

# SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE 149th PLENARY MEETING



03-04 May 2023

09:00-16:00 / 09:30-13:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 22 May 2023

**Location:** EFSA - Parma (Meeting Room MTG SEAT 00/M10A; MTG SEAT 00/M10B) and web conference

## **Attendees:**

- Panel Members:  
ALVAREZ Julio, BICOUT Dominique, Calistri Paolo, CANALI Elisabetta, DREWE Julian, GARIN-BASTUJI Bruno, GONZALES ROJAS Jose Luis, GORTAZAR SCHMIDT Christian, HERSKIN Mette, MICHEL Virginie, MIRANDA Miguel Angel, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose (Chair), PADALINO Barbara, SPOOLDER Hans, STAHL Karl, ROBERTS Helen, VELARDE Antonio, VILTROP Arvo, WINCKLER Christoph.
- Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:  
Not Applicable
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:
  - ALAEZ PONS Ester, FORCELLA Simona, REVIRIEGO-GORDEJO Francisco, GEOGHEGAN Fiona, LOGAR Barbara
- EFSA: ANTONIOU Sotiria-Eleni, BALDINELLI Francesca, DHOLLANDER Sofie, FABRIS Chiara, GNOCCHI Marzia, KARAGIANNI Anna, MANAKIDOU Aikaterini, MUR Lina, RUSINA Alessia, VANDER STEDE Yves, VITALI Marika

## **I. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed the participants.  
Apologies were received from GONZALES ROJAS Jose.

## **II. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members**

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence<sup>2</sup> and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management<sup>3</sup>, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Working Group 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.

## **III. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted **with** changes. On 3 May, a new mandate was received on the Welfare of cats and dogs kept for commercial breeding, and this topic was added under point VIII.

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<sup>1</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/en/keydocs/docs/expertselection.pdf>

<sup>2</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>3</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)



#### **IV. Agreement of the minutes of the 148<sup>th</sup> AHAW Panel Plenary meeting held on 29-30 March 2023, via web-conference**

The [Minutes of the 148th Plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel](#) were agreed by written procedure on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

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

- V.I Art. 29-Request for a scientific opinion related to the listing and categorisation of Infectious pancreatic necrosis and the listing of relevant aquatic species, in the framework of the Animal Health Law (EFSA – M-2022-00144): Adoption (Tollgate 3).

Minor comments on the draft Scientific Opinion on the listing and categorisation of Infectious pancreatic necrosis and the listing of relevant aquatic species, in the framework of the Animal Health Law were discussed. The Opinion was adopted unanimously.

#### **VI. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion**

- VI.I Art. 29-Request for a Scientific Opinion related to the listing of species of aquatic animals or groups of species of aquatic animals which pose a considerable risk for the spread of listed diseases because of their capability to act as vectors or reservoirs of those diseases, in the framework of the Animal Health Law (M-2022-00138): thorough discussion on the draft Scientific Opinions on vectors for listed pathogens of Fish, Molluscs and Crustaceans (Tollgate 2)

A short presentation was given to discuss the assessment methodology and main outcomes of the extensive literature review on potential vectors or reservoirs of pathogens of fish, molluscs and crustaceans. The wording of the certainty assessment was discussed and agreed upon. Some examples of conclusions of the assessment on vectors and reservoirs of listed fish pathogens were discussed. The Panel was informed about the next steps. During the following working group meeting, some remaining inconsistencies in the assessment will be dealt with by the working group. The Scientific Opinion will be presented for adoption in the June plenary.

- VI.II Art. 29-Request for a Scientific Opinion related to the listing and categorisation of certain diseases of aquatic animals and the listing of relevant aquatic species, in the framework of the Animal Health Law (EFSA - M-2022-00144).

A short update was provided on the planning for the work on the remaining 4 Scientific Opinions on listing and categorisation of certain diseases of aquatic animals and the listing of relevant aquatic species, in the framework of the Animal Health: AHL Aquatic Animal Diseases Listing: Spring Viraemia of Carp, *Gyrodactylus salaris*, Bacterial kidney disease and Salmonid alphavirus.

- VI.III Art. 29-Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the use of high-expansion foam for stunning and killing of pigs and poultry – EFSA-Q-2022- 00344-Update.
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An update regarding the state of play of the mandate from the clock-stop mechanism until present was made. The deadlines of the deliverables of the tasking grant group were re-organised, the working group meetings for 2023 were planned and the related Panel activity was announced.

- VI.IV Art. 29 Scientific Opinion concerning the use of Diathermic Syncope for stunning cattle (M-2022-00006, EFSA-Q-2023-00085): Update.

The preparatory work has been outsourced to IRTA with the Specific Agreement No 2 of the Tasking Grant. The composition of the working group has been completed and it was announced that the deep reviewers from the Panel will be Dominique Bicout and Mette Herskin.

VI.V 6.5 Art. 29-Vaccination against highly pathogenic avian influenza – EFSA-M2022-00145  
An update on the progress on the SO on vaccination against HPAI virus in poultry was given. The new text that was added to the draft SO since the previous plenary meeting was presented to the Panel. Specific points, such as the linear model to predict the antigenic distances between the vaccine seed strains and the currently circulating HPAI H5N1, were discussed and clarifications will be added in the SO. The first results on which available vaccines were retrieved were shown according to the HPAI subtype targeted. In addition, the possible drawbacks in the control and eradication of HPAI by vaccination that were identified by the WG experts were presented.

