

29 January 2024

09:00-13:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 06 February 2024

**Location:** EFSA - Webconference

**Attendees:**

○ Working Group Members:

Bojan Blagojevic

Laurent Guillier

Kostas Koutsoumanis

Roland Lindqvist

○ Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:

Not applicable

○ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Not applicable

○ EFSA:

Martin Goudjihounde

Michaela Hempen

Laura Martino

## I. Welcome and apologies for the absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

## II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## III. 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.

## IV. Scientific topic(s) for discussion<sup>4</sup>

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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)

<sup>4</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00058>



The answer to TOR 1 was discussed, which is a description of the proposed changes of the microbiological monitoring system. A comparison was presented between the current and proposed system in the form of operating characteristics (OC) curves for Aerobic Plate Counts (APC) for cattle. The probability of acceptance was calculated for three scenarios, assuming microbial contamination of bulk meat, primal, and offal are (1) equal to carcass contamination or (2) 1.5 log<sub>10</sub> higher compared to carcasses. Scenario (3) considered an establishment where activities are limited to slaughtering only, and carcasses are transferred to a different establishment for boning.

The WG agreed that scenario 3 was not needed for the assessment. An OC curve also presented the impact of a discontinuation of Salmonella monitoring.

The modelling approach for TOR 2 included data from bulk meat, primal and offal. The final model and results will be presented and discussed at the next WG meeting.

The amendment to the protocol was discussed, with the main change being the inclusion of data from bulk meat, primal and offal.

## **V. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 via web conference.

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20 November 2023

09:00-10:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 28 November 2023

**Location:** EFSA - Webconference

**Attendees:**

○ Working Group Members:

Bojan Blagojevic

Laurent Guillier

Kostas Koutsoumanis

Roland Lindqvist

○ Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:

Not applicable

○ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Not applicable

○ EFSA:

Martin Goudjihounde

Michaela Hempen

Laura Martino

## I. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

## II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## III. 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.

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<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. Scientific topic(s) for discussion<sup>4</sup>**

The results for the comparison between the current and the proposed system for bovine and sheep were presented for APC and *E. coli*. Regarding Salmonella, the simulation model was based on the prevalence in the current system. The WG discussed the outcomes and the sensitivity of both systems in triggering alerts. Some clarifications are still needed to better draft the models. It was agreed to request more detailed information from the Australian Authority. Further discussions will take place during the upcoming meetings to choose the best models for the assessment of the proposed PHI program. The WG set up the new working plan with specific tasks for its members for upcoming meetings.

#### **V. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 via web conference.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00058>

# 5<sup>th</sup> Working Group meeting on impact of the proposed revised Australia's microbiological monitoring programme for beef and sheep meat exported to the EU



08 November 2023

09:00-12:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 16 November 2023

**Location:** EFSA - Webconference

**Attendees:**

- Working Group Members:

Bojan Blagojevic

Laurent Guillier

Kostas Koutsoumanis

Roland Lindqvist

- Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:

Not applicable

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Not applicable

- EFSA:

Teresa Maria Da Silva Felicio

Martin Goudjihounde

Michaela Hempen

Laura Martino

## I. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

## II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## III. 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.

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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. Scientific topic(s) for discussion<sup>4</sup>**

The results of the 5 models for APC and E. coli (beef and sheep) were presented. The characteristic are a) by establishment, fitting a normal distribution to log transformed concentration to describe variability, b) frequency of sampling based on sampling plan and daily kill, c) moving window of 15 samples to which criteria are applied (c, m, M), closing and resetting window in case of alert and d) outcome : total number of alerts. It was suggested to run three scenarios based on estimated mean and std dev of fitted normal distribution, the 97.5<sup>th</sup> percentile of the fitted distribution and a hypothetical scenario with higher contamination loads. Including Salmonella in this model requires a translation of prevalence data to concentration.

The approach for including bulk meat, primal and offal into the model was discussed since outcome of the model used in the equivalence submission is expressed as summed average annual number of alerts combining alerts from carcasses, bulk meat and primals. The discussion will continue during the next WG meeting.

#### **V. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 via web conference.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00058>

# 4<sup>th</sup> Working Group meeting on impact of the proposed revised Australia's microbiological monitoring programme for beef and sheep meat exported to the EU



12 October 2023

13:00-16:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 30 October 2023

**Location:** EFSA - Webconference

**Attendees:**

- Working Group Members:

Bojan Blagojevic

Laurent Guillier

Kostas Koutsoumanis

Roland Lindqvist

- Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:

Andreas Kiermeier

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Not applicable

- EFSA:

Teresa Maria Da Silva Felicio

Kateryna Chuzhakina

Michaela Hempen

Laura Martino

## I. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

## II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## III. 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. Two interests were declared orally by Kostas Koutsoumanis at the beginning of this meeting but no conflict was identified.

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<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. Scientific topic(s) for discussion<sup>4</sup>**

A hearing expert was invited to this WG meeting to present the calculations for the OC curves presented in the equivalence submission. He explained that the proposed change of the programme including samples from bulk meat and primal, in addition to carcasses, is still considered one sampling plan. The overall sampling frequency is not changed but distributed to the other two products. This results in fewer carcass samples compared to the current system but is topped by samples for bulk meat and primal. Exceeding the criteria in any of these samples triggers an alert which is followed by an investigation of the entire chain.

