

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN
137th Panel Plenary meeting – OPEN to observers



28-29-30 November 2023
13:30-18:00 / 09:00-18:00 / 09:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 15 December 2023

Location: EFSA, Parma

Chair: Dieter Schrenk

Attendees:

o **Panel Members:**

On-site: Margherita Bignami, Laurent Bodin, James Kevin Chipman, Jesús Del Mazo, Laurentius (Ron) Hoogenboom, Jean-Charles Leblanc, Carlo Nebbia¹, Elsa Nielsen, Annette Petersen, Salomon Sand, Dieter Schrenk (Chair), Heather Wallace
Online: Bettina Grasl-Kraupp², Christer Hogstrand, Tanja Schwerdtle, Christiane Vleminckx

o **Hearing Experts³:**

Andrew Hart⁴

o **European Commission and/or Member States representatives:**

EC: Frans Verstraete, Veerle Vanheusden⁵, Ivana Poustkova (DG-SANTE)

o **EFSA:**

FEEDCO_CONTAM: Maria Anastassiadou, Mst Tazmin Akhter, Anna Christodoulidou, Federico Cruciani, Chantra Eskes, Mary Gilsean (HoU), Elena Gkimpixi, Eirini Kouloura, Marianna Kujawa, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Elena Rovesti, Hans Steinkellner, Tuuli Tauriainen, Ben Whitty, Magdalena Wagner

FEEDCO_FEED: Montserrat Anguita Freixa, Alberto Navarro Villa

o **Others:**

MESE: José Angel Gómez Ruiz, Djien Liem, Bruno Dujardin

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants and the Observers. Apologies were received from Evangelia Ntzani (28-29-30 November) and Tanja Schwerdtle (30 November).

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Panel members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence⁶ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management⁷, 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.

¹ On 29 Nov participated until 17.00 CET. On 30 Nov 2023 participated online.

² On 29 Nov participated until 16.45 CET.

³ 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>

⁴ Participated online on 28 Nov 14.15-15.30 CET.

⁵ Participated on-site 28-30 Nov 2023.

⁶ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

⁷ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf



4. Panel members introduction

The members of the CONTAM Panel and the EFSA staff from the FEEDCO Unit/CONTAM Team introduced themselves.

5. Presentation of Guidelines for observers

The CONTAM Panel coordinator presented the Guidelines for participation of Observers to EFSA Open Plenary meetings.

6. Agreement of the minutes of the 136th Panel plenary meeting held on 6 and 13 November 2023, via teleconference

The minutes of the 136th Panel plenary meeting were agreed on 28 November 2023.

7. Report on written procedure

None.

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

- **8.1 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 and the WG coordinator presented for possible adoption the draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of PBDEs in food. No further comments were received to the draft replies to the public consultation comments presented at previous Plenary meetings. The CONTAM Panel members went through the Abstract and agreed on some modifications for a clearer reading. The CONTAM Panel adopted the Opinion and thanked the WG members and EFSA staff for their work.

- **8.2 Draft opinion on the update of the risk assessment on inorganic arsenic in food ([EFSA-Q-2021-00250](#))**

The Chair of the WG on Arsenic in food presented for possible adoption the draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of inorganic arsenic in food. Annex G containing the responses to the public consultation comments as well as the draft Opinion had been updated following the discussions and written comments received before this Plenary. The CONTAM Panel went through these updates and after introducing a few minor amendments, adopted the Opinion. The CONTAM Panel thanked the WG members and EFSA staff for their work.

- **8.3 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 presented for possible adoption the draft Opinion on the risks for animal health related to the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed. The sections on Occurrence data, Exposure assessment, Risk characterisation, Uncertainty analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations, Abstract and



Summary were discussed. The CONTAM Panel adopted the Opinion and thanked the WG members and EFSA staff for their work.

- **8.4 Draft opinion on guidance for feed detoxification ([EFSA-Q-2023-00187](#))**

The Chair of the WG on feed detoxification and the EFSA WG coordinator presented for possible adoption the draft Statement providing guidance for the assessment of detoxification processes in feed. Following discussions and revisions to the draft, the CONTAM Panel adopted the Statement and thanked the WG members and EFSA staff for their work.