## **VII. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission**

- VII.I Feedback from the European Commission on the recently adopted Scientific Opinions of the AHAW Panel and needs for future mandates on Animal Health

Francisco REVIRIEGO-GORDEJO provided feedback on the recently adopted Scientific Opinions of the AHAW Panel on animal health. More in particular, on the opinions on COVID in animals, Anti-Microbial Resistance, Avian Influenza, African swine fever, Surveillance of cross-border pathogens threatening the Union using a One-Health approach, AHL listing and categorisation and the recent work on the listing of aquatic animals. Both positive and negative aspects of the work were addressed. Overall, the collaboration is fruitful, and the work of AHAW Panel and teams contributed to provide the needed background information to support the risk managers to update the legal framework on animal health, where needed.

- VII.II Public consultation of the draft guidance on protocol development for EFSA generic scientific assessments: AHAW Panel feedback

A summary of the feedback of AHAW Panel and Team members on the draft Scientific Committee guidance on protocol development was provided. As the guidance document is applicable for generic risk assessments, members of the Panel and the Teams who have not yet reviewed and commented on the draft document were encouraged to do so before the end of the public consultation on 15 May. The guidance document will be tabled for adoption at the Scientific Committee plenary meeting in September 2023.

- VII.III Feedback from the Scientific Committee
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Feedback of the last Scientific Committee meeting was provided. An overview on the work plan of the AHAW Panel was presented.

## **VIII. Update on applications, new mandates**

### **VIII.I Welfare of cats and dogs kept for commercial breeding**

The new mandate for a Scientific Report of EFSA (Art 31) on 'welfare of cats and dogs kept for commercial breeding' was discussed. It requests to evaluate if a series of possible measures, which were drafted by a subgroup of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare, are supported by scientific evidence. The mandate deadline is July 2023.

## **IX. Other topics for information and/or discussion**

### **IX.I Art.31-Mandate for scientific and technical assistance for a coordinated surveillance system under the One Health approach for cross-border pathogens threatening the Union: short update**

The Panel was updated about direct grant initiative CP-g-22-04.01 of the EU4Health programme 2022 and the related mandate for scientific and technical assistance EFSA is working on. The applications for direct grants submitted by MSs by 15 March have been evaluated, and evaluation results will be shared with MSs in May. EFSA will develop proposals for data models to be used for reporting the data collected under the coordinated surveillance as well as data visualisation options. It is planned to discuss and agree these with MSs at a workshop of the One Health subgroup of EFSA's AHAW Network in November 2023.

### **IX.II Update on the upcoming meetings of the EFSA Networks dealing with Animal welfare, i.e., the AHAW Network and of the Network of the scientific National Contact Points for Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009.**

The AHAW panel was updated on the upcoming meetings of EFSA's Networks dealing with AW topics: the AHAW Network and its sub-group, the Network of the scientific National Contact Points (NCPs) for scientific support under Art 20 of Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009. The two Networks will meet on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May for a joint session focused on the EFSA ongoing activities on AW and exchanges of information. On the following day, the AHAW Network will meet in the morning to run an exercise on the use of ABMs collected at slaughter for monitoring on-farm welfare of beef cattle. A similar exercise will be run in the afternoon of the 31<sup>st</sup> of May by the scientific NCPs on the welfare of turkeys.

### **IX.III Update on list of welfare consequences published in the Methodological guidance for the development of animal welfare mandates in the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy (EFSA 2022)**

The AHAW panel discussed three welfare consequences that may be added to the current list and that may be applicable to fish. It was agreed to inform the AHAW panel in further meetings on how the definitions of these welfare consequences can be finetuned (e.g., including definition of negative affective states such as pain).

### **IX.IV Update on preparatory activities for the expected mandate on welfare of beef cattle**

An update was provided to the AHAW panel on the preparatory work for the forthcoming mandate on the welfare of beef cattle.

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IX.V Update on preparatory activities for the expected mandate on welfare of farmed turkeys

An update was provided to the AHAW panel on the expected mandate on welfare of farmed turkeys. Additional elements for the Terms of Reference were proposed and discussed.

IX.VI Update on the mandates on slaughter and killing (M-2018-024)

An update was provided to the AHAW panel on the preparatory work for the forthcoming mandate on the welfare during slaughter and killing.

IX.VII Discussion on the potential approach for the expected mandate on welfare of cats and dogs.

See point VIII.

IX.VIII Planning of open plenary in June, on-site plenary in September 2023 and Panel renewal

The organisation of the open plenary was discussed. It was agreed to have a question-and-answer session after each major topic that will be discussed during the open plenary meeting, to have an interactive meeting.

It was agreed that the physical meeting in September 2023 would be held on Wednesday 27 September in Bologna, with a field trip to be organised in conjunction on 28 September.

The application for the renewal of the EFSA Panels is closed. Candidates will be informed about the outcomes of the selection procedure in the beginning of 2024.

IX.IX Bird flu radar

This topic was postponed for the next plenary meeting.

IX.X Epidemiological analysis of African swine fever in the European Union during 2022

The main results and highlights of the African swine fever epidemiological report during 2022, approved few weeks ago, were presented to the Panel. Some discussions took place regarding the different levels of surveillance efforts between countries, the potential misinterpretation of some terminologies used, as well as the problems associated with the whole genome sequencing of ASF virus. The next step of the Working group is the planning of the second Term of Reference, to analyse the risk factors associated with the introduction, spread and persistence of the virus in domestic pigs and wild boar populations.

## X. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 21 June 2023, via web conference. It will be a Plenary meeting open to the public.

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