SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

117th Panel Plenary meeting

29 - 30 November 2023
10:30-18:00 / 09:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 19 December 2023

EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Location: Teleconference

Attendees:

- Panel Members:
  Claude BRAGARD (Chair), Paula BAPTISTA, Elisavet CHATZIVASSILIOU, Francesco DI SERIO, Paolo GONTHIER, Josep JAQUES, Annemarie JUSTESEN, Alan MACLEOD, Christer MAGNUSSON, Panagiotis MILONAS, Juan NAVAS-CORTES, Roel POTTING, Philippe REIGNAULT, Emilio STEFANI, Hans-Hermann THULKE, Antonio VICENT CIVERA, Wopke VAN DER WERF, Jonathan YUEN, Lucia ZAPPALÀ
- Hearing Experts:
  Yara EL KHOURY (CNR Bari)
- European Commission:
  Maria Belen MARQUEZ GARCIA, Panagiota MYLONA, Wolfgang REINERT, Leonard SHUMBE
- EFSA:
  Joao Filipe CAVALHEIRO, Ewelina CZWIENCZEK, Cristiana DO VALE CORREIA, Ciro GARDI, Alex GOBBI, Agata KACZMAREK, Paraskevi KARIAMPA, Virág KERTÉSZ, Andrea MAIORANO, Raghavendra Reddy MANDA, Marco PAUTASSO, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Franz STREISSL, Emanuela TACCI, Anastasia TERZIDOU
- Others:

MESE Unit: Olaf MOSBACH-SCHULZ

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Stephen Parnell.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Panel 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.

4. Report on written agreement of the minutes of the previous plenary minutes

The minutes of the 115th and 116th Panel plenary meetings were agreed by written procedure on 14 November 2023.

5. Scientific output(s) submitted for discussion/adoption

5.1 Draft on Scientific Opinion of QPRA on *Leucinodes orbonalis* EFSA-Q-2023-00069

Following a request from the European Commission, the EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a quantitative risk assessment of *Leucinodes orbonalis* (Lepidoptera: Crambidae), the eggplant fruit and shoot borer, for the EU. The assessment focused on potential pathways for entry, climatic conditions favouring establishment, spread and impact. Options for risk reduction are discussed but effectiveness was not quantified. *L. orbonalis* is a key pest of eggplant (aubergine/ brinjal) in the Indian subcontinent and occurs throughout most of southern Asia with records mostly from India and Bangladesh. The main pathway of entry is fruit of Solanaceous plants, primarily exotic varieties of eggplant, *Solanum melongena* and turkey berry, *S. torvum*. The trade in both commodities from Asia is small but nevertheless dwarfs the trade-in other *Solanum* fruits from Asia (*S. aethiopicum, S. anguivi, S. virginianum, S. aculeatissimum, S. undatum*) which were therefore not further assessed as potential pathways. The trade in eggplant from Asia consists of special fruit types and caters mostly to niche markets in the EU, while most eggplant consumed in Europe is produced in southern European and northern African countries, where *L. orbonalis* does not occur. Using expert knowledge elicitation (EKE) and pathway modelling, the Panel estimated that approximately 3 to 670 infested fruit (90% certainty range, CR) of *S. melongena* or fruit bunches of *S. torvum*, enter into regions of the EU that are suitable for *L. orbonalis* establishment each year. Based on CLIMEX modelling and using two possible thresholds of ecoclimatic index (EI) to indicate uncertainty in establishment potential, climates favouring establishment occur mostly in southern Europe, where, based on human population, approximately 14% of the imported produce may be distributed across NUTS2 regions where EI≥30; or where 23% of the produce is distributed where EI≥15. Escape of adult moths occurs mostly from consumer waste. By analysing results of different scenarios for the proportion of *S. melongena* and *S. torvum* in the trade and considering uncertainties in the climatic suitability of southern Europe, adult moth emergence in areas suitable for establishment is expected to vary between 84 individuals per year and one individual per 40 years (based on 90% CR in different scenarios). In the baseline scenario, 25% of the solanaceous fruit from Asia is *S. torvum*, 75% is *S. melongena* and EI≥30 is required for establishment. After accounting for the chances of mating, host finding, and establishment, the probability of a mated female establishing a founder population in the EU is less than 1 in 100 000 to about 1 event per 161 years (90% CR in baseline scenario). The waiting time until the first establishment is then 161 to more than 100 000 years (CR). If such a founder population were established, the moth is estimated to spread at a rate of 0.65–7.0 km per year after a lag phase of 5–92 years. The impact of the insect on the production of eggplant is estimated to be 0.67–13% (CR) if growers take no specific action against the insect and 0.13-1.9% if they do take targeted actions. Tomato (*S. lycopersicum*) and potato (*S. tuberosum*) are hosts of *L. orbonalis*, but the insect does not develop to maturity in tomato fruit, and it does not feed on potato tubers under field conditions, hence damage to potato can only occur due to feeding on shoots. Tomato and potato are not preferred hosts; nevertheless, impact can occur if populations of *L. orbonalis* are high and preferred hosts are not available. The Panel did not assess this damage due to insufficient information.

