SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

161st Plenary meeting

7th February 2024
09:00-16:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 1 March 2024

Location: Teleconference

Attendees:

- Panel Members:
Ewen Mullins (chair), Jean-Louis Bresson, Tamas Dalmay, Nils Rostoks, Michelle Epstein, Leslie George Firbank, Philippe Guerche, Jan Hejatko, Francisco Javier Moreno, Hanspeter Naegeli, Fabien Nogué, Jose Juan Sanchez Serrano, Giovanni Savoini, Eve Veromann and Fabio Veronesi

- Hearing Experts[1]:
None

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:
DG SANTE: Ilaria Ciabatti (for item 5.3), Kathleen Lehmann (for item 5.3), Olga Orlova, Mara Sgroi

- EFSA:
NIF Unit:

Michele Ardizzone, Giacomo De Sanctis, Antonio Fernández Dumont, Andrea Gennaro, Aina Belen Gil Gonzalez, Tilemachos Goumperis, Paschalina Grammatikou, Sara Jacchia, Dafni Maria Kagkli, Paolo Lenzi, Aleksandra Lewandowska, Ana Martin Camargo, Franco Maria Neri, Estefania Noriega Fernandez (for item 6.1), Nikoletta Papadopoulou, Pietro Piffanelli, Tommaso Raffaello, Marta Rodrigues and Reinhilde Schoonjans

MESE Unit:

Jose Ángel Gómez Ruiz (for item 8.3)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.
Apologies were received from Ian Dewhurst

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[2] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management[3], 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.

4. Report on written procedure since the 160th Plenary

[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

4.1 Agreement of the minutes of the 160th Plenary meeting held from 29th to 30th November 2023

The minutes of the 160th plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 19 December 2023.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion/adoption

5.1 Application for authorisation of genetically modified maize DP202216 submitted under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 by Corteva Agriscience (EFSA-GMO-NL-2019-159) EFSA-Q-2019-00419

Maize event DP202216 expresses the phosphinothricin acetyltransferase enzyme (PAT) which confers tolerance to glufosinate-ammonium-containing herbicides. In addition, maize DP202216 has been developed to extend and increase the expression of the ZMM28 protein, a MADS-box transcription factor, which can provide an opportunity for a potential yield enhancement under field conditions. The scope of application EFSA-GMO-NL-2019-159 is for food and feed uses, import and processing and does not include cultivation in the European Union (EU).
The GMO Panel revised the draft opinion, and where appropriate, questions were raised and addressed throughout the different sections. The GMO Panel adopted the opinion, which will be published on the EFSA website and in the EFSA Journal.

5.2 Request for placing on the market of Soy Leghemoglobin produced from genetically modified *Pichia pastoris* (EFSA-GMO-NL-2019-162) EFSA-Q-2019-00651

EFSA received two applications submitted to gain authorization for the use of soy leghemoglobin (the liquid preparation is referred to as "LegH Prep") produced from genetically modified *Pichia pastoris*, reclassified as *Komagataella phaffii* as a food flavoring ("meaty taste") in meat analogue products to be marketed in the European Union. The first application[4] was received under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 and validated in December 2021 and is under the remit of the GMO Panel, the second application[5] received under Regulation (EC) No 1331/2008 and validated in June 2022 is under the remit of FAF Panel[6].
The GMO Panel was updated on the progress made with these applications and discussed the scientific content of the dossier submitted under its remit. The GMO Panel will further discuss the dossier once the expected information[7] will be provided.

5.3 Scientific opinion on new developments in biotechnology applied to microorganisms

In August 2022 EC mandated EFSA to produce an opinion on new developments in biotechnology applied to microorganisms. The mandate tasked EFSA to i) conduct a horizon scanning on microorganisms and their products obtained by new developments in biotechnology and that was commissioned to a contractor and ii) produce an opinion on potential novel hazards/risks from new developments in biotechnology applied to microorganisms and adequacy of the current EFSA risk assessment guidance. The discussion on the scientific content of the mandate took place in the GMM-WG[8] that prepred the draft opinion that was introduced at the 160th GMO Plenary meeting[9]. The GMO Panel reviewed the draft opinion and endorsed it.

[4] https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2019-00651
[5] https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2022-00031
[6] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/scientific-committee-and-panels/faf
[7] https://open.efsa.europa.eu/study-inventory/EFSA-Q-2019-00651
[8] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-01/gmm-ngt-minutes.pdf
[9] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-12/Minutes_3.pdf

The output will be open to comments through a dedicated consultation to be launched in the coming weeks[10].

6. Other scientific topics for information/discussion

6.1 Adverse Outcome Pathway (AOP) for celiac disease

The Unit presented the preparatory work (systematic review) carried out by the contractor for the development of an AOP for celiac disease by EFSA in the framework of the OECD AOP Development Programme. The external scientific report is available on the EFSA website and on the EFSA Journal.

7. Update on new Mandates

7.1 Applications

None

7.2 Mandates

EFSA informed the GMO Panel that on the 5th of February a mandate[11] received from the Commission in accordance with Article 31 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 was accepted. The mandate requests EFSA to evaluate the findings of the post-market environmental monitoring (PMEM) activities for the 2022 cultivation season of maize MON 810. The assessment of the received information should be concluded by the end of July 2024.

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

8.1 Scientific Committee

The Chair of the GMO Panel reported on discussions at the last Scientific Committee meeting and ongoing EFSA activities[12].

8.2 European Commission

The representatives of the EC informed the GMO Panel on their ongoing activities, including approval procedures for applications for which the GMO Panel has delivered a scientific opinion.

8.3 Scientific Panel(s) including their Working Groups

The GMO Panel was updated on discussions of transversal relevance that took place in the last working groups molecular characterisation (MC), comparative risk assessment and ERA (CompERA) and food and feed (FF). In particular, the items discussed were the guidance on microorganisms by the MC and CompERA WG and on some of the additional information discussed by the FF WG.

9. Any other business

None

10. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 13th March 2024 via teleconference.

[10] Public consultation accessible at: https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/publicconsultation2/a0lTk000000C3VB/pc0848
[11] https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2024-00070
[12] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/117th-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee