

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN
135th Panel Plenary meeting



26-27-28 September 2023
13:30-18:00 / 09:00-18:00 / 09:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 11 October 2023

Location: Teleconference

Attendees:

- Panel Members:
Margherita Bignami¹, Laurent Bodin, James Kevin Chipman, Jesús Del Mazo, Bettina Grasl-Kraupp, Christer Hogstrand², Laurentius (Ron) Hoogenboom, Jean-Charles Leblanc, Carlo Nebbia³, Elsa Nielsen⁴, Evangelia Ntzani⁵, Annette Petersen, Salomon Sand, Dieter Schrenk (Chair), Tanja Schwerdtle, Christiane Vleminckx, Heather Wallace
- Hearing Experts⁶:
Not Applicable
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:
EC: Frans Verstraete, Veerle Vanheusden
- EFSA:
 - FEEDCO_CONTAM: Maria Anastassiadou, Anna Christodoulidou, Federico Cruciani, Chantra Eskes, Mary Gilsenan (HoU), Eirini Kouloura, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Elena Rovesti, Hans Steinkellner, Tuuli Tauriainen, Ben Whitty.
 - MESE: Lucian Farcal, Petra Gergelova, José Angel Gómez Ruiz, Francesca Riolo.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence⁷ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management,⁸ 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 Declarations of Interest made at the beginning of the meeting, please refer to the Annex.

¹ Absent on 26 09 2023 from 13.30-15.30 CET.

² Absent on 26 09 2023 whole session, and on 28 09 2023 from 11.00-12.00 CET.

³ Absent on 27 09 2023 from 15.00-16.00 CET.

⁴ Absent on 27 09 2023 from 15.00-18.00 CET.

⁵ Absent on 28 09 2023 from 9.00-10.00 CET.

⁶ 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>

⁷ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

⁸ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf



4. Agreement of the minutes of the 134th Panel Plenary meeting held on 11-12-13 July 2023, in Parma and via teleconference

The minutes of the 134th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 27 July 2023.

5. Report on written procedure

None.

6. Scientific output(s) submitted for discussion/adoptio

6.1 Draft Opinion on the risk for human and animal health related to the presence of Polychlorinated Naphthalenes in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2020-00663)

The Chair of the WG on PCNs in feed and food gave an overview of the progress of the work for this mandate. The sections under Data and Methodologies related to Supporting information for the assessment and Hazard identification and characterisation were discussed, as well as the sections under Assessment on Mode of action, Considerations of critical effects for human risk assessment and Dose-response analysis for human risk assessment. These sections were endorsed by the CONTAM Panel with minor amendments. In addition, the WG proposal for hazard identification and characterisation for animals was presented and discussed. The WG will consider the feedback and comments received by the Panel to continue with the development of the risk assessment.

6.2 Draft Opinion on the risk for animal health and transfer for feed to food of animal origin related to the presence of Ochratoxin A in feed (EFSA-Q-2021-00699)

The Chair of the WG on OTA in feed and the EFSA WG coordinator presented the final draft of the Opinion for possible adoption. The sections on Effects in food-producing and non-food producing animal species, Dietary exposure assessment, Risk characterisation, Conclusions, Recommendations, Summary and Abstract were discussed. The CONTAM Panel provided minor comments and adopted the Opinion. The Panel thanked the WG member and EFSA staff for their work.

6.3 Draft Opinion on the risk for animal health related to the presence of Ergot alkaloids in feed (EFSA-Q-2021-00697)

The Chair of the WG on Ergot alkaloids in feed and the EFSA WG coordinator provided an update on the progress of the mandate. The sections on Toxicokinetics, Modes of action and Effects in food-producing and non-food producing animal species were discussed. The CONTAM Panel provided minor comments and endorsed the sections presented. The WG will address the comments and continue with the development of the risk assessment.

6.4 Draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of TBBPA in food (EFSA-Q-2018-00434)

The Chair of the WG on BFRs in food presented the draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of TBBPA and its derivatives in food for first discussion of selected sections. This included the sections on Supporting information for the assessment, Toxicokinetics and Toxicity in experimental animals. The approach for the estimation of the human dietary exposure was also presented for possible agreement. The CONTAM Panel provided comments to the draft sections



presented and agreed with the approach for exposure assessment. The WG will take into consideration the feedback received and will continue with the development of the draft Opinion.

6.5 Draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of PBDEs in food (EFSA-Q-2018-00432)

The Chair of the WG on BFRs in food presented an overview of the comments received during the public consultation of the draft Opinion that took place from 8 June to 20 July 2023. Draft replies to selected comments were discussed. The feedback provided by the Panel will be taken into consideration by the WG in addressing the comments.