This opinion was adopted on 30th of November 2023.

5.2 Draft on Scientific Opinion of Commodity Risk assessment Prunus L from Moldova EFSA-Q-2020-00533

Scientific Opinion of Commodity Risk assessment Prunus L from Moldova was endorsed at November Plenary, pending adoption in January after inclusion of an EKE on *Erwinia amylovora*, following evidence from recent scientific publications.

5.3 Draft on Scientific Opinion of Commodity risk assessment on *Corylus avellana* plants from the UK EFSA-Q-2023-00331

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. This Scientific Opinion covers plant health risks posed by plants of *Corylus avellana* imported from the United Kingdom (UK) as: (a) bundles of 1- to 2-year-old whips or transplants,(b) bundles of 1- to 2-year-old cell grown plants, (c) 1- to 7-year-old bare root single plants, and (d) up to 15-year-old single plants in pots, taking into account the available scientific information, including the technical information provided by the UK. All pests associated with the commodity were evaluated against specific criteria for their relevance for this opinion. Two EU quarantine pests, *Phytophthora ramorum* (non-EU isolates) and *Thaumetopoea processionea* fulfilled all relevant criteria and were selected for further evaluation. For the selected pests, the risk mitigation measures implemented in the technical dossier from the UK were evaluated taking into account the possible limiting factors. For these pests an 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. In the assessment of risk, the age of the plants was considered, reasoning that older trees are more likely to be infested mainly due to longer exposure time and larger size. The degree of pest freedom varies among the pests evaluated, with *P. ramorum* being the pest most frequently expected on the imported plants. The Expert Knowledge Elicitation indicated with 95% certainty that between 9,939 and 10,000 of the single plants in pots up to 15-year-old will be free from *P. ramorum* (non-EU isolates)

The opinion was adopted on 30 Nov 2023.

It was proposed by the panel experts that details which are provided in the answers to comments should be included in the text of the opinion if appropriate. Otherwise potentially important information which is included in the answers may get lost.

5.4 Draft on Scientific Opinion of Commodity risk assessment on Petunia Calibrachoa from Guatemala EFSA-Q-2022-00238

The European Commission requested the EFSA Panel on Plant Health to evaluate the probability of entry of pests (likelihood of pest freedom at entry), including both, regulated and non-regulated pests, associated with unrooted cuttings of the genera Petunia and Calibrachoa produced under physical isolation in Guatemala. The relevance of any pest for this opinion was based on evidence following defined criteria, based on the methodology used for High-Risk Plants adapted for the specificity of this assessment. Nineteen EU regulated pests (*Bemisia tabaci*, pepper golden mosaic virus, pepper huasteco yellow vein virus, tomato severe leaf curl virus , tomato yellow lea*f curl virus, tomato spotted wilt orthotospovirus, Liriomyza huidobrensis, Liriomyza sativae, Liriomyza trifolii*, *Bactericera cockerelli*, *Eotetranichus lewisi*, *Epitrix subcrinita, Epitrix cucumeris, Helicoverpa zea, Chloridea virescens, Spodoptera ornithogalli, Ralstonia solanacearum, Ralstonia pseudosolanacearum, Xantomonas vescicatoria*) and one EU non-regulated (*Phenacoccus solenopsis*) pest fulfilled all relevant criteria and were selected for further evaluation. For these pests, the risk mitigation measures proposed in the technical dossier from Guatemala were evaluated taking into account the possible limiting factors, and an 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 estimated degree of pest freedom varies among the pests evaluated, with tomato spotted wilt virus being the pest most frequently expected on the imported cuttings. The Expert Knowledge Elicitation indicated, with 95% certainty, that between 9,927 and 10,000 bags containing unrooted cuttings per 10,000 would be free of tomato spotted wilt virus.

