

**SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
PLANT HEALTH**
111th Plenary meeting



29 March 2023 h 09:00-18:00
30 March 2023 h 9:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 25 June 2023

Location: EFSA - Parma - Onsite

Attendees:

- PLH Panel Members:

BRAGARD Claude (Chair), BAPTISTA Paula, CHATZIVASSILIOU Elisavet, DI SERIO Francesco, GONTHIER Paolo, JAQUES Josep, JUSTESEN Annemarie, MACLEOD Alan, MAGNUSSON Christer, MILONAS Panagiotis, NAVAS-CORTES Juan, PARNELL Stephen, POTTING Roel, REIGNAULT Philippe, STEFANI Emilio, THULKE Hans-Hermann, VAN DER WERF Wopke, VICENT CIVERA Antonio, YUEN Jonathan, ZAPPALÀ Lucia.

- Hearing Experts¹: FACCOLI Massimo and MARCHIORO Matteo (University of Padova), GRIMAULT Valérie and PICARD Camille (EPPO).
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

EC SANTE: MYLONA Panagiota, SHUMBE Leonard, REINERT Wolfgang, DI MARIA Filippa (SANTE)

- EFSA PLANTS Unit:

ANTONIOU Alexia, CAMILLERI Melanie, CAVALHEIRO Joao Filipe, CROTTA Matteo, CZWIENCZEK Ewelina, DEL BIANCO Alice, DIMITROPOULOU Spyridoula, GARDI Ciro, GOBBI Alex, GRAZIOSI Ignazio, KACZMAREK Agata, KARIAMPA Paraskevi, KERTÉSZ Virág, KRUSTEVA Roumiana, LOPEZ MERCADAL Julia, MAIORANO Andrea, MARTINO Marina, PAUTASSO Marco, ROSSI Eugenio, STANCANELLI Giuseppe, STREISSL Franz, TACCI Emanuela, VOS Sybren.

- EFSA MESE Unit:

Olaf MOSBACH-SCHULZ

I. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the all the participants attending onsite and online. No apologies for absences were received.

II. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

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/en/keydocs/docs/expertselection.pdf>



III. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence^[1] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management,^[2] 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.

Certain interests were declared orally by the members before the beginning of the meeting. For further details on the outcome of the screening of the Oral Declaration of Interest made at the beginning of the meeting, please refer to the Annex I.

IV. Report on written procedures

The PLANTS Administration Assistant highlighted that method for sharing the minutes has proven effective by referring to the previous plenary (110th).

V. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

5.1. Draft Scientific opinion on the pest categorisation of *Solenopsis invicta*. (EFSA-Q-2022-00766)

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Solenopsis invicta* Butler (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) the red imported fire ant, for the EU territory. *S. invicta* is native to central South America and has spread to North and Central America, East Asia and Australia where it is recognised as a major invasive species causing serious environmental impacts to biodiversity and harming horticultural crops such as cabbage, eggplant and potatoes. It can girdle and kill young citrus trees. *S. invicta* is not listed as a Union quarantine pest in Annex II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. However, the European Scientific Forum on Invasive Alien Species lists *S. invicta* as a species of Union concern (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203). Like other ant species, *S. invicta* is a social insect commonly creating colonies in the soil. Long distance spread in the Americas has been attributed to nests being carried in soil accompanying plants for planting, or simply in soil alone. *S. invicta* could enter the EU via conveyances carrying a wide range of goods if the conveyance is contaminated with soil or has been in close contact with soil, and with plants for planting in soil or growing media. Climatic conditions in large parts of the southern EU are suitable for establishment and spread would occur when mated females disperse to form new colonies. If *S. invicta* established in the EU, losses to horticultural crops would be expected in addition to losses to biodiversity. The impacts of *S. invicta* go beyond plant health with the ant attacking new-born, hatching, weak, or sick animals. Stings can cause allergic reactions in humans and are a public health issue. However, such factors are outside the scope of a plant health pest categorization. *S. invicta* satisfies the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for it to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest.

