SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

125th Panel Plenary meeting

2, 3 & 4 July 2024
14:30-18:15 / 9:00-18:00 / 9:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 24 July 2024

EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Location: EFSA Onsite and Teleconference

Attendees:

- Panel Members:

Paula BAPTISTA, Anna BERLIN, Elisavet CHATZIVASSILIOU, Jaime CUBERO, Nik CUNNIFFE, Eduardo DE LA PEÑA, Nicolas DESNEUX, Francesco DI SERIO, Anna FILIPIAK, Paolo GONTHIER, Beata Anna HASIÓW-JAROSZEWSKA, Hervé JACTEL, Blanca LANDA, Lara MAISTRELLO, David MAKOWSKI, Panagiotis MILONAS, Nikolaos PAPADOPOULOS, Roel POTTING, Hanna Sinikka SUSI, Antonio Vicent CIVERA

- European Commission DG SANTE: Panagiota MYLONA
- EFSA:

PLANTS: Federica BALDASSARRE, Melanie CAMILLERI, João Filipe CAVALHEIRO, Chiara CIVITELLI, Matteo CROTTA, Alicia CULOT, Ewelina CZWIENCZEK, Cristiana DO VALE CORREIA, Ciro GARDI, Alex GOBBI, Dejana GOLIC, Agata KACZMAREK, Tomasz KALUSKI, Virág KERTÉSZ, Andrea MAIORANO, Alexandre NOUGADERE, Marco PAUTASSO, , Maria RIBAYA MUNOZ, Tobin ROBINSON, Daria RZEPECKA, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Franz STREISSL, Emanuela TACCI, Anastasia TERZIDOU, Sara TRAMONTINI, Sybren VOS

- MESE: Olaf MOSBACH-SCHULZ, Eugen CHRISTOPH
- IDATA: Giuseppe TRIACCHINI
- EFSA art.36 Tasking grant: Eugenio Rossi (CREA, Bologna Italy)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

EFSA welcomed the participants, apologies for absence were received from Dirk Jan Van Der Gaag.

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 Panel 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.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 124th Panel plenary meeting held on 19 June 2024.

A practical example of the procedure for the written agreement of the minutes was shown to the Panel. The Panel was also informed that the minutes of the previous Plenary meeting were published in time and now available on EFSA website.

[1] EFSA's Policy on Independence
[2] Decision of the EFSA's Executive Director on Competing Interest Management

5. Round table presentations

The Panel members and EFSA staff introduced themselves and their areas of expertise and experience.

6. Introduction to the procedures for the election of the Panel Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Scientific Panel on Plant Health (PLH Panel) - held at 9.00 am on second day

The Panel was informed about the roles and responsibilities of the Panel Chair and of the two Vice-Chairs and the procedure for their election by the Panel. It was highlighted that all Panel members could express their candidacy for Chair or Vice-Chair until the start of the election procedure.

7. Pitch presentations to introduce the World Café style discussion groups on activities of Plant Health Panel and Plant Health Risk Assessment team (pest categorisation, quantitative pest risk assessment, climate suitability, commodity risk assessment)

The Plant Health Risk Assessment team presented briefly their main four activities (pest categorisation, quantitative pest risk assessment, climate suitability, commodity risk assessment) to serve as an introduction for the World Café discussion, that followed.

8. World Café discussion groups on main activities of Plant Health Panel and Plant Health Risk Assessment team (pest categorisation, quantitative pest risk assessment, climate suitability, commodity risk assessment)

A World Café type discussion was organised at the plenary meeting by creating four discussion corners to facilitate the introduction of pest categorisation, quantitative pest risk assessment, climate suitability and commodity risk assessment activities to Panel members.

The climate suitability group presented activities comprising systematic literature search, data extraction, climate suitability analyses, climate products, publishing of the results and GIS tools under development that will facilitate future work of the PLH Panel. Following presentation, rounds of discussion between group members and Panel members were exchanged.