The draft opinion was endorsed on 30 Nov 2023, pending the provision of a clarification from Guatemala NPPO. After such clarification is received and reviewed, the draft opinion will be presented for further discussion and possible adoption in next plenary.

5.5 Draft on Scientific Opinion of Pest categorisation on *Pestalotiopsis microspora* EFSA-Q-2023-00348

Following an EFSA commodity risk assessment of bonsai plants (*Pinus parviflora* grafted on *Pinus thunbergii*) imported from China, the EFSA Plant Health Panel performed a pest categorisation of *Pestalotiopsis microspora,* a clearly defined plant pathogenic fungus of the family Pestalotiopsidaceae. The pathogen has been reported on a wide range of monocotyledonous, dicotyledonous, and gymnosperms, either cultivated or wild plant species causing various symptoms such as leaf spot, leaf blight, scabby canker, fruit spot, pre- and post-harvest fruit rot, and root rot. In addition, the fungus was reported as an endophyte on a wide range of asymptomatic plant species. This pest categorisation focuses on the hosts that are relevant for the EU and for which there is robust evidence that the pathogen was formally identified by a combination of morphology, pathogenicity and multilocus sequencing analyses. *Pestalotiopsis microspora* was reported in Africa, North, Central and South America, Asia, and Oceania. In the EU, it was reported in the Netherlands. There is a key uncertainty on the geographical distribution of *P. microspora* worldwide and in the EU, because of the endophytic nature of the fungus, the lack of surveys, and because in the past, when molecular tools were not fully developed, the pathogen might had been misidentified as other *Pestalotiopsis* species or other members of the Pestalodiopsidaceae family based on morphology and pathogenicity tests. *Pestalotiopsis microspora* is not included in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. Plants for planting, fresh fruits, bark and wood of host plants as well as soil and other growing media associated with plant debris are the main pathways for the entry of the pathogen into the EU. Host availability and climate suitability in parts of the EU are favourable for the establishment and spread of the pathogen. The introduction and spread of the pathogen into the EU are expected to have an economic and environmental impact in parts of the territory where susceptible hosts are grown. Phytosanitary measures are available to prevent the introduction and spread of the pathogen into the EU. Unless the restricted distribution in the EU is disproven, *Pestalotiopsis microspora* satisfies all 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 Nov 2023.

5.6 Draft on Scientific Opinion of Pest categorisation on *Pestalotiopsis disseminata* EFSA-Q-2023-00346

Following the commodity risk assessments of bonsai plants from China consisting of *Pinus parviflora* grafted on *Pinus thunbergii* performed by EFSA, the EFSA Plant Health Panel performed a pest categorisation of *Pestalotiopsis disseminata,* a clearly defined plant pathogenic fungus of the family *Pestalotiopsidaceae*. The pathogen has been reported on herbaceous, woody and ornamental plants causing symptoms such as leaf blight, shoot blight, seedling blight, pod canker, pre- and post-harvest fruit rot, and gummosis. Moreover, the fungus was reported as an endophyte on a wide range of asymptomatic hosts. The pathogen is present in Africa, North and South America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. It has been reported from the EU, with a restricted distribution (Portugal). Nevertheless, there is a key uncertainty on the geographical distribution of *P. disseminata* in the EU and worldwide, because of the endophytic nature of the fungus, the lack of surveys, and since the pathogen might have been misidentified based only on morphology and pathogenicity tests. The pathogen is not included in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. This pest categorisation focuses on those hosts that are relevant for the EU and 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, bark

and wood of host plants as well as soil and other plant growing media are the main pathways for the entry of the pathogen into the EU. Host availability and climate suitability factors occurring in parts of the EU are favourable for the establishment of the pathogen. Despite the low aggressiveness observed in most reported hosts, and the fact that *P. disseminata* may colonise plants as an endophyte, its introduction and/or spread in the EU may have an economic and environmental impact (with a key uncertainty) where susceptible hosts are grown. Phytosanitary measures are available to prevent the introduction and spread of the pathogen into the EU. The Panel cannot conclude on whether *Pestalotiopsis disseminata* satisfies all the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for this species to be regarded as potential Union quarantine pest because of the key uncertainties on the restricted distribution in the EU and the magnitude of the impact.

The opinion was adopted on 30 Nov 2023.