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.2. Draft Scientific opinion on the pest categorisation of *Nilaparvata lugens*. (EFSA-Q-2022-00764)

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Nilaparvata lugens* (Hemiptera: Delphacidae), the brown planthopper, for the European Union (EU). *N. lugens* is widespread in Asia where it is native; it also occurs in Oceania where it is naturalised. *N. lugens* is not known to be present in the EU and is not listed in Annex II of Commission



Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. It is a monophagous species and a major pest of rice (*Oryza sativa*). High populations of planthoppers cause leaves to initially turn orange yellow before becoming brown and dry and this is a condition called “hopperburn” that kills the plant. *N. lugens* can also transmit plant viruses. It can complete 12 generations per year in tropical areas, where it resides year-round. *N. lugens* can undertake long-distance migration of up to 500 km from tropical areas to form transient populations in sub-tropical and temperate areas but due to low temperatures and absence of rice plants during the winter it does not establish in such areas. Entry to the EU via migration is unlikely given the distance from tropical rice growing areas. A possible but unlikely potential pathway is the import of infested rice seedlings, although we have no evidence that such trade exists. In the EU, rice is mainly planted from seed; when transplanted, it is sourced locally. *N. lugens* is very unlikely to survive year-round in the EU due to unsuitable climate and lack of hosts during the winter. Consequently, the pest is very unlikely to become established in the EU territory. Nevertheless, there are measures available to further reduce the likelihood of entry, establishment and spread of *N. lugens* within the EU. *N. lugens* does not satisfy the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for it to be regarded as a potential Union Quarantine Pest.

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.3. Draft Scientific opinion on the pest categorisation of *Takahashia japonica*. (EFSA-Q-2022-00768)

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Takahashia japonica* (Hemiptera: Sternorrhyncha: Coccidae), the Asian string cottony scale, for the EU. This insect is native to Japan, and it is now established in many countries in Asia. It was first recorded in the EU (Italy) in 2017 and has also been found in Croatia. It is not listed in Annex II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. It is polyphagous, feeding on broad-leaved trees and shrubs assigned to 25 genera belonging to 17 families. Host plant species commonly found in EU include maple (*Acer* sp.), alder (*Alnus japonica*), silkworm mulberry (*Morus alba*), black mulberry (*Morus nigra*), quince (*Cydonia oblonga*), walnut (*Juglans regia*), cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*), apple (*Malus domestica*), and citrus (*Citrus* sp.). Climatic conditions and availability of host plants in southern and central EU countries have allowed this species to establish and spread. Impact in cultivated hosts including citrus, mulberries, quinces, apples, plums, forest trees, as well as ornamental plants, is anticipated. Phytosanitary measures are available to reduce the likelihood of entry and further spread. *T. japonica* meets the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for this species to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest.

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.4. Draft Scientific opinion on the pest categorisation of *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum*. (EFSA-Q-2022-00398)

The EFSA Plant Health Panel performed a pest categorisation of *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum*, a clearly defined plant pathogenic fungus of the family Botryosphaeriaceae. The pathogen affects a wide range of woody perennial crops and ornamental plants causing symptoms such as leaf spot, shoot blight, branch dieback, canker, pre- and post-harvest fruit rot, gummosis, and root rot. The pathogen is present in Africa, Asia, North and South America, and Oceania. It has also been reported from Greece, Cyprus and Italy, with a restricted distribution. Nevertheless, there is a key uncertainty on the geographical distribution of *N. dimidiatum*



worldwide and in the EU, because in the past, when molecular tools were not available, the two synanamorphs of the pathogen (*Fusicoccum*-like and *Scytalidium*-like) might have been misidentified based only on morphology and pathogenicity tests. *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum* is not included in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. Because of the wide host range of the pathogen, this pest categorisation focuses on those hosts for which there is robust evidence that the pathogen was formally identified by a combination of morphology, pathogenicity and multilocus sequence analysis. Plants for planting, fresh fruits and bark and wood of host plants as well as soil and other plant growing media are the main pathways for the further entry of the pathogen into the EU. Host availability and climate suitability factors occurring in parts of the EU are favourable for the further establishment of the pathogen. In the areas of its present distribution, including Italy, the pathogen has a direct impact on cultivated hosts. Phytosanitary measures are available to prevent the further introduction and spread of the pathogen into the EU. *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum* satisfies the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for this species to be regarded as potential Union quarantine pest.

