

18-19 September 2024  
9:00-18:00 and 9:00-13:00  
MINUTES - Agreed 4 October 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 Experts<sup>1</sup>:  
Not Applicable
- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:  
EC: ALAEZ PONS Ester, DITTMANN RASMUSSEN Susanne
- EFSA:  
ANTONIOU Sotiria-Eleni, ASHE Sean, AZNAR Inma, BALDINELLI Francesca, 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 Independence<sup>2</sup> and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management<sup>3</sup>, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by

<sup>1</sup> 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>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/policy\\_independence.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/competing\\_interest\\_management\\_17.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf)



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. Agreement of the minutes of the 158<sup>th</sup> AHAW Panel Plenary meeting held on 2-3 July 2024, in Parma**

The minutes of the 158<sup>th</sup> Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 10 July 2024.

#### **5. Report on written procedure**

Not applicable

#### **6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion/adoption.**

##### **6.1 Art. 29 - Scientific opinion concerning the killing for slaughter of other species – horses - Art 29 - [EFSA-Q-2023-00310](#)**

The draft opinion was submitted to the Panel for thorough reading and in-depth discussion. The discussion was mainly focussed on the uncertainty aspect: the rationale for choosing a threshold of 50% animals as quantity of interest was questioned and it was agreed that this is the threshold for which corrective actions should take place. It was also agreed to keep the short explanations of the uncertainty ranges but some of these should be revised. Additional comments were raised in other specific text sections, e.g. the request to include a sentence explaining that theoretically the process of moving the animals from the unloading to the lairage area should also be considered, but it can be explained that this process is comparable, in terms of effects on welfare, to the process of handling and moving to the stunning point. Another point was to amend the flowchart of indicators for monitoring penetrative captive bolt stunning of horses and clarify that when signs of consciousness are seen the horse should be re-stunned or a back-up stunning method applied. The opinion will be submitted to the Panel for possible adoption at the Plenary meeting in November.

##### **6.2 Art. 29 – Scientific opinion concerning the killing for other purposes than slaughter of other species – horses - Art 29 - [EFSA-Q-2021-00285](#)**

The draft opinion was submitted to the Panel for first reading. Comments were raised with view to improvements in terminology, e.g. the terms additional or secondary killing method are used inconsistently. It was agreed to always refer to 'second-step killing method' (to indicate the second killing method to be applied in two-step methods) and to refer to 'back-up killing method' (to indicate the second killing method to be applied in case of failure). The opinion will be submitted to the Panel for thorough reading at the Plenary meeting in November and for possible adoption in December.

##### **6.3 Art. 29 - Joint mandate EFSA-ECDC on Avian Influenza: Task 2. Scientific Opinion on zoonotic avian influenza– ([EFSA-Q-2024-00172](#))**

The methodology to address the risk of mutations of AIV and possible results to be obtained were presented in detail. First, a mutation map is compiled, with phenotypic traits linked to the mutations leading to zoonotic behaviour of the virus. According to how each mutation was studied, a score of evidence is estimated. Mutations with highest score are mapped in the AI virus strains from public database since 2000, and based on that, a description of the % of isolates with highest number of traits are described, % isolates with certain traits (e.g.



polymerase affinity), most relevant subtypes and clades with possible zoonotic role, and a description about place, time and host of isolation is provided.

Further comments provided to the other sections of the opinion were discussed.

#### **6.4 Art. 31 - Joint mandate EFSA-ECDC on Avian Influenza: Task 3. Simulation exercise– ([M-2024-00009](#))**

ToR 3 of the joint mandate was presented to the Panel. The experts were informed about the purpose and the specific objectives of the simulation exercise (SIMEX). Participants from public and animal health sectors from MSs and third countries will face a cross-border severe outbreak of avian influenza in animals and humans thus to explore one health emergency preparedness and response approaches and countries' interactions. ECDC, EFSA, EURL and EC are currently working on the specific scenario to be simulated. The simulation will take place on 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> December in Brussels, all the logistics will be supported by an HaDEA external contractor.

#### **6.5 Art. 31 - Annual Report on surveillance for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds in the European Union– ([EFSA-Q-2023-00580](#))**

The background and methodology for the annual assessment of the surveillance for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds reports was presented and examples of recent outputs were provided.

