

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE
153rd Plenary meeting



24 January 2024

09:00-16.00

MINUTES - Agreed on 7 February 2024

Location: Teleconference

Attendees:

- Panel Members:
ALVAREZ Julio, VELARDE Antonio, BICOUT Dominique, CALISTRI Paolo, CANALI Elisabetta, DREWE Julian Ashley, GARIN-BASTUJI Bruno, GONZALES ROJAS Jose Luis, GORTAZAR SCHMIDT Christian, HERSKIN Mette, MICHEL Virginie, MIRANDA Miguel Angel, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose, PADALINO Barbara, ROBERTS Helen, SPOOLDER Hans, STÅHL Karl, VILTROP Arvo, WINCKLER Christoph.
- Hearing Expert¹:
Not Applicable
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:
COHEN Iulia-Delia, ALAEZ PONZ Ester POPA Ana Maria
- EFSA:
ASHE Sean, AZNAR ASENSIO J Inmaculada, BALDINELLI Francesca, BROGLIA Alessandro, CANDIANI Denise Francesca, DHOLLANDER Sofie, FABRIS Chiara, GERVELMEYER Andrea, KOHNLE Lisa, LANFRANCHI Barbara, MANAKIDOU Aikaterini, MUR Lina, ORTIZ Angel, PREITE Ludovica, ROJO GIMENO Cristina, VITALI Marika.
- Others:
Not Applicable

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 Independence² and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management³, 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 Christian GORTÁZAR SCHMIDT, Arvo VILTROP, Jose GONZALES ROJAS before the beginning of the meeting (see Annex). All interests declared were related to public research funding. 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.

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>

² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf



4. Agreement of the minutes of the 152nd AHAW Panel Plenary meeting held on 13 December 2023 via Teleconference

The minutes of the 152nd Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 22 December 2023, and republished on 12 January 2024.

5. Scientific output(s) submitted for adoption

Not applicable

6. Scientific outputs for information/updates

6.1 Vaccination against highly pathogenic avian influenza: Terms of reference 3 and 4. (EFSA-M-2022-00145).

An overview of the current state of the work was given. The discussion focussed on the main comments raised by the Panel on the current draft of the Scientific Opinion. Minor comments were resolved ahead of the Plenary and other proposal for changes were dealt with shortly after the meeting. It was agreed that the terms flock, epidemiological unit, and establishment would be defined and harmonised and consistently used throughout the Scientific Opinion. The text of the Scientific Opinion will be revised, ensuring that each section has the appropriate content, in particular a clear separation between the methodology and the results. Regarding the model to demonstrate freedom from HPAIV infection, a different approach that is less country specific than that currently in the SO will be implemented. The Panel asked to be notified of the new results as soon as these changes in the model part are finalised. Clarifications on what was meant as high-risk zone were asked for by the Commission and resolved during the meeting. The Panel offered to provide insights and support with the drafting of the uncertainty analysis section. The Panel agreed on the current layout of the SO and was complacent with the work carried out so far, described in the methodology and assessment parts.

6.2 Scientific Opinion concerning the use of high-expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry – EFSA-Q-2022-00344 – Update.

The Panel was updated on the applicant's reply on EFSA's second request for additional information concerning the application for the use of high expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry. Some indicative clarifications on questions on the updated dossier were presented. Information on the working group meetings and the method used to evaluate the potential equivalence of the modified method with the already existing stunning methods was also given.

6.3 Scientific opinions concerning scientific opinion concerning the protection of animals kept for fur production

The Panel discussed the terms of reference of the mandate. An update on the stakeholder meeting that took place in Brussels on 22 January 2024 was provided. Mette Herskin was confirmed to be the Chair of the working group.

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



7.1 Feedback from the presentation of the work of the AHAW Panel in 2023 at the EFSA's management board meeting.

The Panel Chair provided feedback from his presentation of the recent outputs of the AHAW Panel at EFSA's Management Board meeting. Some examples were provided on how the Scientific Opinions adopted by the AHAW Panel were followed up by the European Commission. For instance, the conclusions of the Opinions on listing and categorisation of the different diseases were all taken up by the Animal Health Law.

7.2 Feedback from the Emerging Risk Exchange Network on Epizootic Hemorrhagic disease virus, Usutu virus, Henipavirions and Rat lungworm.

The AHAW Panel was told about four diseases agents discussed at the Emerging Risk Exchange Network. The spread of Epizootic Haemorrhagic disease virus in Europe was outlined as a threat, for which stakeholders and Member States should be prepared. The other three pathogens may require further information and monitoring. The Panel is invited to share relevant information with the KNOW Unit in EFSA.

8. New Mandates

8.1 Joint mandate EFSA-ECDC on Avian Influenza: enhancing preparedness, prevention and control measures to better manage the risks pertaining to animal and public health due to the current and potentially evolving avian influenza situation

The Panel was informed about the mandate received in EFSA on a joint mandate for EFSA and ECDC on assessing the risk of the potential pandemic risk of zoonotic influenza viruses. As no draft was received prior to the receipt of the final mandate, discussions with ECDC and the EC are ongoing.

9. Other topics for information and/or discussion

9.1 Infographic about the application procedure for stunning methods regarding animal protection at the time of killing.

The Panel was informed about the infographic that was published on the EFSA's website about the application procedure for stunning methods regarding animal protection at the time of killing. The process starting from the submission of the applicant's dossier until the publication of EFSA's Scientific Opinion, and the decision of the European Commission to approve or reject the new or modified stunning and killing method to be included in the relative legislation was explained. The related website and links were provided.

9.2 Disease profiles

The updated [Disease Profiles](#) were presented to the Panel. Volunteers for reviewing specific disease profiles are sought. A table with an overview until when each tab (review question) for each disease was reviewed will be provided to the Panel, as well as a table to volunteer for reviewing a specific Disease profile.

9.3 Roadmap for animal welfare

An overview of the development of a roadmap for action for EFSA's project "More Welfare", presented during an info session on 15 January 2024, was given. The info session is available [here](#). The outcome of this project is published [here](#).



9.4 The use of the APRIO approach for problem formulation in animal welfare protocols

The document 'Protocol development template Animal welfare' was presented and comments received by the Panel members were discussed. The main messages in relation to the use of this template were reiterated: i) it is mandatory to produce a protocol (the "what" and the "how") to pass tollgate 1; ii) the APRIO approach to formulate the "what" (problem formulation) is recommended but not mandatory; iii) the approach for implementing the protocol is flexible. Examples provided by AHAW Panel members were discussed and will be added to the document and shared with the AHAW Panel. The document is for internal use by EFSA staff and working group chairs.

10. Any other business

Not applicable

11. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 21 February 2024 via teleconference.

Annex

With regard to this meeting, Christian GORTÁZAR SCHMIDT declared the following interest: participation HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-5 — "Advancing vaccine development for African swine fever", funded by the European Commission. 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, Arvo VILTROP declared the following interest: participation in 1) Horizon Europe project named "Pandemic Information to Support Rapid Response" (PAIR) - HORIZON-HLTH-2023-TOOL-05-08 and 2) Setting up a coordinated surveillance under the One Health approach- Project 101132473 — OH4Surveillance with funding from European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA). 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, Jose GONZALES ROJAS declared the following interest: participation in an Horizon Europe project named "New Technologies for African swine fever vaccines" (VAX4ASF), funded by the European Commission. 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.