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.5. Draft Scientific opinion on the pest categorisation of *Coleosporium asterum*. (EFSA-Q-2022-00394)

The Panel discussed a draft of the pest categorisation of *Coleosporium asterum* and decided to postpone adoption, because of the need to revise the draft due to the taxonomic uncertainty.

5.6. Draft Scientific opinion on the commodity risk assessment of *Crataegus monogyna* plants from United Kingdom. (EFSA-Q-2022-00349)

The European Commission requested the EFSA Panel on Plant Health to prepare and deliver risk assessments for commodities listed in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/2019 as 'High risk plants, plant products and other objects'. Taking into account the available scientific information, including the technical information provided by the applicant country, this Scientific Opinion covers the plant health risks posed by the following commodities: *Crataegus monogyna* bare root plants and rooted plants in pots imported into the EU from the United Kingdom. A list of pests potentially associated with the commodities was compiled. The relevance of each pest was assessed based on evidence following defined criteria. The quarantine pest *Erwinia amylovora* was selected for further evaluation. For *E. amylovora* the special requirements specified in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 are fulfilled by the United Kingdom. No other pests for further evaluation were selected.

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.7. Draft Scientific opinion on the commodity risk assessment of *Malus domestica* plants from United Kingdom. (EFSA-Q-2021-00568)

The European Commission requested the EFSA Panel on Plant Health to prepare and deliver risk assessments for commodities listed in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/2019 as 'High risk plants, plant products and other objects'.

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a commodity risk assessment of *Malus domestica* plants from United Kingdom. This Scientific Opinion covers plant health risks posed by rooted plants in pots, bundles of bare-rooted plants or trees and bundles of budwood and graftwood



of *Malus domestica* imported from the United Kingdom, taking into account the available scientific information, including the technical information provided by the United Kingdom. All pests associated with the commodities were evaluated against specific criteria for their relevance for this opinion. Two quarantine pests (tobacco ringspot virus and tomato ringspot virus), one protected zone quarantine pest (*Erwinia amylovora*) and four non-regulated pests (*Colletotrichum aenigma*, *Meloidogyne mali*, *Eulecanium excrescens*, *Takahashia japonica*) that fulfilled all relevant criteria were selected for further evaluation. For *E. amylovora*, special requirements are specified in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. Based on the information provided in the dossier, the specific requirements for *E. amylovora* were met.

For the remaining six pests, the risk mitigation measures proposed in the technical Dossier from the United Kingdom were evaluated considering the possible limiting factors. For the selected pests, expert judgement is given on the likelihood of pest freedom, taking into consideration the risk mitigation measures acting on the pest, including uncertainties associated with the assessment. The degree of pest freedom varies among the pests evaluated, with scales (*E. excrescens* and *T. japonica*) being the pests most frequently expected on the imported budwood and graftwood. The Expert Knowledge Elicitation indicated with 95% certainty that between 9,976 and 10,000 bundles (consisting of 50 up to 500 plants each) per 10,000 would be free from the above-mentioned scales.

5.8. Draft Scientific opinion on commodity risk assessment of *Crataegus monogyna* plants from United Kingdom. (EFSA-Q-2022-00349)

The European Commission requested the EFSA Panel on Plant Health to prepare and deliver risk assessments for commodities listed in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/2019 as 'High risk plants, plant products and other objects'. Taking into account the available scientific information, including the technical information provided by the applicant country, this Scientific Opinion covers the plant health risks posed by the following commodities: *Crataegus monogyna* bare root plants and rooted plants in pots imported into the EU from the United Kingdom. A list of pests potentially associated with the commodities was compiled. The relevance of any pest was assessed based on evidence following defined criteria. Only the quarantine pest *Erwinia amylovora* was selected for further evaluation. For *E. amylovora* the special requirements specified in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 are fulfilled by the United Kingdom but no other pests for further evaluation were selected.