#### **6.6 Art. 31 - Annual assessment of *Echinococcus multilocularis* surveillance reports submitted in the context of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2018/772– ([EFSA-Q-2023-00578](#))**

The background and methodology for the annual assessment of the surveillance for *Echinococcus multilocularis* surveillance in the EU was presented and examples of recent outputs were provided.

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

The draft report, the two models and the input data files were shared with the AHAW Panel for information. Two comments were received from Panel members, about the length of the methodology section and the lack of uncertainty assessment in the report. It was explained that the methodology section remains almost intact since the first evaluation was conducted to explain the scenario tree model, not frequently used for risk management decisions. Regarding the uncertainty analysis, the BIOHAZ Panel agreed in the previous evaluation to waive the implementation of the uncertainty guidance for this type of mandates, since they are more like applications. Regulated products in EFSA do not implement the uncertainty guidance. Nevertheless, uncertainty is addressed in the scenario analysis where results applying different values of the diagnostic sensitivity of the screening test in field conditions were reported. The final draft will be submitted for internal approval and publication.

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

An update on the progress for the development of the scientific opinion concerning the protection of turkeys on farm (M-2023-00122) and the technical report on the housing systems of keeping turkeys and practices applied in turkeys was provided (ToR A Request 1). Particularly, the progress made on the risk factors 'space allowance', 'type and presence of enrichment', 'type and condition of the litter' (ToR B Request 2a) and the selected animal-based indicators collected at the slaughterhouse to monitor the level of welfare of turkeys on farm (ToR B Request 5) was detailed. An update of the planned time for submitting different ToRs for the panel was provided and agreed.



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

A description of the apparatus and operation of the new stunning method was provided to the Panel. The initial key parameters and Animal Based Measures used by the applicant to detect pain, fear and unconsciousness were described. The stunning methods that will be compared with the Diathermic Syncope, as well as the method that will be used for performing a non-formal expert elicitation exercise, were announced. The hazards of the four comparable stunning methods to carry out the exercise, identified by the working group, were: Inappropriate handling, Inappropriate restraint, Unexpected loud noise, Incorrect position of application of the stunning method, Pre-stun shocks, Inappropriate stunning parameters, Energy leakage, Wet skin, Prolonged stun to stick interval, Ineffective sticking, Release from restraining while conscious, Poor electrical contact, Overheating of applicator/tong, Presence of horns. The Panel consented to the aforesaid hazards and proposed to include two additional hazards and specifically the Too short exposure time and sticking of conscious animals and that was agreed unanimously.

## **6.10 Art 31 – Technical assistance concerning the welfare of animals kept for fur production – ([EFSA-Q-2024-00126](#))**

A general overview on the engagement plan and the milestone progress for the development of the scientific opinion and technical report for the mandate on the welfare of animals kept for fur production (M-2023-00148) was provided. Progress on the selection of highly relevant welfare consequences for mink, foxes, raccoon dogs and chinchilla in response to TORs 2a of the mandate, was presented.

The Panel reviewed the first draft of the technical report (EFSA-Q-2023-00126) before the meeting. During the meeting, selected comments were discussed, and lack of available information on specific aspects was explained. The Panel actively contributed with feedback and input, and it was agreed that the working group would address the proposed revision by the Panel experts. A revised version of the report, with the incorporated suggestions will be submitted to the Panel at a later stage.

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

An update of the progress of the report EFSA-Q-2022-00381 was provided to the Panel, including a brief summary of the process and methodology applied in each of the sections; risk factor of ASF in domestic pigs, risk factors in wild boar, role of vectors on ASF in Europe, effectiveness of barriers in controlling wild boar population and immunocontraception as tool to control wild boar populations. The main results obtained so far were discussed, and the Panel provided insightful comments on the interpretation and ways to improve the report. Additional work on phrasing some conclusions to include the uncertainty assessment was proposed by the Panel and will be done in the next Working Group meeting.

# **7 Other scientific topics for information/discussion**

## **7.1 EUBA-EFSA-2024-BIOHAW-01 Pathway to animal welfare quantitative risk assessment: piloting a harmonised collection of welfare data in pigs.**

Background, project objectives and timelines as well as aspects inherent to the grant application were presented to the Panel. This call for proposals was launched by EFSA on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2024 as follow-up of the main conclusions of the EFSA Roadmap for Actions 'More Welfare'. The project focuses on sows, gilts and piglets and aims at collecting harmonised welfare data (ABMs and resource-, management-, environmental- based context data) on a large scale across the EU, from farms and slaughterhouses, enabling a quantitative assessment of the on-farm welfare of the above pig categories. A prototype database, *ad-hoc* protocol and training programme of the evaluators need to be developed and fine-tuned for the harmonisation of the field data collection of welfare data. Only Art 36



Organisations are eligible to apply and in *Consortia* of at least four Organisations. The deadline for application is the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

#### **7.2 Communication on animal health and welfare**

A brief presentation, showing recent communication activities in the area of Animal Health and Welfare, was given by the COM content partner.