The pest categorisation group presented activities on categorisation of arthropod plant pests and plant pathogens: EFSA conducts categorisation for the EU territory of new and emerging plant pests, identified by EFSA commodity risk assessment or horizon scanning.

The quantitative pest risk assessment group (qPRA) presented the steps in the development of quantitative risk assessment model (entry, establishment, spread, impact, and risk reduction options). The link between the climate suitability and the qPRA, as well as the expert knowledge elicitation (EKE) procedure and the sensitivity analysis of qPRA model, were explained. Discussion with Panel members followed.

The commodity risk assessment group (CRA) presented the rationale and the EU legislative process that brought to the introduction of "High Risk Plants" as one of the measures for preventing the introduction of new and emerging plant pests. The CRA methodology adopted for high-risk plants and for the requests of derogation from provisions of the EU plant health law, e.g., for import

prohibitions, was briefly described, presenting the example of the recently published opinion on Petunia and Calibrachoa unrooted cuttings from Kenya.

9. Election of Panel Chair and Vice-Chairs

The PLH Panel members elected the Panel Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the Panel.

Antonio Vicent Civera was elected as the Panel Chair, and Elisavet Chatzivassiliou and Roel Potting were elected as Vice-Chairs. After the election procedure, the Panel Chair Antonio Vicent Civera started chairing the meeting.

The newly elected Chair and Vice Chairs of the Panel were congratulated and presented with the mascot, "Pesty", from the EFSA Plant Health awareness campaign.

10. Literature review, bibliometrics and climate suitability analysis for new and emerging plant pests

Activities and Workflow (Systematic literature search, bibliometric and climate suitability analyses) of Climate Suitability group were presented in detail.

10.1 EFSA workflow and systematic literature review for climate suitability assessment for new and emerging plant pests

It was presented to the Panel how the Climate suitability group supports EFSA Pest Categorizations and Quantitative Pest Risk Assessments. Starting from the systematic literature search and data extraction to providing climate products performing climate suitability modelling exercises to evaluate potential establishment on the pest in the EU territory. Selected modelling exercises were further explained to the Panel. Köppen-Geiger climate matching and Climate products such as air temperature and soil temperature developed specifically for the biology and characteristics of the pest. Climate suitability with specific examples where they were applied were presented: CLIMEX, Species Distribution Models (SDM), Physiologically based demographic model and Magarey model. All outputs of Climate suitability analyses are open source and published on the Zenodo platform. Presentation was finalized with the tools (SCANClim) and GIS support for experts and contractors that Climate suitability group are offering and the SEED (Spatially Explicit Environmental Data) project under development to support staff, experts and member states with its user-friendly GIS Web Tools.

10.2 Proof of concept for bibliometric analysis and PowerBI dashboard for climate suitability assessment for new and emerging plant pests

The Panel was presented with the detailed explanation of systematic literature search, it started from the creation of the literature search string and retrieval of the relevant articles from Scopus and Web of Science. Further, it was explained that articles go through two-level of screening (title-abstract screening and full text). Full text screening comprises data extraction on pest distribution and host range, as well as mapping information on pest biology, eco-physiology, impact, spread and control methods. Deliverables of systematic literature search were explained: PRISMA Diagram, Master file, Host file, Distribution file, Pest Distribution map and Köppen-Geiger map. Following systematic literature search, Climate suitability presented a new concept under development, which is Bibliometric analysis. The aim of the analysis is to provide the Panel with possible information on which hearing experts to contact, the attention of the scientific community, which countries are the most active with research on the pest. Part of the presentation was the demonstration of a PowerBI dashboard that contains products of the bibliometric analysis and deliverables of systematic literature search. Bibliometrics and Climate Suitability Deliverables can be explored directly by Panel Members through the Interactive-Dashboard developed by CREA-AA Bologna (Italy) and EFSA.

11. Introduction to PLH Panel Sharepoint: sharing, accessing, reviewing and editing Panel documents

Due to time limitation, only a brief demonstration was provided, and this topic was deferred to the next PLH plenary session.

12. EU Plant health law: an introduction highlighting the links with PLH panel work

The EC DG SANTE representative gave a presentation on the EU Plant Health Law applicable since December 2019, with a particular focus to the Implementing Regulations linked to the PLH panel work, explaining in detail the relevant legislation, also presented at the link Plant health and biosecurity.

13. PLH Panel work-programme 2024-2029

The Panel was informed about the current mandates and expected work plan of the Panel for the 2024-2029 term. Current mandates from EC SANTE include:

- **Pest categorisation for "actionable" new and emerging plant pests identified by EFSA commodity risk assessment.**
  This mandate has a deadline by end of 2026, however this activity is expected to continue following the flow of incoming dossiers of High Risk Plants from Third Countries. The PLH Panel conducts pest categorisation for plant pathogens (fungi, oomycetes, bacteria, viruses, viroids and nematodes), arthropod plant pests, and, occasionally, for other invertebrate plant pests (eg snails) and for parasitic plants. The draft categorisations are conducted rapidly by Working Groups, with coordination and support by EFSA PLANTS Plant Health Risk Assessment team and art. 36 Tasking Grants with Member States. In particular, the pest categorisation WGs are supported by extraction of data and information from databases and systematic literature review and by the analysis of climate suitability. Pest categorisation follows a standard template and protocol developed for this type of recurrent scientific outputs (as per EFSA Scientific Committee Guidance on Protocol development, 2023). All pest categorisations are published in a dedicated Virtual Issue of the EFSA Journal on Wiley Online Platform and quoted in the EPPO PRA online platform.

- **Quantitative pest risk assessment for *Xylella fastidiosa* for the EU territory.**
  EFSA was recently requested to update its pest risk assessment for this plant pathogenic bacterium which was published in 2019. Such an update needs to consider the current outbreaks caused by the various subspecies of *X. fastidiosa*, focusing on establishment, spread, impact and risk reducing options.
  This type of assessment follows the PLH Panel guidance on quantitative pest risk assessment (2018) and a standard protocol developed for this type of recurrent scientific outputs (as per EFSA Scientific Committee Guidance on Protocol development, 2023). All quantitative pest risk assessments are published in a dedicated Virtual Issue of the EFSA Journal on Wiley Online Platform and quoted in the EPPO PRA online platform.

- **Commodity risk assessment for High Risk Plants dossiers from Third Countries.**
  Commodity risk assessment (CRA) for High Risk Plants dossiers are conducted following the flow of incoming dossiers from Third Countries (considered by EFSA as "applications"). Commodity risk assessment is also conducted for assessing requests for derogation to provisions of the EU Plant health law for specific plant commodities. Currently, the Panel is conducting CRA for derogation requests for wood and wood products from Canada and USA, Vitis plants from Moldova, Petunia and Calibrachoa unrooted cuttings from Costa Rica and Uganda.

CRA for High Risk Plants and for derogation requests follow the PLH Panel guidance on commodity risk assessment (EFSA PLH Panel, 2019) and a standard template and protocol developed for this type of recurrent scientific outputs (as per EFSA Scientific Committee Guidance on Protocol development, 2023). This work is conducted by three Working Groups (WG HRP 1 mostly working on ornamentals, WG HRP 2 mostly working on forest plants and WG HRP3 mostly working on agriculture plants), with coordination and support by EFSA PLANTS Plant Health Risk Assessment team and art. 36 Tasking Grants with MS. CRA is also supported for the Expert Knowledge Elicitation by the EFSA Methodology and Scientific Support (MESE Unit). The CRA workload depends on number of dossiers and it usually ranges around 10-15 outputs/year. All CRAs are published in a dedicated Virtual Isssue of the EFSA Journal on Wiley Online Platform and quoted in the EPPO PRA online platform.

