



# SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

## MINUTES OF THE 127<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING

**Held on 22-24 November 2022, Parma (Italy)**

**(Agreed on 7 December 2022)**

### Participants

#### ■ Panel Members:

Attending in person:

Margherita Bignami, Kevin Chipman, Christer Hogstrand, Ron Hoogenboom, Elsa Nielsen, Annette Petersen, Salomon Sand, Dieter Schrenk and Tanja Schwerdtle<sup>1</sup>.

Attending via web-conference:

Laurent Bodin, Jesús Del Mazo, Bettina Grasl-Kraupp<sup>2</sup>, Jean-Charles Leblanc, Carlo Nebbia, Evangelia Ntzani<sup>3</sup>, Christiane Vleminckx and Heather Wallace<sup>4</sup>.

#### ■ Hearing Experts<sup>5</sup>:

Diane Benford (for item 7.6), Eugenia Dogliotti (for item 7.6), Andy Hart (for Item 7.1)

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

Attending in person:

Veerle Vanheusden (European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety, Unit E2).

Attending via web-conference:

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

#### ■ EFSA:

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<sup>1</sup> On 23 11 2022 was absent from 10.15 to 11.15 CET.

<sup>2</sup> On 23 11 2022 participated until 17.00 CET.

<sup>3</sup> On 24 11 2022 participated from 10.00 CET onwards.

<sup>4</sup> On 24 11 2022 participated until 10.00 CET.

<sup>5</sup> 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](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/expertselection.pdf)

**FEEDCO Unit:**

Maria Anastassiadou, Anna Christodoulidou, Federico Cruciani, Mary Gilsean, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Elena Rovesti, Hans Steinkellner, Tuuli Tauriainen

**PREV Unit:**

Marco Binaglia (for item 7.2)

**MESE Unit:**

José Ángel Gómez Ruiz (for item 7.3), Francesca Riolo (for item 7.1)

**■ Observers:**

Not applicable

**■ Others:**

Not applicable.

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed the participants to this plenary meeting.

**2. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence<sup>6</sup> and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management<sup>7</sup>, 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 126<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held on 14 October 2022**

The minutes of the 126<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held on 14 October 2022 were agreed by written procedure on 26 October 2022<sup>8</sup>.

**5. Report on written procedures since the 126<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held on 14 October 2022**

In agreement with the Panel Chair, Christer Hogstrand has been nominated as Chair of the WG on Ambrosia.

**6. New mandates**

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/policy\\_independence.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/competing\\_interest\\_management\\_17.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/126th-plenary-meeting-contam-panel>

The CONTAM Team presented the following new mandate received from the EC:

1. Request for a scientific opinion on the processing conditions which make Ambrosia seeds unviable.<sup>9</sup>

The CONTAM Panel agreed with the proposal of the Secretariat to establish an ad-hoc WG for the preparation of the Scientific Opinion, and with the nomination of Christer Hogstrand as WG Chair (see Item 5).

## **7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption**

### **7.1. Risk assessment of grayanotoxins (GTXs) in certain honey (EFSA-Q-2020-00509)<sup>10</sup>**

The Chair of the WG on GTXs in certain honey presented the sections on hazard identification and characterisation, occurrence, dietary exposure assessment and risk characterisation which were endorsed by the Panel, providing that the suggested changes are implemented. The WG will continue with the development of the risk assessment and uncertainty analysis and finalise the draft opinion that will be presented for possible adoption at the December ad-hoc Plenary meeting.

### **7.2. Update of the risk assessment of mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH) in food (EFSA-Q-2020-00664)<sup>11</sup>**

The Chair of the WG on MOH in food presented for discussion and possible endorsement the section on risk characterisation for mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) and the conclusions for hazard identification and characterisation, occurrence and exposure. In addition, amendments to previously endorsed sections on repeated dose toxicity and human observations, included in view of new relevant studies identified, were also presented. The Panel endorsed the presented sections pending minor suggested changes. The WG will continue to work on the finalisation of the assessment and uncertainty analysis.

### **7.3. EFSA Scientific Report on the dietary exposure to metals and iodine via the consumption of seaweeds and halophytes in the European population (EFSA-Q-2022-00212)<sup>12</sup>**

The scientific officer from the MESE Unit presented an overview of the draft EFSA Scientific Report on the dietary exposure to metals and iodine via the consumption of seaweeds and halophytes in the European population. The draft report had been previously reviewed by two members of the CONTAM Panel. The CONTAM Panel endorsed the report pending the implementation of minor changes.

### **7.4. Update of the risk assessment of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in food (EFSA-Q-2018-0432)<sup>13</sup>**

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<sup>9</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00501?search=ambrosia>

<sup>10</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00509>

<sup>11</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2020-00664>

<sup>12</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2022-00212>

<sup>13</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2018-00432>

The Chair of the WG on Brominated flame retardants (BFRs) presented for possible agreement the revised approach for risk characterisation following the comments received at the September 2022 Plenary meeting, including considerations on the BMD modelling. The draft section on Mode of action was presented for discussion and possible endorsement. The Panel agreed with the revised approach for risk characterisation and agreed to the proposal of the WG to recalculate all BMDs for the critical studies with the new software that is based on the revised EFSA BMD guidance issued on 25 October 2022. The Panel also endorsed the section on mode of action and provided comments that will be considered by the WG in finalising this section and the overall risk assessment.