The WG discussed if this additional information can be included in the assessment and suggested to either assume a worst-case scenario based on carcass samples or to carry out a complete analysis including the data from bulk meat and primal cuts. The way forward will be discussed further in consultation with the European Commission.

The WG further agreed on the specifications of the model. It was agreed to present the results as number of alerts and total number of windows per year for current and proposed and discuss at the next meeting how to present those visually. Results could be summarised in a table with total number of alerts and number of establishments contributing to those alerts.

#### **V. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 via web conference.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00058>



05 September 2023

09:00-12:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 08 September 2023

**Location:** EFSA - Webconference

**Attendees:**

- Working Group Members:  
Kostas Koutsoumanis  
Roland Lindqvist  
Bojan Blagojevic  
Laurent Guillier
- Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:  
Not Applicable
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:  
Not applicable
- EFSA:  
Michaela Hempen  
Laura Martino

## I. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

## II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## III. 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.

## IV. Scientific topic(s) for discussion<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00058>



The WG discussed the draft of the answer to TOR 1. The predicted changes reported by the Australian equivalence submission in the annex to the mandate were different from those calculations implemented by the WG. It was agreed to request more detailed information from the Australian authority on their calculation of the probability of acceptance for cattle and sheep carcasses comparing the current and proposed sampling plans.

The WG further discussed the approach to answer TOR 2. A model will be developed using an extended dataset (cattle and sheep carcass monitoring data from all EU-listed slaughterhouses over 5 years) to compare annual number of alerts of the current monitoring system with the proposed changes.

First results of the model will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **V. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 via web conference.

14 July 2023

13:00-17:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 20 July 2023

**Location:** EFSA - Webconference

**Attendees:**

- Working Group Members:

Kostas Koutsoumanis

Roland Lindqvist

Bojan Blagojevic

Laurent Guillier

- Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:

Not Applicable

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Not applicable

- EFSA:

Michaela Hempen

Laura Martino

Ancuta Cezara Simon

## I. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

## II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## III. 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.

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<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. Scientific topic(s) for discussion<sup>4</sup>**

The WG discussed the data and model code received by the Australian authority. Some data entries are still unclear and further clarifications will be requested.

The WG is implementing the code with the data provided to reproduce the results presented in the equivalence submission. In addition, a new model will be developed with a larger data set, also provided by the Australian authority. Using this model, a comparison will be made on the number of alerts expected with the current system and with the proposed changes.

The new model will be developed until the next meeting and then discussed with the entire WG.

#### **V. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 via web conference.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00058>

# 1<sup>st</sup> Working Group meeting on impact of the proposed revised Australia's microbiological monitoring programme for beef and sheep meat exported to the EU



12 May 2023

09:30-13:30

MINUTES - Agreed on 19 May 2023

**Location:** EFSA - Webconference

**Attendees:**

- Working Group Members:  
Kostas Koutsoumanis  
Roland Lindqvist  
Bojan Blagojevic  
Laurent Guillier
- Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:  
Not Applicable
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:  
EC: Martial Plantady
- EFSA:  
Michaela Hempen  
Laura Martino

## I. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

## II. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## III. 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.

## IV. Scientific topic(s) for discussion<sup>4</sup>

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<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)

<sup>4</sup> <https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00058>



The WG chair welcomed the participants and after a tour de table, the EFSA secretariat presented the background to the mandate and the terms of reference. In October 2021, the Australian Government (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment) informed the European Commission on its intention to reform its export meat regulatory system, in particular the National Carcase Microbiology Monitoring Program (NCMMP) for beef and sheep meat exports. The *E.coli* and *Salmonella* Monitoring (ESAM) Program (now NCMMP) was determined by DG SANTE in 2010 to be equivalent to the requirements for microbiological monitoring laid down in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 further to an EFSA scientific assessment. The proposed revised NCMMP would expand existing carcase and carton meat (bulk meat) microbiological monitoring to include also primal cuts and offal and cease carcase monitoring for *Salmonella*.

EFSA is asked to assess if the revised system continues to offer the same level of guarantees for the EU as regards its ability to detect microbiological contamination. In particular, EFSA is asked (1) to appraise the results of the revised NCMMP for beef and sheep meat exports provided by Australia and (2) to determine the impact of this revision on the ability of the program to detect microbiological contamination and to be equivalent to the EU requirements as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005.

The deadline for this Article 31 request is 31 December 2023.

The WG discussed the interpretation of the TORs with the EC representative. It was agreed with EC that TOR 1 will be addressed by describing the proposed monitoring programme in comparison to the current programme. TOR 2 will be addressed using a quantitative model to compare the impact of the proposed changes with the current programme using Australian data. It was agreed to limit the comparison to data from carcasses as applied in the EU monitoring programme. The model (implemented in R software) output will be measured as time (days) to alert and/or average annual number of alerts.

## V. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023 via web conference.

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