- **Expected mandates.**
  New mandates are expected on risk assessment of new and emerging plant pests identified by EFSA Horizon scanning, as well as further assessment of entry and spread pathways.

14. Working practices of PLH Panel and PLANTS Unit

The PLANTS Unit and its teams and the art. 36 Tasking Grant projects supporting PLH Panel activities were introduced to the Panel. Working practices of the PLH Panel and the PLH risk assessment team were presented in detail to the Panel, highlighting key tasks and responsibilities of experts and EFSA staff. Tasking grants supporting plant health activities and projects were listed. The Panel was also informed about the different types of Article 29 scientific opinions and about the roles of chair, vice chair, WG member and scientific coordinator in the working groups. Additionally, the principles of authorship for the EFSA Journal were explained using a practical example.

15. Introduction to mandates and methods of PLANTS Plant health monitoring team

An overview of the Plant Health Monitoring team mission and objectives was provided. Three ongoing projects were introduced i) Horizon Scanning, ii) Priority Pests, and iii) Pest Surveillance. For of the three different mandates from the European Commission, the principles and the approaches that have been developed and implemented have been briefly introduced. In particular, the presenter explained i) how the EFSA Horizon scanning process contributes to alert the EU risk managers on emerging threats in plant health, ii) how EFSA is contributing to the ranking of the Union Quarantine pests and iii) what the pest survey toolkit consists of explaining that it was developed to address each step of the surveillance process (initiation-preparation-design-implementation-conclusion).

16. World Cafè discussion groups on main activities of Plant Health Monitoring team

16.1 Horizon Scanning Newsletters and tools

Sara Tramontini and María Ribaya presented the different tools from the Horizon Scanning project. A printed version of the Newsletter was circulated while the tools used for its development were shown online.
First, EIOS platform (Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources), used for the first step of article selection, was introduced as the future working tool for Plant Health community (in collaboration with Joint Research Center and World Health Organisation), replacing MediSys. The PHoRiS (Pest Horizon and Risk Scanning) tool was shown and involves a working group of experts divided into two sub-groups. One sub-group does a final selection of the articles that should be included in the monthly newsletter and acts as an editorial board. The second sub-group performs the PeMo

scoring to evaluate if some of the emerging pests included in the newsletter can be a threat to the European territory. This second part of PHoRiS is aimed to be an open source for the different Member States. Finally, the interactive dashboard (currently open source and accessible through this link https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/powerbi/plant-health-horizon-scanning-dashboard) was shown, where all the results of the Newsletter are included.

16.2 Priority pests: EKEs & ERA

The EFSA Priority Pests project was presented by the Project Team (Alexandre Nougadère and Federica Baldassarre). The terms of reference of the EFSA mandate M-2022-00070 (European Commission's request) were detailed, with a focus on the task C aiming to assess the spread and impact of 47 shortlisted union quarantine pests. Fully-fledged expert knowledge elicitations (EKE) have been conducted for one year by EFSA to support the European Commission's Joint Research Center (JRC Sevilla) in the assessment of 47 Union Quarantine Pests for their potential inclusion in the list of Priority Pests under Regulation (EU) No 2019/1702. The method and first achievements were discussed with the groups, as well as the work plan and remaining tasks. The Panel members provided relevant questions and comments, noting the added value of the initial steps (tasks A and B) to select these 47 pests to be studied from a preliminary EFSA analysis on observed impact and potential spread and JRC's first run of the ranking model. Moreover, the environmental indicators recently developed as part of this project were introduced.

16.3 Pest Survey Cards

Daria Rzepecka and Melanie Camilleri presented to the Panel the process of Pest Survey Card (PSC) production and explained its link to the survey process. They emphasised that, in the context of the European Commission's request to support Member States in preparing pest surveys for Union Quarantine Pests, PSCs are a one of the crucial tools for risk managers to design surveys. The EC mandate includes the delivery of Pest Survey Cards for all quarantine organisms, pests regulated with emergency measures, and protected zone pests (approximately 400). The involvement of Member States was highlighted, with 10 ongoing grants for PSC production across various Art. 36 organisations engaged in this activity. The PSC gallery and interactive story map format were also presented. A project on estimating survey parameters (Method Sensitivity, Relative Risk and Design Prevalence) for 20 pests regulated as priority pests was also discussed.

