

12 December 2024 9:00-12:00  
13 December 2024 9:00-12:00  
MINUTES - Agreed on 8 January 2025

**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, Arjan, 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,
- EFSA:  
ANTONIOU Sotiria-Eleni, ARDIZZONE Michele, ASHE Sean, AZNAR Inma, BALDINELLI Francesca, BROGLIA Alessandro, CANDIANI Denise Francesca, CARO Eleonora, CATTANEO Eleonora, DHOLLANDER Sofie, FABRIS Chiara, GERVELMEYER Andrea, HEMPEN, Michaela, KOHNLE Lisa, LIMA Eliana, LOPEZ Aitana, MANAKIDOU Aikaterini, MUR Lina, ORTIZ PELAEZ Angel, ROJO GIMENO Cristina, VAN DER STEDE Yves, VERDONCK Frank, VITALI Marika, MESSENS Winy
- Other  
Not Applicable

## **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

- The Chair welcomed the participants.
- Apologies were received from Karl Stahl

## **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 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.

#### **4. Agreement of the minutes of the 160<sup>th</sup> AHAW Panel Plenary meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024, in Parma**

The minutes of the 160<sup>th</sup> Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 12 December 2024.

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

Not applicable

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

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

The draft opinion was discussed for adoption. Abstract and summary were revised, and related comments discussed and addressed, as well as those in the body text and conclusion and recommendations received in the last round of revision. The opinion was finally adopted unanimously by the Panel, to be published in January 2025.

##### **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 discussed for possible adoption. The following points were addressed: i. related to terminology, it was agreed to refer to 'stunning and/or killing methods' to indicate both one-step methods (that simultaneously stun and kill animals) and two-step methods (that require one step for stunning and a second step for killing); ii. for handling and moving to the killing area, the new text and recommendation to kill severely sick or injured animals in their home pen with lethal injection was discussed and agreed, iii. for lethal injection, the text about combinations of substances in use, and their route of administration was amended for clarification. The opinion was unanimously adopted. It will be published in January 2025.

##### **6.3 Art 29 – Scientific opinion concerning the welfare of beef Cattle ([EFSA-Q-2023-00535](#))**

The Panel discussed comments made on the section on indoor housing of the Scientific opinion on the welfare of beef cattle. The wording of the conclusions and recommendations on flooring, water access, nutrition and feeding, extreme environmental heat, lack of outdoor access, environmental enrichment and mixing was discussed, and changes were made to address the AHAW Panel's points. When the wording changed considerably, the uncertainty of the discussions will be reassessed in the WG. The next steps are to finalise addressing the comments in the body of the text and to prepare two other sections to be discussed at the February 2025 meeting. The foreseen adoption deadline for this mandate is June 2025.

##### **6.4 Art 29 – Scientific opinion concerning the welfare of animals kept for fur production – ([EFSA-Q-2023-00869](#))**



The panel reviewed the draft scientific opinion on the welfare of animals kept for fur production, with a focus on the welfare assessment of mink as a first reading. Panel members discussed proposals to enhance the clarity and conciseness of the text. The draft conclusions were also discussed. Agreement was reached on the main changes and follow-up actions to be undertaken by the working group also for the remaining species covered by the mandate. The Panel agreed that no recommendations were needed for this output. The next step is the submission of the assessment also for the other species for deep reading at the February 2025 meeting.

#### **6.5. Art.29 – Fish diseases’ introduction in free area ([EFSA-Q-2024-00668](#))**

The Panel was informed about the envisaged literature review to collect data needed for the assessment. The detailed methodology will be provided in the protocol that will be shared with the Panel in the next months for reviewing and approval by written procedure.