6.6 Draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of inorganic arsenic in food (EFSA-Q-2021-00250)

The Chair of the WG on Arsenic in food presented an overview of the comments received during the public consultation of the draft Opinion that took place from 24 July to 10 September 2023. A summary of selected comments was made and an outline of how the WG on Arsenic in food intends to address these comments was discussed. The feedback provided by the Panel will be taken into consideration by the WG in addressing the comments.

7. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/ Scientific Panels/EFSA/ EC

7.1 Scientific Committee

The CONTAM Panel Chair reported on matters important for the work of the Panel that were discussed at the last meetings of the EFSA Scientific Committee held on 20-21 September 2023.

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 Biomarkers of effects, on the appraisal of Epidemiological studies, on Protocol development, on the Update of the risk-benefit assessment guidance, and on Fluoride.

7.2 European Commission

The European Commission representatives 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.

7.3 Updates from CONTAM Panel Working Groups

- WG on BFRs in food**

See Item 6.4 and 6.5.

- WG on Feed detoxification processes**

The Chair of the WG informed that the WG is proceeding well with the preparation of guidance to the feed business operators regarding the information needed to support the risk assessment of the detoxification processes applied to products intended for animal feed (as provided for in Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and in line with the acceptability criteria of the Regulation (EU) 2015/786).



- **WG on Arsenic in food**

The Chair of the WG informed that, in parallel to the draft Opinion on inorganic arsenic in food (see Item 6.6), the WG is developing two draft Opinions on small and complex organoarsenics. The approach for the risk assessment for the draft Opinion on small organoarsenics is foreseen to be presented at upcoming Plenary meetings.

- **WG on PCNs in feed and food**

See Item 6.1.

- **WG on Ergot alkaloids in feed**

See Item 6.3.

- **WG on Ochratoxin A in feed**

See Item 6.2.

7.4 Updates from EFSA

The CONTAM Panel members were informed about upcoming events of interest such as the 'International Conference on Using Epidemiological Studies in Health Risk Assessments: Relevance, Reliability and Causality' to be held on 9-10 November 2023.

The CONTAM Panel members were informed about activities within the framework of PARC (Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals) that might be of relevance for its work.

The CONTAM Panel members were informed in more detail about the proposed planning and upcoming activities of the SC WG on Biomarkers of effect.

The CONTAM Panel members were informed about current initiatives on PFAS from the EFSA Advisory Forum. At the 87th meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum (AF)⁹, representatives from five Member States proposed to create a working group to address the various issues related to PFAS, including risk assessment, risk communication, and others. As a follow-up, the representatives of these countries met and proposed during the 88th AF meeting¹⁰ the creation of 1) a governance "Steering Group" comprised of interested AF representatives as well as representatives from EC DG SANTE, DG ENV, and EFSA; 2) a Risk Assessors Working Group comprised of experts on PFAS nominated by the AF; and 3) an online platform for information, documents and data sharing.

Due to the high work load before the end of the year, the Panel members agreed on dates for an ad-hoc Plenary meeting beginning of November.

8. Any other business

None.

⁹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/87th-advisory-forum-minutes.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-09/minutes-88th-advisory-forum-meeting.pdf>



9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 6 and 13 November 2023, via teleconference.

Annex

Interests and actions resulting from the Oral Declaration of Interest done at the beginning of the meeting

With regard to this meeting, Dr Dieter Schrenk declared the following interest: participation in a scientific role to the World Health Organization (WHO) expert meetings held from April 2022 to October 2023 on the re-evaluation of the 2005 WHO toxic equivalency factors (TEFs) for dioxin-like compounds. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence¹¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management¹², and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was not deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest for the expert concerned.

With regard to this meeting, Dr Ron Hoogenboom declared the following interest: participation in a scientific to the World Health Organization (WHO) expert meetings held in October 2022 on the re-evaluation of the 2005 WHO toxic equivalency factors (TEFs) for dioxin-like compounds. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence¹¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management¹², and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was not deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest for the expert concerned.

With regard to this meeting, Dr Kevin Chipman declared the following interest: presentation at a Fresenius conference of the Opinion on MOH in food on behalf of EFSA. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence¹¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management¹², and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was not deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest for the expert concerned.

With regard to this meeting, Dr Jean-Charles Leblanc declared the following interest: participation to the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on the Risks and Benefits of Fish Consumption. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence¹¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management¹², and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was not deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest for the expert concerned.

With regard to this meeting, Dr Salomon Sand declared the following interest: presentation at EUROTOX2023 about uncertainty assessments. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence¹¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management¹², and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was not deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest for the expert concerned.

¹¹ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

¹² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf