

2-3 July 2024

14:30-18:00 and 9:00-16:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 10 July 2024

Location: EFSA, Parma / Teleconference

Attendees:

○ Panel Members:

ALVAREZ Julio, BOKLUND Anette, DIPPEL Sabine, DÓREA Fernanda, FIGUEROLA Jordi, HERSKIN Mette, MICHEL Virginie, CHUECA MIRANDA Miguel Ángel, NANNONI Eleonora, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose, NONNO Romolo, RIBER Anja, STEGEMAN Jan Arend, STÅHL Karl, THULKE Hans-Hermann, TUYTTENS Frank, WINCKLER Christoph.

○ Hearing Experts¹:

Not Applicable

○ European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

EC: ALAEZ PONS Ester, AMSLER Sandrine, ALVIROU Anastasia, COHEN Iulia-Delia, DITTMANN RASMUSSEN Susanne, GKNA Eleni, GILLINI Laura, POPA Ana Maria, ROGGE Alexander

○ EFSA:

ANTONIOU Sotiria-Eleni, ASHE Sean, AZNAR Inma, BALMOS Oana Maria, BROGLIA Alessandro, CANDIANI Denise Francesca, CARO Eleonora, CATTANEO Eleonora, DELACOURT Roxane, DHOLLANDER Sofie, FABRIS Chiara, GRANT Malin, GERVELMEYER Andrea, HEMPEN, Michaela, KOHNLE Lisa, LANFRANCHI Barbara, LOPEZ Aitana, MANAKIDOU Aikaterini, MUR Lina, ORTIZ PELAEZ Angel, PREITE Ludovica, ROJO GIMENO Cristina, TIRCHETT Neil Joseph, VAN DER STEDE Yves, VAN HOUTUM Aniek, VERDONCK Frank, VITALI Marika, ZANNA Martina Benedetta

○ Other

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

¹ As defined in Article 34 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>



interests were declared orally by Karl STAHL and Jordi Figuerola before the beginning of the meeting. 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 interests above were not deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest for the experts concerned.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 157th AHAW Panel Plenary meeting held on 21-22 May 2024, via Physical meeting

The minutes of the 157th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 31 May 2024.



5. Report on written procedure

5.1 Written adoption of Art. 29 - Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the use of high-expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry ([EFSA-Q-2022-00344](#)).

The Panel was informed about the procedure that was followed for the adoption of the Scientific Opinion (SO) on the use of high expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry. The SO was unanimously adopted via written procedure on 03 June and is expected to be published in the EFSA Journal by 12 July.

10. AOB

10.1 Presentation of the BIOHAW Unit

The head of the Biological Hazards and Animal Health and Welfare (BIOHAW) Unit presented EFSA's organigramme, the Unit's mission and the Animal Health and Animal Welfare teams that support the Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) Panel as well as their Working Groups for the assessment of risks and for the development of sectorial methodologies and guidance.

10.2 Round table presentations of Panel members and staff

All Members of the AHAW Panel, and the Animal Health and Animal Welfare teams presented themselves.

10.3 Presentation AHAW Panel remit and workplan

The remit of the AHAW Panel was presented, and examples of mandates dealt with in 2023 and on-going were provided. The workplan for the remaining of 2024 and 2025 was presented to the Panel, and the Panel was made aware of the 3 main tollgates that are the legal milestones that need to be reached during the development of a Scientific Opinion. The Panel was reminded to avoid updating the DoI shortly before a plenary meeting, to avoid possible issues with the approval of the DoI before the meeting, and to try and meet an attendance rate of the plenary meeting as close as possible to 100%. All meeting dates until the end of 2025 were communicated to the Panel.

10.4 Rules for elections and confirmation candidates of chair/vice chair AHAW Panel

The rules for the elections of the chair and two vice chairs of the Panel were presented, in line with Article 28(6) of [Regulation \(EC\) No 178/2002](#) and Article 7 of the [Implementing Rule of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority laying down the rules on the selection, appointment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups](#).

10.5 Overview of Animal Welfare activities

The workplan of Animal welfare (legislative framework, context, ongoing mandates, future mandates, applied methods and guidance documents, ongoing grants and procurement) was presented to the AHAW panel.



6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion/ adoption.

6.1 Art. 29 - Scientific Opinion on welfare of horses during slaughter ([EFSA-Q-2023-00310](#))

The draft opinion was submitted for the first reading. It was agreed that part of the pre/stunning phase, namely the two processes i) arrival at the slaughterhouse and ii) unloading, will not be repeated in this assessment, as they were recently assessed in full in the equine transport opinion published by EFSA in 2022. In that opinion, welfare consequences (WCs) occurring to animals during these two processes, hazards and preventive measures were described and therefore the assessment for these two processes in the current opinion will be addressed in brief, reporting only main conclusion and recommendations, and referring to the equine transport opinion for further details. Nevertheless, since some of the WCs might be exacerbated during a waiting period before horses are unloaded, corrective measures that can be put in place upon arrival at the slaughterhouse will be specified. It was also agreed that a clear definition of each process will be reported. The document will be revised and sent back to the Panel for the Plenary in September for an in-depth discussion. Adoption is foreseen in November 2024.

6.2 Art. 29 – Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the protection of turkeys on farm ([EFSA-Q-2023-00647](#))

Art 31 – Technical assistance concerning the welfare of turkeys on farm – ([EFSA-Q-2023-00648](#))

The background of mandate M-2023-122 and the animal categories of turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) were described in view of the new EFSA AHAW Panel members. The ToRs from the mandate were presented comprising the Article 31 request to describe the husbandry practices used to farm turkeys as well as the Article 29 ToRs: space allowance, group size, feed and water restriction, the hatchery conditions, the age and onset of breeding, the conditions of the nests, the practice mutilations, breeding and genetics, relevant welfare consequences and ABMs and animal-based measures ABMs at the slaughterhouse, etc. It was highlighted that EFSA tollgate 1 which consists of the protocol and problem formulation was achieved on the 154th EFSA AHAW Panel meeting and that the Scientific Opinion planned adoption is in December 2025. Miguel Angel Miranda, Christoph Winckler and Frank Tuytens were confirmed as deep reviewers of the Scientific Opinion. The short-term draft tentative plan of submission of different sections of the Scientific Opinion as well as tollgate 2 and adoption was presented and agreed by the EFSA AHAW Panel.

10. Any other Business

10.6 Election of chair/vice chair AHAW Panel

Søren Saxmose Nielsen was elected as chair of the AHAW Panel and both Virginie Michel and Fernanda Dórea were elected as vice chairs of the AHAW Panel.

10.7 Best Practices

Best practices and agreements made for the development and reviewing of Scientific Opinions were shared with the Panel. Procedures for sharing of documents, the creation and composition of the working groups, the discussion of the TORs of the mandate, the regular updates of the mandates, the first and thorough discussion of the mandates and their adoption during the plenaries were explained. Some tips were provided on how to reduce the length of the Scientific Opinions.

10.8 Uncertainty

An important aspect of the scientific opinions is the expression of uncertainty of the conclusion of the assessments. A short presentation was provided to introduce the topic to the new AHAW Panel.



Further training will be provided. Some training on uncertainty assessment is already available on the expert corner.

6. Other scientific topics for information/discussion (continuation).

- 6.3 Art. 29 - Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the welfare of animals kept for fur production – ([EFSA-Q-2023-00869](#))
Art 31 – Technical assistance concerning the welfare of animals kept for fur production – ([EFSA-Q-2024-00126](#))**

A general overview on the mandate on the welfare of animals kept for fur production (M-2023-00148) was provided. The Terms of references of the mandate (EFSA-Q-2023-00869 and EFSA-Q-2024-00126) and tollgate 1 achieved so far were also described, followed up by presentation of the milestones that are planned to be achieved in the duration of the mandate.

The Panel discussed the first draft of the scientific opinion, focusing on the Interpretation of the terms of reference (ToRs), particularly regarding how to consider needs and wants, as well as domestication in the context of this mandate. The Panel revised, discussed, and agreed on the content of the text and provided feedback to enhance its clarity and completeness. Modifications will be made by the working group and re-submitted to the Panel at a later stage with the new sections of the drafted opinion.

- 6.4 Art. 29- Scientific Opinion concerning the use of Diathermic Syncope for stunning cattle – ([EFSA-Q-2023-00085](#)).**

The Panel was informed about the mandate background and the application procedure for new and/or modified stunning methods, the Terms of Reference of the mandate, the protocol that is being followed, the content and general information of the submitted dossier, the basic structure of the Scientific Opinion, the Tasking Grant (TG) partnership agreement, the composition of the TG and the Working Group (WG) and their role/work, the additional data requests made to the applicant and the deadline of the mandate, the rest planning of the WG meetings, the revised Panel activity and who is the first deep reviewer of the SO from the Panel. Nielsen Søren volunteered to be the second reviewer.

- 6.5 Art. 29 - Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the welfare of horses – terms of reference - ([EFSA-Q-2024-00188](#))
Art. 29 - Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the welfare of donkeys and their hybrids – terms of reference - ([EFSA-Q-2024-00189](#))
Art. 31 - Request for a Technical Report on common husbandry systems for the keeping of Equidae – terms of reference - ([EFSA-Q-2024-00187](#))**

The background, scope and terms of reference of this mandate on the protection of Equidae were presented. The mandate requests three scientific outputs. A technical report (Art. 31) which addresses TOR 1 and provides a general description of husbandry systems for keeping Equidae in the EU. Two scientific opinions on the welfare of horses and donkeys and hybrids address TORs 2 and 3. TOR 2 is divided into many sub-questions, all of which apply to horses, but only some of them apply to donkeys and hybrids. TOR 3 is about animal-based measures for on-farm welfare which can be measured at the slaughterhouse. The WG chair is Julio Alvarez, further WG members are currently added. For 2024, four WG meetings are planned. A public event was organised on 19th June in Brussels, to inform stakeholder about the mandate. A call for evidence may follow in the second half of 2024.

- 6.6 Overview of Animal Health activities**



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.

6.7 Art. 29 - Task 2. Scientific Opinion on zoonotic avian influenza– ([EFSA-Q-2024-00172](#))

An update of the activities related to the SO on zoonotic AI was provided, including the results obtained by the contractor about risk of mutations, the contribution by ECDC, the surveillance in different animal categories and the structure of the section about preventive and control measures. Jordi and Karl appointed as deep readers.

6.8 Art. 31 - Task 4. Guidelines on zoonotic avian influenza outbreak investigation, when there is a human involvement (exposed and/or infected), and its management according to a One Health approach– ([EFSA-Q-2024-00173](#))

The terms of reference for Task 4 of mandate EFSA-M-2024-00009 have been presented. The scope and the approach that EFSA and ECDC staff will take to develop the scientific report were explained. The report will allow the EC and MSs to develop guidelines for investigation and control of outbreaks of zoonotic avian influenza involving both animals and humans. The deadline for the output is end of 2024.

6.9 Art. 31 - Mandate for scientific and technical assistance for a coordinated surveillance system under the One Health approach for cross-border pathogens threatening the Union – ([EFSA-M-2022-00084](#))

The grant opportunity of the EU4Health programme 2022 and the related mandate for scientific and technical assistance for EFSA were explained. An overview of the grant beneficiary countries and the zoonotic pathogens targeted by their One Health surveillance was provided. The broad range of surveillance components that will be applied by countries and the upcoming milestones were highlighted.

