

**SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS**
168th Panel Plenary meeting



11 December 2024

09:00-16:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 19 December 2024

Location: Teleconference

Attendees:

○ Panel Members:

Josep Casacuberta (Chair), Francisco Barro, Albert Braeuning, Pilar Cubas, Michelle M Epstein, Thomas Frenzel, Jean-Luc Gallois, Frits Koning, Ruud de Maagd, Antoine Messéan, F Javier Moreno, Fabien Nogué, Giovanni Savoini, Alan H Schulman, Christoph Tebbe and Eve Veromann.

○ Hearing Experts¹:

Robin Ørnsrud (item 5.3)

○ European Commission:

Olga Orlova (DG-SANTE)

○ EFSA:

NIF Unit:

Ana Afonso, Michele Ardizzone, Giacomo De Sanctis, Antonio Fernández Dumont, Arianna Ferrari, Andrea Gennaro, Aina Belen Gil Gonzalez, Tilemachos Goumperis, Sara Jacchia, Silviya Kološevska, Paolo Lenzi, Aleksandra Lewandowska, Ana Martin Camargo, Franco Maria Neri, Nikoleta Papadopoulou, Pietro Piffanelli, Tommaso Raffaello, Elena Sánchez Brunete and Reinhilde Schoonjans

COM Unit:

Edward Bray, Anatolie Luca (item 8.1)

MESE Unit:

Jose Angel Gomez Ruiz (item 5.3)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. No apologies were received.

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 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, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

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>

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. Report on written procedure since the 167th Plenary meeting held on 13 and 14 November 2024, in Parma

The [minutes](#) of the 167th GMO Open Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 4 December 2024.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion/possible endorsement

5.1 Mandate on “Protein safety” ([EFSA-Q-2023-00664](#))

Over the last 20 years, the GMO Panel gained considerable experience on the assessment of protein safety. The Panel considers that novel tools and methodologies could be used to strengthen protein safety assessment and that a way forward in this area is possible and necessary. Furthermore, the GMO Panel is facing new challenges related to the protein allergenicity and toxicity assessment of newly expressed proteins. Some applications under assessment by the GMO panel contain numerous newly expressed proteins that in some cases are difficult to assess.

In October 2023, the GMO Panel initiated a self-task mandate to deliver a scientific opinion regarding protein safety assessment. For this Scientific Opinion, the GMO Panel considered the experience gained over the last years, new developments in the field, the result of a survey launched on this topic by EFSA at the beginning of 2024 and the outcome of EFSA procurements such as the ones presented during the 167th GMO Panel plenary meeting.

The Panel discussed the draft scientific opinion. The opinion was endorsed for public consultation, which will be launched in mid January 2025. The mandate deadline for the adoption by the GMO Panel is 30th June 2025.

5.2 Mandate on “GMA-NGT” ([EFSA-Q-2023-00050](#))

The GMO Panel, under mandate M-2018-0205, was requested to provide a scientific opinion on potential novel hazards and risks from new developments in biotechnology (including synthetic biology and new genomic techniques) applied to animals that may enter the market in the near future, and on the adequacy of the current EFSA risk assessment guidance covering all aspects of molecular characterisation, food/feed safety, welfare and environmental impact. The mandate included the request for a knowledge-gathering report to identify known cases of NGT animals for agri/food/feed products. The report is available as EFSA supporting publication ([Van Eenennaam, 2023](#)).

The Panel discussed the draft scientific opinion. The opinion will be proposed for endorsement on the upcoming meeting of the Panel. The mandate deadline for the adoption by the GMO Panel is on the 30th June 2025.

5.3 Application for authorisation of canola LBFLFK import in the European Union submitted under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 by BASF Agriculture Solutions ([EFSA-GMO-DE-2019-157](#)) ([EFSA-Q-2019-00394](#))

Oilseed rape LBFLFK was produced by *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation using a single transformation vector to introduce genes encoding fatty acid desaturase and elongase proteins to allow for the synthesis of omega-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (LC-PUFAs), including EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), from oleic acid, as well as an AHAS (acetohydroxyacid synthase) protein to confer tolerance to imidazolinone--containing herbicides.

The scope of the application EFSA-GMO-DE-2019-157 is for food and feed uses, import and processing and does not include cultivation in the European Union.



The Panel discussed and agreed on the next steps of the risk assessment of oilseed rape LBFLFK. Further discussion is needed.

6. Update on new Mandates

6.1 Applications

- None

6.2 Mandates

- Mandate for assessment of additional information related to the application for authorisation of food and feed containing, consisting of and produced from genetically modified oilseed rape MS11 submitted under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 (EFSA-GMO-BE-2016-138) ([EFSA-Q-2024-00691](#))

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

7.1 Scientific Committee

The Chair of the GMO Panel reported the discussions at the last Scientific Committee meeting and ongoing EFSA activities. ⁴

7.2 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.

7.3 Scientific Panel(s) including their Working Groups

This agenda item was not discussed due to lack of time.

8. Any other business

8.1 Communication from Media & Content management (MeCo)

The EFSA's GMO MeCo partners meet the Panel to provide information on their activities.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on the 5th and 6th of February 2025 via teleconference.

⁴ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/122nd-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee-open-observers>