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.9. Quantitative pest risk assessment of *Elasmopalpus lignosellus*. (EFSA-Q-2021-00751)

Following a request from the European Commission, the EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a quantitative pest risk assessment of *Elasmopalpus lignosellus* (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae), the lesser cornstalk borer, for the EU territory. The assessment considered entry, establishment, spread and impact. Two scenarios for establishment were considered: (i) under current climatic conditions, and (ii) under a future climate based on an ensemble of climate change scenarios. Impact assessment focused on cereal and legume host species. *E. lignosellus* is not known to occur outside of the Americas although it has been intercepted in the EU on fresh asparagus spears for consumption. Based on the size of the trade and evidence of interceptions, the importation of asparagus from Peru was identified as the most important pathway for entry. Using stochastic pathway modelling with parameter values based on Eurostat data and expert knowledge elicitation (EKE), the Panel estimated the



median number of infested asparagus spears entering the EU annually to be approximately 8,600 (90% certainty range (CR) approximately 1,300 to 58,500). Each infested spear is likely to contain only one larva. Conditions are most suitable for establishment in the southern EU, especially around the Mediterranean basin. Under current climatic conditions around 16% of spears enter regions of the EU suitable for establishment; this rises to 24% in the climate change scenario considered (2040–2059). However, due to estimated small likelihoods of adults emerging and escaping from discarded waste, finding a mate and the subsequent progeny surviving to initiate a founder population, the median number of populations expected to establish was estimated to be 0.0001 per year (90% CR 0.000005 to 0.002). Were *E. lignosellus* to establish, the median rate of natural spread was estimated to be 7.4 km/year (90% CR 0.6 to 18.2 km/year), after an initial lag period of 18.5 years (90% CR 3.3 to 43.8 years) following the establishment of a founder population. Estimated median yield losses in crops of cereals and legumes were estimated to be 0.95% (CR 0.2 to– 2.8%), assuming farmers would adapt control measures such as are in place for other seedling pests. The Panel did not consider a scenario with additional risk reduction options because no feasible options at field level could be identified while export inspections aiming for zero contamination of the commodity are already in place in the exporting country – Peru.

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.11. Quantitative pest risk assessment of *Resseliella citrifrugis*. (EFSA-Q-2023-00200)

Following a request from the European Commission, the EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a risk assessment of the citrus fruit midge *Resseliella citrifrugis* (Diptera: Cecidomyiidae), an oligophagous species, which feeds on fruits of *Citrus* spp., and is reported from China. The pest was temporarily regulated in October 2022 (Regulation (EU) 2022/1941, under Art. 30 (2016/2031)). The entry risk assessment focused on the citrus fruit pathway. Three scenarios were considered: A0 (current practice, i.e. regulated pest for the EU), A1 (deregulation), and A2 (A0 with additional stand-alone postharvest cold treatment). Based on the outputs of the entry model, under scenario A0, slightly less than 40 potential founder populations per year are expected (median; 90%-uncertainty interval between about one per 30 years and about 3,000 per year). Under scenario A1, the risk of entry increases by about three times and reaches about 120 potential founder populations per year (median; 90%-uncertainty interval between about one per 10 years and about 9,000 per year). Compared to scenario A0, the risk of entry is orders of magnitude lower for scenario A2 (median= about one potential founder population per 120 years; 90%-uncertainty interval between one per about 600 million years and about two per year). The main uncertainties in the entry assessment are the probability of transfer, the RRO effectiveness (for scenario A2), and the disaggregation of consignments (transport of citrus fruit in boxes or lots to different locations). For all scenarios, the number of established populations is only slightly lower than the number of potential founder populations. Establishment is thus not expected to be a major constraint for this pest to then spread and cause impacts, despite the uncertainty about the pest thermal requirements. The median lag period between establishment and spread is estimated to be about 18 months (90%-uncertainty interval between about 7 months and 54 months). After the lag period, the median rate of spread by flying and due to transport of harvested citrus fruit from orchards to packinghouses is estimated at about 100 km/yr (90%-range between about 40 and 500 km/yr). The main uncertainties in the spread assessment include the level of susceptibility of cultivars of different citrus species in the EU, the spread rate in China and the climate suitability of the initial spread focus in the EU. The median impact of *R. citrifrugis* in the EU citrus growing area (proportion of infested citrus fruit out of harvested citrus fruit) is estimated at about 10% (90%-uncertainty interval between about