- **8.5 Draft Opinion on small organoarsenic species in food ([EFSA-Q-2021-00496](#))**

The Chair of the WG on Arsenic in food presented the main elements of the approach to risk assessment, including the timelines for the development of the draft Opinion, the main features of small organoarsenic species and an overview about their toxicokinetics, toxicity and the proposed approach to hazard assessment. The available occurrence data and approach to exposure assessment was also presented, as well as the proposed approach for the uncertainty assessment. The Panel members agreed to the approaches proposed and provided comments that will be considered by the WG in developing the draft risk assessment. The CONTAM Panel went through the sections on Chemistry, Analytical methods, Previous assessments and Legislation. Comments were made and these sections were endorsed pending implementation of the agreed updates.

- **8.6 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 second reading and possible endorsement of selected sections. The CONTAM Panel members went through the section on Toxicokinetics and selected sections under Toxicity in experimental animals. The Panel provided comments to the draft sections presented and endorsed the section on Toxicokinetics. The WG will take into consideration the feedbacks received and will continue with the development of the draft Opinion.

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

9.1 Scientific Committee

The CONTAM Panel Chair reported on matters important for the work of the Panel that were discussed at the last meeting of the EFSA Scientific Committee held 21-22-23 November 2023.

For the Working Groups of interest to the CONTAM Panel, updates were provided on the activities of the Cross-cutting WGs on Genotoxicity, on Uncertainty, on Benchmark dose, Biomarkers of effects, appraisal of Epidemiological studies, Update of the risk-benefit assessment Guidance, and on Fluoride.

9.2 Scientific Panel(s) including their Working Groups

- **WG on BFRs in food**

See Items 8.1 and 8.6. the Chair of the WG indicated that the WG will initiate the development of the draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of brominated phenols and their derivatives in food.

- **WG on Feed detoxification processes**



See Item 8.4.

- **WG on Arsenic in food**

See Item 8.2 and 8.5.

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

The Chair of the WG on PCNs informed that the public consultation of the draft Opinion on the risk for animal and human health related to the presence of PCNs in feed and food was launched on 23 November and will remain open until 14 January 2024⁸.

- **WG on Ergot alkaloids in feed**

See Item 8.3.

9.3 EFSA

The CONTAM Panel members were informed about the upcoming launch of a call for grant proposals and analytical work in relation to the role of nitrate and nitrite, processing and storage in the formation of *N*-nitrosamines in certain food products.

The CONTAM Panel members were informed that following a WHO ad-hoc expert consultation, the 2005 WHO toxic equivalency factors (TEFs) for dioxin-like compounds (PCDD/Fs and DL-PCBs) have been re-evaluated and the new WHO-TEF values are now published⁹.

The CONTAM Panel members were informed about upcoming mandates and meeting to discuss about the use of experimental animal data to estimate maximum safe level of feed.

9.4 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.

10. Questions from and answers to Observers (in application of the guidelines for Observers)

Only one question was received from observers relating to Item 8.3 and described here below.

Question 1: *“Maybe it’s useful to differentiate the biomarker of exposure and the biomarker or surrogate marker of effect. Thank you!”*

Response 1: The comment was considered by the CONTAM Panel that agreed that prolactin is a biomarker of effect rather than a biomarker of exposure. Panel members commented that there can be cases where a biomarker can be both a biomarker of effect and a biomarker of exposure. It was noted that EFSA’s Scientific Committee is working on a guidance on biomarkers of effects which will help clarify the definitions of the different types of biomarkers and their use in future EFSA’s outputs.

⁸ <https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/publicconsultation2/a0ITk00000012W1/pc0725>

⁹ DeVito M, Bokkers B, van Duursen MBM, van Ede K, Feeley M, Antunes Fernandes Gáspár E, Haws L, Kennedy S, Peterson RE, Hoogenboom R, Nohara K, Petersen K, Rider C, Rose M, Safe S, Schrenk D, Wheeler MW, Wikoff DS, Zhao B and van den Berg M, 2023. The 2022 world health organization reevaluation of human and mammalian toxic equivalency factors for polychlorinated dioxins, dibenzofurans and biphenyls. *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 146, 105525. doi: 10.1016/j.yrtph.2023.105525.



11. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 30-31 January 2024, via teleconference.

Annex I List of Observers

About 23 registered, (but only 18 observers attended)

| OBSERVERS | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--|
| Surname | Name | email address |
| Afghan | Abdul | abdul.afghan@hc-sc.gc.ca |
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