5.7 Draft on Scientific Opinion on Pest categorisation on *Dendrolimus punctatus* (arthropods) EFSA-Q-2023-00315

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health performed a pest categorisation of *Dendrolimus punctatus* (Lepidoptera: Lasiocampidae), following a commodity risk assessment of bonsai *Pinus parviflora* grafted onto *P. thunbergii* from China in which *D. punctatus* was identified as a pest of possible concern to the European Union (EU). *D. punctatus*, also known as the Masson pine caterpillar, is present in China, Taiwan, Vietnam, India, and has recently spread to Japanese islands close to Taiwan. Larval feeding on the needles of *Pinus massoniana*, *P. merkusii, P. luchuensis*, and *P. elliottii* causes important damage. *D. punctatus* larvae can also feed on *P. armandii, P. echinata, P. latteri, P. parviflora, P. taeda, P. taiwanensis*, and *P. thunbergii* but full development on these hosts is uncertain. The pest has three to five generations per year; winter is spent as larvae on branch tips, on tree trunks, and in the soil. The females lay egg clusters on pine needles. Pupation occurs in cocoons attached to branches or needles. *D. punctatus* could enter the EU, either as eggs, larvae, or pupae in the foliage of plants for planting or cut branches, as larvae on wood with bark, or as overwintering larvae in branches, crevices in the bark or in the litter of potted plants. However, Annex VI of 2019/2072 prohibits the introduction of *D. punctatus* hosts (*Pinus* spp.) from countries and areas where the pest occurs. There are climate zones where the pest occurs in Asia that also occur in the EU, though they are limited, which constitutes an uncertainty regarding establishment. The pest's main hosts are not grown in the EU. However, the fact that it attacks the North American *Pinus echinata*, *P. elliottii*, and *P. taeda* in its Asian native area suggests a potential capacity to shift to pine species occurring in the EU territory. *D. punctatus* satisfies all the criteria that are within the remit of EFSA to assess for it to be regarded as a potential Union quarantine pest. Whether the *Pinus* commonly found in Europe could act as hosts is unknown but is fundamental, affecting the criteria of establishment, and magnitude of impact.

The opinion was adopted on 30 November 2023.

6. Feedback from EFSA, SC and EC DG SANTE

6.1 MUST-B project: Environmental scenarios for ApisRAM, a honey bee colony model

Agnès Rortais, SO from Team Ecotoxicology presented the MUST-B project on ApisRAM's environmental scenarios for honey bee colonies. The timeline, three scenarios, and adherence to Good Modelling Practices were discussed. It covered ApisRAM version three's development for regulatory risk assessment. Challenges included defining environmental scenarios and selecting baseline scenarios.

In the Q&A, topics included non-crop seasons, bee race integration, Europe's landscape diversity, and handling uncertainty. The possibility of sharing documents for panel input was discussed.

6.2 Feedback from EFSA Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee had discussions on crop guidance and epidemiologic studies. It was decided to include a section on plant and animal health. Additionally, there was a joint meeting with the Norwegian Food Safety Authority, which showed considerable interest in the report on GMO and PPR Panel activities.

An update on the plenary sessions was given, proposing a session on December 15th from 9 to 13:30. The dates for the panel meeting from January onwards was agreed and it was suggested to the panel member a transition to 100% in-person meetings.

6.3 Feedback from EC DG SANTE

DG SANTE is working on targeting amendments of the annexes that will include the work for the pest categorisation.

6.4 Feedback from EFSA: New Horizon Scanning Dashboard and Plenary meeting calendar

Sara Tramontini (SO PLH Monitoring team) presented the new Horizon Scanning Dashboard. The dashboard has three sections: Emerging pests, Priority pests, and a Newsletter Search Engine.

Sara demonstrated how users can explore the dashboard, view emerging pests on a map, analyse the traffic for priority pests, and search newsletters for specific pest-related information. The tool aims to engage both experts and the general public in understanding plant health threats.

In the Q&A session, Sara clarified that the tool primarily focuses on new signals and emerging threats rather than existing information from scientific publications. Future enhancements may include indicating if pest risk assessments are available and refining the search engine for more specific information.

The 2024 first semester PLH plenary calendar was shown to the Panel members as a reminder. The panel was informed that the next year Open Plenary is going to be the PLH plenary in January.

7. Any other business

8. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 15 December 2023 online.

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 of Commodity Risk assessment Prunus L from Moldova EFSA-Q-2020-00533 (item 5.2.)

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.