#### **6.6. Art. 31 – Joint mandate EFSA-ECDC on Avian Influenza: Task 4. Coordinated One Health investigation and management of outbreaks in humans and animals caused by zoonotic avian influenza viruses ([EFSA-Q-2024-00173](#))**

The scientific report that has been jointly developed by ECDC and EFSA staff was presented. The document primarily highlights the collaborative framework necessary for interdisciplinary coordinated responses, referring to more detailed guidance and technical reports published elsewhere when applicable. By presenting five scenarios that should trigger One Health investigations alongside the integrated actions of stakeholders, the report identifies critical development needs, such as tools and key points for information exchange across sectors, triggers for joint risk assessments, and gaps in existing knowledge. The document should assist in developing guidance documents to facilitate coordinated One Health investigations and the management of outbreaks in humans and animals caused by zoonotic avian influenza viruses.

#### **6.7. Art. 29 – Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the protection of turkeys on farm ([EFSA-Q-2023-00647](#)) and Art. 31- Scientific and technical assistance ([EFSA-Q-2023-00648](#))**

The comments made on the housing systems report of keeping turkeys were discussed. Additional information was added to the practice of toe trimming. More clarity was provided on the practice of flock-thinning and distinguished from the removal of the turkey hens earlier than the toms in fattening turkey flocks. The latter occurs typically in some EU countries. In addition, a consideration of the scope of labeled production focused on turkeys kept for meat production and not on turkey breeders will be added. The remaining comments will be addressed to finalize the report. The working group is preparing sections for discussion of the Art 29 Scientific opinion at the February 2025 panel meeting. The foreseen adoption deadline for this mandate and request for scientific and technical assistance is December 2025.

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

#### **7.1. Art. 29- GMO unit: Scientific opinion on new developments in biotechnology applied to animals -([EFSA-Q-2023-00050](#)) – update on the aspects related to AW assessment**

A draft of the SO concerning new developments in biotechnology was submitted to the AHAW panel for review and comments on aspects related to animal welfare risk assessment. The panel revised the text, and the main comments were discussed. In particular, the panel



highlighted and agreed on the need to clarify the meaning of animals intended for “agri” use and to specify in the SO, even if not in the remit of the current mandate, the need of a comprehensive AW risk assessment which cover animals during all the stages of the NGT process. The AHAW panel agreed that the text could proceed to public consultation.

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

### **8.1. Risk of infection with highly pathogenic avian influenza virus affecting dairy cows in the United States of America (H5N1, Eurasian lineage goose/Guangdong clade 2.3.4.4b. genotype B3.13)**

A new mandate from the European Commission was presented. The mandate requests scientific and technical assistance (Art. 31 ) and a risk assessment (Art. 29) regarding the risk of infection with highly pathogenic avian influenza virus that currently affects dairy cows in the United States of America (H5N1, Eurasian lineage goose/Guangdong clade 2.3.4.4b. genotype B3.13). A scientific report summarising the current knowledge about the virus and the outbreak in the USA, including measures taken, will be delivered by 31/05/2025, while the risk assessment will be delivered by 30/11/2025. The risk assessment questions concern both animal health and food safety. The AHAW Panel (lead panel) will assess the questions regarding the potential impact of the infection of dairy cows in the EU, describe possible measures to prevent the introduction of the virus into dairy cows and poultry in the EU as well as possible risk mitigating measures to prevent its spread in the EU, describe possible options for adaptations of the current EU surveillance for HPAI that would allow detection of an introduction into the EU dairy cows populations posing a significant animal or public health threat, and assess the likelihood of bulk milk being contaminated. The BIOHAZ Panel will assess the questions regarding the levels of viable virus at the point of consumption in raw milk, colostrum, dairy products and colostrum-based products produced and consumed in the EU, the risk for humans due to the exposure to those assessed levels of viable virus via the foodborne route, and the available measures to mitigate the estimated risk; all considering a hypothetical scenario that bulk milk is found to be contaminated with this virus in the EU.

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

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

Not applicable

## **10. Any Other Business**

Not applicable

## **11. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 25th of February 2025 by web conference.