep and venison, and iii) provide scientific elements on the appropriateness to establish in future regulatory levels in liver on a product basis rather than on a fat basis. In addition, EFSA was recently informed by the EC that the term venison should be replaced by deer.

The members of the CONTAM Panel appreciated the current draft opinion but felt that further modifications in relation to the calculations of background exposure to dioxins and PCBs are needed. Therefore, it was proposed that the opinion should be re-submitted for possible adoption to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011).

8. POLYBROMINATED DIPHENYL ETHERS. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the CONTAM WG on brominated flame retardants presented the draft opinion on polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in food (EFSA-Q-2009-00684) where the European Commission had asked EFSA to assess the risk for public health related to the presence of PBDEs in food. The members of the CONTAM Panel appreciated the current draft opinion, and particularly that the recommendations

made at the 41st plenary meeting in relation to the dose-response data used to assess the implications for public health were taken into account by the WG.

However, the CONTAM Panel proposed further refinements in the dietary exposure estimates in order to conclude the risk characterisation. Therefore, it was not possible to adopt the PBDE opinion during this plenary meeting. However, it was proposed to schedule an additional plenary meeting to present the opinion for possible adoption (see item 15).

9. SMOKED SKIN ON SHEEP OPINION: CONTAMINANTS CHAPTER. APPROACH DISCUSSION

EFSA was asked by the European Commission to issue a scientific opinion on a summary of scientific studies carried out by the UK Food Standards Agency to support a proposed production method for smoked “skin-on” sheep meat (M-2010-0413). In particular, EFSA should assess i) the scientific validity of the studies, and their relevance for the outcome and the conclusion on the safety of smoked “skin-on” sheep meat and ii) identify additional hazards, if any, and risks for public health which have not been addressed in the FSA report. This request was allocated to the BIOHAZ and CONTAM Panels. The BIOHAZ Panel established a WG on this matter including a member of the CONTAM Panel. A member of the CONTAM Panel presented the approach to be taken to address the mandate for chemical contaminants (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-01273). The members of the CONTAM Panel agreed on the approach presented for chemical contaminants. The draft chapter on contaminants, the respective conclusions and recommendations in relation to the “skin-on” sheep meat opinion will be presented for possible adoption at the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011).

10. ZEARALENONE IN FOOD. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the CONTAM WG on Zearalenone presented the draft opinion on zearalenone in food (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-00958). The European Commission had asked EFSA to assess the potential increase of risks for public health by a possible increase of the currently existing maximum levels for zearalenone in breakfast cereals, and to review the health-based guidance value for zearalenone established by the Scientific Committee in Food in 2000. The members of the CONTAM Panel provided some general comments to the draft opinion, however due to lack of time no detailed discussions took place and therefore it was not possible to adopt the opinion during this plenary. The opinion on zearalenone in food will be presented for possible adoption to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011).

11. WORKING PROGRAMME

11.1. OFFICIAL REQUEST TO EFSA FOR CONTAM PANEL

The following request for a scientific opinion was received by EFSA and allocated to the CONTAM Panel:

- Methodological principles and scientific methods to be taken into account when establishing reference points for action (EFSA-Q-2011-00149)

The CONTAM Panel raised concerns in relation to the proposed deadline for delivering this scientific output by December 2011 due to the currently high workload and asked to revisit this deadline. The CONTAM Panel agreed to set up a WG on reference points of action to prepare this scientific output. Rolaf van Leeuwen kindly accepted to chair this WG.

11.2. UPDATE FROM WG ALKALOIDS

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

11.3. UPDATE FROM WG ALTERNARIA TOXINS

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

11.4. UPDATE FROM WG ASPERGILLUS TOXINS

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

11.5. UPDATE FROM WG BROMINATED FLAME RETARDANTS

Besides the work presented under item 8 an update on the progress of the draft opinion on hexabromocyclododecanes was not possible to give to the members of the CONTAM Panel due to lack of time. This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011).

11.6. UPDATE FROM WG MEAT INSPECTION

Besides the work presented under item 6 an update on the progress of the draft opinion on poultry meat inspection was not possible to give to the CONTAM Panel due to lack of time. This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011).

11.7. UPDATE FROM WG FUSARIUM TOXINS

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

11.8. UPDATE FROM WG MINERAL HYDROCARBONS

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

11.9. UPDATE FROM WG POPPY SEEDS

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

11.10 UPDATE FROM WGS OF SC OF INTEREST TO CONTAM PANEL

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

12. FEEDBACK FROM THE LAST SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

This agenda item was deferred to the 46th CONTAM Panel meeting (30 May to 1 June 2011) due to lack of time.

13. FEEDBACK FROM EFSA

Due to lack of time the members of the CONTAM Panel were only informed on a few, but important, matters by the Head of the CONTAM unit:

- **Management Board meeting 17 March 2011**
The Management Board of EFSA followed the proposals for candidates for Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee made by the Executive Director of EFSA in relation to a call of expression of interests for Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee in 2010. This included also two appointments - due to vacancies - for the CONTAM Panel. The CONTAM Panel will receive further information when the respective candidates have accepted their nomination.
- **Call for experts for Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels for the Mandate 2012 to 2015.**
EFSA will publish a call for expression of interest to become an expert in the Scientific Committee or the Scientific Panels on its webpage³ by 30 March 2011. The deadline for submitting applications is 31 May 2011.
The call will serve three objectives: i) membership in one of the eight Scientific Panels (AHAW, BIOHAZ, CONTAM, FEEDAP, GMO, NDA, PHL, and PPR) or the Scientific Committee for 2012 to 2015, ii) reserve list for ANS and CEF Panel for 2011 to 2014; and iii) membership for ANS and CEF Panel for 2014 to 2017. It will not prevent EFSA from launching another call for ANS and CEF Panel in 3 years time.

³ Available at URL: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scpanels/memberscall2011.htm>

The CONTAM Panel raised concerns that EFSA's current draft reflection paper on declaration of interests will not be finalised by end of May 2011, the deadline for submission of applications.

- **Reorganisation of EFSA**

The reasons for the reorganisation of EFSA were outlined and the new organogram of EFSA which will come into place on 1 May 2011 and will be fully implemented by 1 January 2012, was presented.

The CONTAM Panel expressed concern that in the new organogram the Panel structure cannot be found, mirroring units as previously. This could be interpreted that EFSA's way of working with independent scientific experts is no longer promoted.

- **Draft dietary exposure assessment report of EFSA**

The DATEX unit of EFSA requested feedback from EFSA staff and members of the CONTAM Panel on a draft report "Dietary exposure assessment at EFSA". This report summarises the current procedures used for estimating dietary exposure for different chemical substances. The members of the CONTAM Panel were invited to provide comments on this draft report to the Head of the CONTAM Unit by 15 April 2011.

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

The European Commission provided written feedback for the period June to December 2010 on the EC follow up of scientific outputs provided by the CONTAM Panel. The members of the CONTAM Panel appreciated this overview.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The members of the CONTAM Panel agreed to have an additional plenary meeting (45th plenary) on 9 May 2011 by conference call. This meeting will be dedicated to the possible adoption of the opinion on PBDEs in food.