16.4 Pest survey methods: RiPEST & OptiPest

Tomasz Kaluski and Alicia Culot presented the statistical tools developed by EFSA for the surveys of Union quarantine pests. First, a demonstration of the version 2 of the Risk-based PEst Survey Tool (RiPEST) was conducted. This tool is developed as an interactive guide to help the user to plan and execute a statistically sound and risk-based survey on plant pests. It has been developed based on the statistical methods outlined in the General guidelines (https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/sp.efsa.2020.EN-1919). It implements statistical methods for estimating the sample size, design prevalence (achieved design prevalence), global (and group) sensitivity (achieved confidence level) and probability of freedom from disease.
Secondly, a demonstration of the crop optimisation tool was carried out. This tool enables the grouping of pests for a specific host plant based on the sampling period, sampling matrices, and the monthly sample testing limits of the laboratory. This optimization aims to reduce the number of inspection units visited, as well as the number of samples tested in the lab, by allowing some samples to be reused.

17. Group exercises on review of commodity risk assessments

The mandate to assess the request of derogation from the import prohibition of *Petunia* and *Calibrachoa* unrooted cuttings from Guatemala, Kenya, Costa Rica and Uganda was presented by

Ciro Gardi. The dossier from Kenya was used as case study for the group exercise. The initial stages of the assessment, from the dossier received from the NPPO of the applicant country, to the following requests of integration of information were presented.
The more relevant parts of the dossier were described, with particular focus on the description of the commodity, the origin of the propagation material, the cultivation practices and the risk mitigation measures applied.

17.1 How to review a commodity risk assessment – selecting actionable pests for an imported plant commodity (group exercise on https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2024.8742)

The methodology and the criteria to differentiate between pests which need further evaluation (actionable pests) and those which do not need to be further assessed were presented by Franz Streissl. Pests for which uncertainties remained and could not be clearly allocated to one of the two groups are included in the reserve list. An overview was provided on where the relevant information can be found in the CRA opinions. The panel members were divided into four groups to work on the differentiation of selected pest species. Each group provided feedback to the plenary on possible issues encountered.

17.2 How to review a commodity risk assessment – estimating the likelihood of pest freedom in an imported plant commodity (group exercise on https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2024.8742)

As an introduction to this exercise, Olaf Mosbach-Schultz gave the presentation on Assessment of pest freedom for actionable pests and described the process of assessment of pest freedom for actionable pests. Details were provided on expert elicitation methodology and framing of the assessment question, incl. consignments and also on the presentation of the results.
Next presentation was given by Agata Kaczmarek who described the role of the evidence dossier and structure of the pest sheet in the presentation: Evidence base for the assessment. Following the introduction, Panel members were divided into four groups, each of the groups was assigned two selected pests. The task for this exercise was to review the results from the assessment and report back the reasonings for: high uncertainty, low import risk, "special" distributions and reasonings of high import risk. At the end of the exercise each group reported feedback.

18. Next steps: 125th PLH Panel plenary minutes; 126th PLH Panel plenary agenda; Calendar of PLH Panel plenaries 2024; Calendar of PLH Panel plenaries 2025 and AOB

A brief description on the main content of the 126th PLH plenary agenda was given, as well as a reminder of how the minutes of the 125th PLH plenary minutes will be agreed in written procedure. The agreed 2024 PLH plenary calendar was shown as a reminder. The 2025 draft calendar of PLH Panel plenary meetings was discussed and approved, agreeing to meet in 2025 four times on site, to further develop the close collaboration of the new PLH panel, and remaining meetings online.