



SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

MINUTES OF THE 114TH PLENARY MEETING

Audio-web conference, 23-24 March 2021

(Agreed on 19 April 2021)

Participants

■ Panel Members:

Margherita Bignami, Laurent Bodin, Kevin Chipman, Jesús Del Mazo, Bettina Grasl-Kraupp, Christer Hogstrand, Ron Hoogenboom, Jean-Charles Leblanc, Carlo Nebbia, Elsa Nielsen, Evangelia Ntzani, Annette Petersen, Salomon Sand, Dieter Schrenk, Tanja Schwerdtle, Christiane Vleminckx and Heather Wallace.

■ Hearing Experts¹:

Not applicable

■ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Frans Verstraete, Ivana Poustkova and Veerle Vanheusden (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit E2), Paolo Caricato and Patricia Herrero Sancho (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit G4).

■ EFSA:

BIOCONTAM Unit:

Marco Binaglia, Anna Christodoulidou, Federico Cruciani, Ernesto Liebana Criado, Karen Mackay, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi and Hans Steinkellner.

AMU Unit:

José Cortiñas Abrahantes (for Item 7.1).

DATA Unit:

Claudia Cascio (for Item 7.1), Zsuzsanna Horvath (for Item 7.2) and Alessandro Delfino (for Item 11.3.).

NUTRI Unit:

¹ As defined in Article 17 of the Decision of the Executive Director concerning the selection of members of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Panels, and the selection of external experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/expertselection.pdf

Annamaria Rossi (for Item 8.)

SCER Unit:

Caroline Mertens (for Item 9.)

■ **Others:**

Not applicable

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No Apologies were received.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence² and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management³, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 113th Plenary meeting held on 26-28.01.2021

The minutes of the 113th Plenary meeting⁴ held on 26-28 January 2021 were agreed by the CONTAM Panel on 15 February 2021.

5. Report on written procedures since the 113th Plenary meeting held on 26-28.01.2021

Not applicable.

6. New mandate on inorganic arsenic in food

A new mandate was issued by the European Commission (EC) to update the hazard characterisation and risk characterisation for inorganic arsenic, taking into account the exposure assessment recently finalised by EFSA⁵. The mandate was discussed and, following a consultation with the secretariat, the Chair of the CONTAM Panel agreed to establish a new working group and to nominate Tanja Schwerdtle as WG Chair.

² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf

⁴ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/113th-plenary-meeting-contam-panel>

⁵ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2021.6380>

7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption

7.1. Evaluation of the shucking of certain species of scallops contaminated with domoic acid (EFSA-Q-2020-00246)⁶

The Chair of the WG on Scallops introduced the progress in the opinion and the approach for the assessment. Appropriate data were only available for one species (*Pecten maximus*) coming from two EU members states. Overall, toxin ratios between edible parts and whole animal and a proposal for sampling size will be derived in a similar manner as in the previous opinion (on lipophilic toxins). The CONTAM Panel discussed the new text on chemistry, analytical methods, previous assessments and peer reviewed literature already available and several updates were proposed.

7.2. Hydroxymethylfurfural in feed for bees (EFSA-Q-2020-00510)⁷

The Chair of the WG on hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) in feed for bees presented the approach to the risk assessment and the progress made so far. Sections on chemistry and metabolism, analytical methods, toxicokinetics and toxicity were discussed. Only few toxicity studies were available, and they all had bee mortality as an endpoint. Three of these studies were suitable for the analysis of concentration/dose response relationship. The CONTAM Panel noted that the effect levels in these studies varied considerably which needs to be further analysed by the WG. There was limited occurrence data available on HMF in bee feed in the EFSA database and therefore the WG might resort to data provided by industry for the development of exposure scenarios.

7.3. Nitrosamines in food – Assessment protocol (EFSA-Q-2020-00665)⁸

The Chair of the WG presented the draft protocol to be followed in the risk assessment of N-nitrosamines in food. Due to the large amount of evidence to be assessed regarding N-nitrosamines analysed in food the WG will not be able to provide a full risk assessment of other nitroso-compounds within the requested deadline as it was previously proposed by the Panel. However, the WG may consider evidence provided in reviews on this issue for recommendations regarding the need for further assessment. The Panel provided revisions and endorsed the draft protocol, which will be published together with the draft opinion for public consultation at a later stage.

8. EHIA study proposal on Tetrahydrocannabinol

The CONTAM Team Leader presented a document received from the EC by which the European Hemp Industry Association (EHIA) proposed a possible strategy for the generation of toxicological data on cannabidiol (CBD) and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). It was clarified that only THC is in the remit of the CONTAM Panel since CBD is to be considered within the novel food regulatory framework that is in the remit of the NDA Panel. The CONTAM Panel noted that the level of detail of the document does not allow a thorough assessment of the proposal. It was agreed that the request to comment and review the document will be considered and a joint reply will be prepared by the BIOCONTAM and NUTRI Units considering the comments from the CONTAM Panel and NDA Panel.

⁶ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00246>

⁷ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00510>

⁸ <http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00665>

9. Identification of potential emerging chemical risks in the food chain to the substances registered under REACH

The SCER Scientific Officer in charge of the project coordination presented the outcome and possible follow-up of a project aiming to identify emerging risk substances. A methodology was developed to identify man-made chemicals registered under REACH⁹ that could pose a risk to the food chain in view of their potential release in the environment and their inherent biodegradation, accumulation and toxicity properties.

10. Discussion of possible topics of interest for discussion at the EFSA SC meetings

The Chair of the CONTAM Panel presented a proposed list of issues that are regularly encountered in the assessment of food and feed contaminants and that could be of interest for further discussion in the EFSA Scientific Committee. The Panel identified two proposals as of higher relevance. The first is on the possible update of the concept of Margin of Exposure for substances that are both genotoxic and carcinogenic, in particular considering cases for which both genotoxic and non-genotoxic modes of action could contribute to the carcinogenicity. The second proposal is to further clarify the application of uncertainty factors for the establishment of Health-Based Guidance Values, with a view of a higher harmonization with other risk assessment schemes. The Panel members were invited to indicate additional topics of possible relevance.

11. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/ Scientific Panels, CONTAM Working Groups, EFSA, the European Commission

11.1. European Commission

The European Commission representative gave an update on the activities in relation to the scientific opinions of the CONTAM Panel. Several amendments of current legislation are under discussion with the Member States as an outcome of the CONTAM Panel scientific opinions. In addition, an update was provided on the future mandates in preparation.

11.2. Update from CONTAM Panel Working Groups

- **WG on Brominated flame retardants in food**

The Chair of the WG informed that the PBDEs in Food draft Opinion is progressing well.

- **WG on Scallops**

See item 7.1.

- **WG on Feed detoxification**

The WG Chair informed the Panel that a technical hearing was held with the applicant for clarifications on the additional information provided during the risk assessment, which has been considered as incomplete by the WG. The applicant informed the WG and EC that he intends to perform further experiments in order to complete the application. However, at this stage the applicant was not able to specify the experiments or provide a timeline. The Standing Working Group on feed detoxification will finalise its opinion based on the information available.

- **WG on Hydroxymethyl furfural in bees**

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach_en.htm

See item 7.2.

- **WG on High pressure processing**

The WG member representing the CONTAM Panel informed the Panel about the findings in the selected literature related the chemical risks of the high pressure process due to contaminants. The draft part of the protocol and the text will be presented at the July Plenary meeting.

- **WG on Mineral oil hydrocarbons**

The WG Chair informed the Panel that the draft assessment protocol was discussed and agreed by the WG. The extensive literature search was outsourced, and a draft report will be available by the end of March. The next meeting will take place on 16 April 2021.

- **WG on N-nitrosamines**

See item 7.3

11.3. EFSA

The CONTAM Panel informed on additional draft mandates of interest for the Panel: a draft mandate on the presence of fluoride in food, issued by the EC, will be presented to the Scientific Committee due to its across-panel nature falling both in the remit of the CONTAM Panel and NDA Panel. A draft mandate on the presence of vanadium compounds in food, issued by the German BfR, will be considered pending the availability of toxicological study reports currently under finalization by the US National Toxicology Programme. Finally, a draft mandate for the request of scientific assistance and production of an EFSA Scientific Report related to the finding of level of semicarbazide in samples of food gelatine.

A presentation on the forthcoming data collection on food and feed contaminants was provided by a representative of the DATA Unit.

11.4. Scientific Committee and Working groups of interest to the CONTAM Panel

The Panel Chair reported on the main points discussed at the 102nd meeting of the EFSA Scientific Committee¹⁰. In particular, the Scientific Committee adopted a statement on the derivation of Health Based Guidance Values (HBGVs) for regulated products that are also nutrients, discussed the approach to perform a risk assessment on copper, the possibility to update the guidance document on expert knowledge elicitation and the activities on the EFSA's Compendium on botanicals. The on-going activities of the CONTAM Panel were also presented to the Scientific Committee.

For the Working groups of interest for the CONTAM Panel, updates were given on the activities of the WG on Genotoxicity, the WG on the update of the Benchmark Dose guidance, the WG on Uncertainty, the WG on Chemical mixtures and the WG on Copper.

¹⁰ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/it/events/event/102nd-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee>

12. Any other business

The possible dates for Panel meetings in 2022 were communicated to the Panel:

119 th meeting	25-26-27 January
120 th meeting	15-16-17 March
121 st meeting	17-18-19 May
122 nd meeting	12-13-14 July
123 rd meeting	13-14-15 September
124 th meeting	22-23-24 November