#### **7.5. Request for an assessment of information as regards the toxicity of deoxynivalenol for horses and poultry other than laying hens (EFSA-Q-2021-00712)<sup>14</sup>**

The Chair of the WG on Mycotoxins in Feed introduced for discussion a presentation summarising the information as regards the toxicity of DON, in particular for the various species of poultry. Any new critical aspects encountered by the WG following the previous panel meeting was presented together with the proposed approach. A discussion took place on various aspects of DON animal health adverse effects in particular on poultry. Various comments provided by the Panel will be taken into account by the WG to finalise the draft opinion that will be presented for possible adoption at the December ad-hoc Plenary meeting.

#### **7.6. Update of the risk assessment on inorganic arsenic in food (EFSA-Q-2021-00250)<sup>15</sup>**

The Chair of the WG on Arsenic in food presented the ongoing activities of the WG, following discussions at the previous Plenary. The CONTAM Panel agreed to the proposal of the WG to recalculate all BMDs for the critical studies with the new software that is based on the revised EFSA BMD guidance issued on 25 October 2022. These will be presented to the Panel at the January 2023 meeting. The Panel then discussed the proposal of the WG to apply a margin of exposure approach (MOE) for risk assessment of inorganic arsenic. The Panel agreed that both thresholded and not-thresholded mechanisms of action could account for the genotoxic effects of inorganic arsenic, which is a human carcinogen and that therefore a MOE approach should be applied for its risk characterisation. Then respective text in the opinion was discussed and, pending minor updates, endorsed by the Panel. A discussion on the magnitude of the MOE will be held at upcoming plenary meetings. The CONTAM Panel also agreed to the proposal of the WG to carry out an uncertainty assessment without involving a formal expert knowledge elicitation (EKE) procedure and not to assess uncertainties related to the exposure assessment as the exposure assessment already available from a recent EFSA report will be used for the present opinion.

## **8. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/ Scientific Panels, CONTAM Working Groups, EFSA, the European Commission**

### **9.1. European Commission**

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<sup>14</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2021-00712>

<sup>15</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2021-00250>

The European Commission representative gave an update on the follow-up activities in relation to the scientific opinions of the CONTAM Panel. Several legislative measures are under discussion with the Member States as an outcome of the CONTAM Panel scientific Opinions.

## **9.2. Update from CONTAM Panel Working Groups**

- **WG on Brominated flame retardants (BFRs) in food**

See item 7.4.

- **WG on Feed detoxification**

There are no new mandates to EFSA regarding the remit of this WG.

- **WG on Mineral oil hydrocarbons in food**

See item 7.2.

- **WG on N-nitrosamines in food**

The scientific officer coordinating the WG on *N*-nitrosamines in food presented an overview of the comments sent to EFSA during the public consultation of the draft opinion on *N*-nitrosamines in food. The WG will address the comments and present the outcome at the next Plenary meeting.

- **WG on Arsenic in food**

See item 7.6.

- **WG on Grayanotoxins in certain honey**

See item 7.1.

- **WG on Mycotoxins in feed**

See item 7.5.

- **WG on Polychlorinated Naphthalenes in food and feed**

The Chair of the WG informed on the progress of the work on this mandate. The WG is finalising the introductory part of the draft opinion and the discussion on the occurrence data submitted to EFSA on PCNs is ongoing.

- **WG on Ergot Alkaloids in feed**

The scientific officer coordinating the WG presented an overview on the progress of the work on this mandate. During the first four meetings the WG has discussed the terms of reference, elaborated the protocol for the risk assessment and started the drafting of the opinion. The draft protocol and sections of the opinion will be presented for endorsement in the next plenary meeting.

- **WG on Ochratoxin A in feed**

The Chair of the WG presented to the Panel the new WG which has recently started the activities on this mandate. Following the first meeting, the WG will commence reviewing newly available literature.

## **9.3. EFSA**

The EFSA CONTAM Panel coordinator confirmed that there will be two half-day ad-hoc Plenary meetings on 15 December 2022 (dedicated to the discussion and possible adoption of the draft Opinion on the assessment of information as regards the toxicity of DON for horses and poultry other than laying hens) and on 16 December 2022

(dedicated to the discussion and possible adoption of the draft Opinion on GTXs in certain honeys). For the agreed ad-hoc meeting in February 2023, the Panel coordinator will communicate soon the proposed date.

The members were informed also about the upcoming launch of the Panel renewal call, the revised EFSA Expert's Compensation guide, and the launch of an internal survey to collect feedback on the application of the Uncertainty guidance. The members were also informed about the notice of call for expressions of interest for scientific and technical support<sup>16</sup>.

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

The last EFSA Scientific Committee meeting was held 16-17 November 2022. The members were informed by the Panel Chair on the main issues discussed related to cross-cutting activities.

For the Working groups of interest for the CONTAM Panel, updates were provided on the activities of the Cross-cutting WGs on Genotoxicity, on Uncertainty and on Benchmark dose, as well as on the activities of the SC WGs on Protocol development, SC WGs on the Update of the risk-benefit assessment guidance, SC WG on Copper, SC WG on Fluoride and SC WG on Bromide.

### **10. Any other business**

Not applicable.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://careers.efsa.europa.eu/jobs/notice-of-call-for-expressions-of-interest-scientific-and-technical-support-various-scientific-and-communication-profiles-325>