

29-30 January 2025

09:00-17:30 / 09:00-13:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 13 February 2024

Location: Web-Conference

Attendees:

o Panel Members:

Ana Allende, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez, Valeria Bortolaia, Sara Bover-Cid, Alessandra De Cesare, Wietske Dohmen, Laurent Guillier, Lieve Herman, Liesbeth Jacxsens, Maarten Nauta, Lapo Mughini-Gras, Jakob Ottoson, Luisa Peixe, Fernando Perez-Rodriguez, Panagiotis Skandamis, Elisabetta Suffredini

o Hearing Experts¹:

Romolo Nonno (item 6.7)

o European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Kris De Smet, Gunilla Eklund (EC DG SANTE)

o EFSA:

Giusi Amore, Simone Baldassa, Frank Boelaert, Sandra Correia, Maria Teresa Da Silva Felicio, Nadya Doyle, Nuria Ferrer, Raquel Garcia-Fierro, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Beatriz Guerra, Michaela Hempen, Kamela Kryemadhi, Ernesto Liebana, Winy Messens, Angel Ortiz-Peláez, Hanne Rabbas, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella, Frank Verdonck (BIOHAW Unit)

o Others:

None

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence² and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management,³ 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. Agreement of the minutes of the 174th Panel Plenary meeting held on 4-5 December 2024

The minutes of the 174th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 19th December 2024.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for adoption/endorsement

5.1 Scientific opinion on the equivalence of an alternative heat treatment process of feathers and down ([EFSA-Q-2024-00169](#))

Last WG meeting was held on 18th November 2024. The comments received during the last plenary in December (thorough reading) on the way to express the uncertainty associated with the replies to AQ1 and AQ2 were taken into consideration and the text revised. The chair went through all sections of the draft opinion and all new comments and suggestions received were taken into consideration. The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

5.2 Application for alternative processing method for animal by-products: alkaline hydrolysis under atmospheric pressure ([EFSA-Q-2024-00286](#))

The WG Chair presented the draft opinion for possible adoption. He went through the comments provided by the Panel members, some of them already addressed before the plenary. Following a few minor amendments to the text, the scientific opinion was adopted. The public consultation of the non-confidential version of the dossier has been finalised and the output can be now approved and published.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

6.1 Scientific opinion on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feeds as notified to EFSA ([EFSA-Q-2023-00054](#))

Last WG meeting was held on 13th January 2025. Next WG meeting is scheduled on 2nd April. The section on the "Safety of strains in relation to the gut environment and its application in the QPS concept" was revised and presented to the Panel. The deadline for adoption of this opinion is 31st December 2025.

6.2 Statement on the update of the list of QPS-recommended biological agents intentionally added to food or feeds as notified to EFSA. 22: Suitability of taxonomic units notified to EFSA until March 2025 ([EFSA-Q-2023-00052](#))

Last WG meeting was held on 13th January 2025. Next WG meeting is scheduled on 2nd April. Eighteen notifications were received between October and December 2024 (inclusive): 6 as feed additives, 2 as food enzymes, food additives and flavourings, 3 as novel foods and 7 as PPPs. From these 18, 15 were not evaluated because they belong to taxonomic units excluded from the QPS evaluation (5 filamentous fungi, 1 *E. coli* and 1 *Streptomyces* spp.), and 7 belong to taxonomic units that already have a QPS status. Two of the remaining 3 notifications were already assessed before: were already evaluated for a possible QPS status in previous Panel Statements: *Bacillus thuringiensis* and *Ensifer adhaerens*. The other taxonomic unit was notified for the first time and therefore will be assessed for a possible QPS status in this Panel Statement: *Vibrio natriegens*. *Bacillus sonorensis* and *Corynebacterium stationis* will be assessed for a possible QPS status in response to an internal request. The deadline is 30th June 2025.



6.3 Guidance on the submission of data for the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of substances for the removal of microbial surface contamination of foods of animal origin ([EFSA-Q-2024-00020](#))

EFSA has launched the public consultation on the draft guidance on 18th December 2024. Interested parties are invited to submit their comments by 5th February 2025⁴.

6.4 Scientific opinion on the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of peroxyacetic acid (PAA) to reduce microbiological surface contamination on beef carcasses, half carcasses and quarter carcasses ([EFSA-Q-2022-00626](#))

The WG vice-Chair informed the Panel that the applicant has withdrawn the application on 23rd December 2024.

6.5 Update of the scientific opinion 'Evaluation of the safety and efficacy of Listex™ P100 for reduction of pathogens on different ready-to-eat (RTE) food products' ([EFSA-Q-2024-00551](#))

The WG vice-Chair informed the Panel that the applicant has responded to the second request for information on 6th December 2024. The dossier was considered valid on 10th December 2024. Two WG meetings were held to discuss the assessment; on 16th December 2024 and on 27 January 2025. The Panel members were reminded about the ToRs of the mandate and about the purpose of the proposed treatment. For each of the four ToRs, the conclusions of the 2016 Scientific Opinion⁵ and the new information provided by the applicant were summarised. It was agreed to request additional information from the applicant. The current deadline for adoption of the Scientific Opinion is 10th December 2025.