2% and 25%). Uncertainties affecting the impact assessment include the susceptibility of different citrus cultivars and the effect of the citrus fruit harvesting season in the EU (mainly winter, the less suitable season for the pest).

The opinion was adopted on 30 March 2023.

5.12. Update of the Scientific opinion on the pest categorisation of Cadang cadang viroid. (EFSA-Q-2023-00174)

Due to lack of time, it was decided to postpone the discussion on this item to the April 2023 PLH Panel plenary meeting.

VI. Feedback from EFSA, SC and EC

6.1. Discussion on best practices for early sharing and presenting QPRA methodological approaches to Panel

The EFSA Scientific Committee Guidance on protocol development for EFSA generic scientific assessments is under public consultation until 15 May 2023. In the meantime, and for the opinions starting in April 2023: *Leucinodes orbonalis* and *L. pseudorbonalis*, *Retithrips syriacus*), some options for the early sharing of QPRA methodological approaches to the Panel were proposed. These consisted in:

Short Plenary meeting: a slide is presented during the short plenary with the work in progress and the links to the most recent version of the Opinion in the DMS.

Long Plenary meeting: (i) A detailed presentation focusing on the methodological approach is shared **1 week** in advance of the long plenary, (ii) a slot is always reserved for updates from WGs and, if needed, discussion of specific aspects of the Opinion.

Proposed options were agreed.

6.2. Update on the data collection for the pest categorisation on the non-EU Scolytinae of broadleaved trees

The data collection for the pest categorisation on the non-EU Scolytinae of broadleaved trees was presented to the EFSA PLH Panel by the staff of University of Padova (that is developing this task under an EFSA Art. 36 Grant). The recent features of the data base were demonstrated. The current data base includes roughly 6000 species, and it is linked to external resources such as Google Scholar citation index. Soon it will be implemented in the EFSA pest categorisation.

6.3. Feedback from SC

PLH Panel chair updated the Panel on the upcoming Scientific Committee activities.

6.4. Feedback from EC DG SANTE

The EC DG SANTE representative expressed gratitude to the panel for their excellent work. The panel was thanked for their efforts, and it was noted that the upcoming activities would be eagerly awaited.



VII. Any Other Business

The Administration Assistant introduced the upcoming steps concerning the present plenary and presented the dates for the next Panel meetings.

The Chair forewarned that the next PLH Panel meeting will be held online on the 28 April 2023. The team leader of PLH Risk Assessment, reminded the attendees about the upcoming 4th European Conference on *Xylella fastidiosa*, highlighting the deadlines and links for abstract submission and registration.

The Chair closed the session by thanking all that contributed to the Scientific opinions and to the fruitful discussions.



Annex I

Interests and actions resulting from the screening of Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI)

With regard to this meeting, **Dr. Francesco Di Serio** declared the following interest with regard to the draft Scientific opinions on:

- Scientific opinion on the commodity risk assessment of *Malus domestica* plants from United Kingdom. (EFSA-Q-2021-00568) (item 5.7.)

He informed the Panel that he participates to the work on these opinions as coordinator of EFSA Art. 36 Tasking Grant Specific Contracts. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence^[1] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management^[2], and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest (CoI).

This results in the exclusion of the expert from discussion or voting as PLH Panel Member of items 6.d, however, he can participate to this agenda meeting to present the work he conducted as coordinator of the related EFSA Art 36 Tasking Grant Specific Contracts.

[1] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

[2]

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