6.10 Art 31 - Risk and protective factors for ASF and mitigating measures for wild boar in the EU– ([EFSA-Q-2022-00381](#))

The TOR 2 of the mandate on African swine fever that addresses the risk and protective factors for ASF every two years in a form of Scientific Report was presented to the Panel. Each mandate element was explained in detail, including the methodology to be used to answer each of them. The work plan was presented with the dates for the tollgates 2 and 3.

6.11 Art. 31 – Annual report on the epidemiological analysis of African swine fever in the European Union– ([EFSA-Q-2022-00380](#))

The TOR 1 of the mandate on African swine fever that requests the production of annual epidemiological reports of the ASF situation in a form of Scientific Reports was presented to the Panel. The data sources used in the analysis of the report, the methodology and planning for future reports were presented.

6.12 Art 31 - Application of Slovenia for the recognition of the negligible risk status of classical scrapie. – ([EFSA-Q-2024-00183](#))

The mandate was presented, including the term of reference, the methodology applied and the work plan. The scientific report is due on 31 October 2024. The draft report will be ready and shared with the AHAW panel for the September plenary. Even though it is not required to be



endorsed by the panel, two internal reviewers were selected: Fernanda Dorea and Romolo Nonno. The suggestions and comments by the Panel will be taken on board before the final report is submitted for internal approval and publication.

6.13 Art. 29 – Annual report on the data collection: transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) in the European Union–[EFSA-Q-2021-00767](#))

The TSE summary report was presented, including the legal mandate, the scope in terms of countries and timelines as well as the main contents. The tools developed by EFSA allow reporting countries to submit and validate the data were described. Finally, the dissemination tools were presented, i.e., the story map and the dashboard.

**6.14 Art. 29 - Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the protection of beef cattle – ([EFSA-Q-2023-00535](#)) –
Art 31 – Technical assistance concerning the welfare of beef cattle ([EFSA-Q-2024-00127](#))**

The background to the mandate and the categories of beef cattle were described. The ToRs from the mandate were presented and included the Article 31 request to describe the husbandry practices used to farm beef cattle as well as the Article 29 ToRs: housing, fattening cattle kept on grass, weaning, mutilations, breeding and genetics, cull cows and ABMs at slaughterhouses. Areas where there were potential overlaps with previous EFSA opinions were clarified i.e., calves born on dairy farms (for the first 6 months of their lives) will not be covered in this opinion. Please note that extreme environmental heat for housed cattle and cattle kept outdoors are both to be found in ToR 2 (a) Welfare assessment of housing conditions for beef cattle.

6.15 Art. 31 – Quarterly monitoring report of avian influenza in poultry and wild birds in the European Union– ([M-2024-00009](#))

The Terms of Reference and workflow of the quarterly reports on avian influenza were presented to the Panel. The reports in question cover the spatiotemporal distribution of highly pathogenic avian influenza (and relevant low pathogenic avian influenza) outbreaks in domestic and wild birds, mammals and humans in Europe and worldwide, taking into account also potential risk factors, the zoonotic potential of the viruses involved and options for response. The quarterly reports are produced in collaboration with ECDC and the European Reference Laboratory on Avian Influenza using a variety of different data: information on outbreaks submitted via ADIS and WOH-WAHIS, genetic information available in GISAID, supplementary information submitted by reporting countries, ECDC line lists, news media, etc. The composition of the Working Group and experts involved were introduced.

7. Other scientific topics for information/discussion (continuation)

7.1 European Partnership for Animal Health and Welfare

An overview of the partnership and the Actions relevant to Animal Health were presented. The partnership started in January 2024 and will last for 7 years. EFSA participates in 4 Actions related to Animal Health: i) Terrestrial wildlife, ii) Rapid Risk Assessment, iii) Biosecurity, iv) Societal and Economic burden of animal diseases.

8. Update on new mandates

9. Feedback from the Scientific Committee

Not applicable



10. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 18-19 September 2024 in Parma