

UNIT ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS and CONTAMINANTS

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

MINUTES OF THE 117TH PLENARY MEETING

Audio-web conference, 14-16 September 2021
(Agreed on 30 September 2021)

Participants

■ **Panel Members:**

Margherita Bignami, Laurent Bodin, Kevin Chipman, Jesús Del Mazo, Bettina Grasl-Kraupp, Christer Hogstrand¹, 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 Experts²:**

Michael O'Keeffe

■ **European Commission and/or Member States representatives:**

Frans Verstraete, Veerle Vanheusden and Ivana Poustkova (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit E2).

■ **EFSA:**

BIOCONTAM Unit:

Maria Anastassiadou, Marco Binaglia, Anna Christodoulidou, Federico Cruciani, Ernesto Liebana Criado, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Katja Schirmer and Hans Steinkellner.

DATA Unit:

José Ángel Gómez Ruiz (for Item 7.1), Sofia Ioannidou and Marina Nikolić (for Item 7.2.), Zsuzsanna Horvath (for Item 7.5).

RASA Department:

Juliane Kleiner (for Item 8)

¹ Attendance on 15 and 16 September only.

² 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

■ **Observers:**

Thomas Tietz³ (for Item 7.1)

■ **Others:**

Not applicable.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

2. Adoption of agenda

An additional agenda item was proposed by the Secretariat (item 8). The amended agenda was adopted.

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence⁴ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management⁵, 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 116th Plenary meeting held on 13-15.07.2021

The minutes of the 116th Plenary meeting⁶ held on 13-15 July 2021 were agreed by the CONTAM Panel on 4 August 2021.

5. Report on written procedures since the 116th Plenary meeting held on 13-15.07.2021

Not applicable.

6. Update of the 'Request for an update of the EFSA Scientific opinion on inorganic arsenic in food' to 'Request for 4 EFSA Scientific opinions on inorganic and organic arsenic in food'

The CONTAM Team Leader informed that following an exchange of views with EU Member States the European Commission decided to amend the recently issued mandate requesting an update of the EFSA Scientific Opinion on inorganic arsenic in food, extending it to organic arsenic species. The amended mandate includes the request to produce scientific opinions on inorganic arsenic in food, organic arsenic species in food and if relevant a risk assessment on the combined exposure to inorganic and organic arsenic

³ GP/EFSA/BIOCONTAM/2021/01

⁴ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

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

⁶ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/116th-plenary-meeting-contam-panel>

species. Following the proposal of the Secretariat the Panel agreed that the remit of the WG on Inorganic arsenic in food, established for the initial mandate, can be extended to the organic arsenic species.

7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption

7.1. Update of the risk assessment of mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH) in food (EFSA-Q-2020-00664)⁷

The Chair of the WG on MOH in Food presented selected sections of the draft Opinion for discussion and possible endorsement. The Panel endorsed the sections on Interpretation on of the Terms of Reference, Chemistry, Sources, Previous assessments and Legislation pending minor changes to be implemented by the WG. The sections on Toxicokinetics, Toxicity in experimental animals and Human Observations were presented for first reading and the Panel provided feedback on the that will be taken into account by the WG to continue with the development of the risk assessment.

7.2. Update of the risk assessment of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in food (EFSA-Q-2018-0432)⁸

The Chair of the WG on Brominated flame retardants (BFRs) together with DATA Unit officers presented an overview of the occurrence data on PBDEs in food submitted to EFSA and the approach for the exposure assessment. The Panel provided some general feedback, e.g. on the left-censored data and its impact on the estimates. The WG will continue with the development of the risk assessment.

7.3. Risk assessment of N-nitrosamines in food (EFSA-Q-2020-00665)⁹

The Chair of the WG on nitrosamines in food updated the Panel on the progress made by the group regarding the preparation of the draft Opinion. Specific section of the opinion will be presented for discussion and possible endorsement at the next Plenary meeting.

7.4. EFSA Scientific Report on the presence of nitrofurans and their metabolites in gelatine (EFSA-Q-2021-00242)¹⁰

The EFSA Scientific Officer coordinating the report on the presence of nitrofurans and their metabolites in gelatine presented the draft Technical Report for discussion and possible endorsement. The CONTAM Panel endorsed the draft report to be approved by EFSA. The Chair of the Panel thanked the WG and EFSA staff for their work.

7.5. Hydroxymethylfurfural in feed for bees (EFSA-Q-2020-00510)¹¹

The Chair of the WG on hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) presented the sections on occurrence and exposure, the new section on time reinforced toxicity, risk

⁷ <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00664>

⁸ <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2018-00432>

⁹ <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00665>

¹⁰ <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00242>

¹¹ <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00510>

characterisation and uncertainties. The CONTAM Panel then went through the entire text with an emphasis on updated and new sections including conclusions and recommendations. The presented sections were endorsed pending the amendments proposed by the Panel. The opinion will be presented for endorsement for public consultation at the 118th CONTAM Plenary meeting.

8. Update on EFSA Architecture Transformation Programme (ART) – Organigramme, Risk assessment workflow, Declarations of interest

The Head of the RASA Department explained the reasons behind EFSA's new organisational structure. In order to implement the new obligations and new processes required by the Transparency Regulation (TR), the ART Programme designed a harmonised high-level Risk Assessment (RA) process divided in four main steps: Mandate & dossier intake, Preliminary activities to Risk Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Output publication and dissemination. To best support the changes triggered by the TR, the next step was to redesign EFSA's internal structure: among other changes, EFSA will have one department focusing on RA production (Assess Department), and one focusing on services in support of RA production (Enable Department). The final organigramme will be confirmed by the EFSA Management Team on 24 September. The Head of the RASA Department also gave an overview of the most recent DOI issues, explaining that while the technical Task Force will work on the issues reported, the automatic request for expert DOI submission will be disabled from 18 September. Experts will be asked to use the alternative workflow described in the EFSA Competing Interest Management rules. More info will follow via email.

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

9.1. European Commission

The European Commission representative gave an extensive 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, a list of upcoming mandates was provided.

9.2. Update from CONTAM Panel Working Groups

- WG on Brominated flame retardants in food**

See item 7.2.

- WG on Feed detoxification**

The WG Chair informed the Panel that the opinions on groundnuts detoxification from aflatoxins via ammoniation will be presented to the Panel for possible adoption at its 118th Plenary meeting.

- WG on Hydroxymethyl furfural in bees**

See item 7.5.

- WG on Mineral oil hydrocarbons in food**

See Item 7.1

- WG on N-nitrosamines in food**

See Item 7.3

- **WG on Arsenic in food**

The WG chair reported that the WG has been set up and that a first WG meeting for the first opinion on inorganic arsenic has taken place the week before. The WG is currently developing an approach to the assessment which should be presented to the Panel as soon as this is possible.

- **WG on Grayanotoxins in honey**

The WG Chair informed the Panel that the first WG meeting will take place on 23 September 2021.

- **WG on SEM in gelatine**

See Item 7.4

9.3. EFSA

The CONTAM Team Leader informed the CONTAM Panel that a number of mandates currently under preparation by the EC. Upon the receipt of the official mandates they will be presented to the Panel by written procedure or at the 118th Panel plenary meeting.

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

The Panel Chair informed that the on the main points discussed at the 105th meeting of the EFSA Scientific Committee¹² will take place on 22-23 September 2021.

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

10. Any other business

Not applicable

¹² <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/it/events/event/105th-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee>



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