#### **7.3 Uncertainty Analysis in animal health and welfare**

The Panel generally agreed that uncertainty analysis (UA) is very important and useful. The way it is carried out can vary. Here, the WG Chair plays an important role in defining the approach and elements on which uncertainty analysis should be carried out. Because not all elements may be subjected to UA in each Opinion, depending on their “perceived importance”, the WG Chair can provide suggestions early in the process on how to deal with it, but preferably not later than the first reading of the Opinion. It was suggested to develop a pragmatic, fit for purpose approach to quantify the uncertainty in the most important conclusions. The working group members should be trained on this method. It is crucial to pose the correct uncertainty questions. These questions should be proofread by some Panel members as early as possible in the process of developing the Opinion.

#### **7.4 European Partnership for Animal Health and Welfare: the animal welfare activities**

An overview of the European Partnership for Animal Health and Welfare (EU PAHW) was given. EFSA is involved in three activities relating to Animal Welfare : SOAs 9, 13 and 17, relating to : (SOA 9) the creation of an animal welfare knowledge platform for the monitoring of animal welfare ; (SOA 13) the assessment of positive animal welfare and (SOA 17) animal welfare and sustainability. A summary of each activity was given.

#### **7.5 Capacity-building for active surveillance of HPAI in wild birds in Europe + EFSA’s Bird Flu Radar**

This agenda item was postponed until the next plenary.

#### **7.6 ENETwild, a project funded by EFSA on wildlife under One Health perspective**

An overview of the ENETwild project was presented, it is titled "Wildlife and One Health: wildlife ecology, health surveillance, interaction with livestock, human population and environment" and has as primary goals 1) collect, share and analyze data about wildlife demography , wildlife disease surveillance to infer on their interaction with domestic animals, humans and environment under a One Health approach; 2) providing ad hoc scientific support and 3) communication of the results produced. The project runs until 2029. Details are given in the presentation available for the Panel.

#### **7.7 VectorNet: A network for sharing information on vectors and vector-borne disease in the EU and neighbouring countries**

The Vectornet project was presented. Vectornet is an inter-institutional framework contract assigned to 15 partner institutions, led by Avia GIS. Vectornet is funded by EFSA and ECDC to support the exchange of data on vector distribution in the EU and neighbouring countries and to support EFSA and ECDC with their risk assessments on vector borne diseases.

One of the new aspects of this iteration of Vectornet is that Vectornet will organize the annual One-Health Vectornet Entomology network (OHVEN) meeting. The OHVEN will be composed of ECDC’s Operational Contact Points (OCPs) for entomology and EFSA’s Network on Veterinary Entomology (NVE). Whereas the OCPs are nominated by ECDC National Coordinators and will represent the entomologists working in the public health sector to combat vector borne diseases, the NVE members are appointed by EFSA and will represent entomologists working in the veterinary health sector.



Another important new aspect is that Vectornet will closely collaborate with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and submit validated vector data on GBIF platform to improve the impact and visibility of the vector distribution data.

## **8. Update on new mandates**

Not applicable

## **9. Feedback from the Scientific Committee**

The Chair informed the Panel about the work in the SC, which includes primarily cross-cutting work for the different panels. This type of work often relates to most other panels. However, some guidance documents of relevance to the AHAW Panel are also developed, e.g. the uncertainty guidance and guidance on protocol development.

The Chair also informed about a current activity of the Chief Scientists Office, where a proposal on a revised structure of scientific opinions will be developed in the near future based on input from EFSA Journal, scientific officers and the current and past scientific committees.

## **10. Any Other Business**

### **10.1 EKE training**

The panel was informed about two Expert Elicitation trainings taking place in \_Parma, either on 3-4 December 2024 or on 21-22 January 2025. Panel members can apply via the Expert Corner.

## **11. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 27 November 2024 by web conference.