6.6 Scientific opinion(s) on the current status of the occurrence and spread of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales in the food chain in the EU/EFTA ([EFSA-Q-2024-00149](#))

The WG Chair updated the Panel on the developments since the last Plenary. The last WG meeting was held on 8-9 January 2024, and the next meeting is scheduled for 11 February 2024. The draft scientific opinion Part 1 was presented for thorough reading. This opinion focuses on the occurrence of CPEs in the food chain, transmission dynamics, detection methods, and existing control measures and contingency plans in EU/EFTA countries. Comments received from the BIOHAZ Panel members were discussed and addressed. For the opinion, data collected from the scientific literature, EFSA reports and databases, and data provided by the MS/EFTA countries through targeted EU-surveys (on detection methods in use, existing control measures/contingency and positive-findings) were assessed. The current Part 1 draft opinion will be presented for adoption by the Panel in March 2025. To generate new data (ToR2), a Monopole Framework Partnership Agreement was signed with the EU and National Reference Laboratories on antimicrobial resistance (2024-2027). Planned studies will focus on isolation and characterization protocols, epidemiological investigations, in-depth genetic analyses of isolates, and genomic comparison of isolates from different sources. The duration of the activities of the whole mandate is up to the end of 2027.

6.7 Scientific opinion on the presence of biological and chemical hazards in ash from Category 1 material after incineration, co-incineration, and combustion ([EFSA-Q-2024-00278](#))

The WG Chair presented the draft opinion for first reading. It was the first time the draft was presented to the BIOHAZ Panel. The WG Chair explained the general structure of the opinion,

⁴ <https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/consultations/publicconsultation2/a01Tk000003F74H/pc1253>

⁵ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4565>



how the different sections contribute to answer the assessment questions as defined in the protocol. Then he went section by section addressing the comments of Panel members and answering any questions that they had. The structure and content were well received by the Panel members. Some suggestions to improve the readability and the understanding were taken on board immediately in the text or will be dealt with after the plenary. Some concluding remarks and summary bullet points were included in the text. They were not contested by the Panel. The draft opinion will be submitted for thorough reading to the next plenary on 12-13 March 2025. The deadline for adoption of the opinion is 30th April 2025.

6.8 Application for fluidized catalytic cracking co-processing for the production of renewable fuels ([EFSA-Q-2024-00539](#))

The WG Chair presented the draft opinion for thorough reading. He went through the comments provided by the Panel members, some of them already addressed before the plenary. There were no major issues, and the Panel agreed with the conclusions of the opinion. The public consultation of the non-confidential version of the dossier has yet to be finalised before the output can be approved and published. The draft opinion will be submitted for possible adoption to the next plenary on 12-13 March 2025.

6.9 Scientific opinion on the microbiological safety of ungulates meat intended to be frozen ([EFSA-Q-2024-00663](#))

The WG coordinator informed the Panel about the composition of the *ad hoc* WG which was established to address the terms of reference of this EC mandate. The Panel was also informed about the agreed workplan until the summer and the WG Chair updated the Panel on the discussions that took place during the 1st WG meeting to clarify the terms of reference. The deadline for delivery of the scientific opinion is 31st October 2025.

7. New mandates

7.1 Request for a second scientific opinion on the microbiological safety of frozen meat of ungulates: defrosting ([EFSA-Q-2024-00711](#))

The Panel coordinator informed the Panel about the decision, taken in consultation with the BIOHAZ Panel Chair, to allocate the mandate to the existing BIOHAZ WG on ungulates meat intended to be frozen, dealing with the previous mandate on the same topic (see agenda item 6.9), and chaired by Laurent Guillier. The WG coordinator informed the Panel that the WG will draft a single protocol for both mandates. The Panel Chair proposed to answer the terms of reference adapting, as much as possible, the previous models used in the previous BIOHAZ opinions related to the topic, which was accepted by the Panel. The Panel discussed the terms of reference with the EC and the EC agreed that the WG focuses on the surface temperature for modelling purposes as was done in the previous 'meat transport opinions' models, provided that the relationship of surface temperature and core temperature is clarified in the opinions. The deadline for delivery of the scientific opinion is 31st December 2025.

7.2 Request for a scientific opinion on the risk of infection with highly pathogenic avian influenza virus affecting dairy cows in the United States of America ([EFSA-Q-2024-00712](#))

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 31st May 2025, while



the risk assessment will be delivered by 30th November 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. The Panel coordinator informed the Panel about the decision, taken in consultation with the AHAW and BIOHAZ Panel Chairs, to allocate the risk assessment part of the mandate to the existing AHAW Working Group on avian influenza, and that Elisabetta Suffredini had been nominated Vice-Chair of the Working Group and will lead the sub-group dealing with the part of the mandate on biological hazards.

8. Feedback from the Scientific Committee, other Scientific Panels, EFSA and the European Commission

8.1 Scientific Committee

No new plenary meetings of the Scientific Committee have taken place since the previous BIOHAZ plenary. No discussion took place under this agenda item.

8.2 European Commission

The Panel coordinator confirmed to the Panel the attendance by EC DG SANTE to the BIOHAZ Plenary meeting of March 2025.

8.3 Presentation of the EU One Health Zoonoses Report 2023

EFSA Staff from the BIOHAW Unit presented the main findings of the EU One Health Zoonoses Report for year 2023⁶, published on 10 December 2024. It presents the results of the zoonoses monitoring and surveillance activities carried out in 2023 in 27 Member States (MSs), the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) and 10 non-MSs. Key statistics on zoonoses and zoonotic agents in humans, food, animals, feed, and foodborne outbreaks were provided and interpreted historically. Dashboards, allowing to explore monitoring data, and story maps, providing useful background information, were developed in relation to food-borne outbreaks, *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*, *Brucella*, zoonotic tuberculosis (focusing on *Mycobacterium bovis* and *M. caprae*), *Trichinella*, *Echinococcus*, *Yersinia*, *Toxoplasma gondii*, Q fever, rabies, tularaemia and West Nile virus. They are all available via links in the report and on EFSA website⁷.

9. Other topics for information and/or discussion

9.1 Topics of scientific concern in the area of biological hazards

No discussion took place under this agenda item.

⁶ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/9106>

⁷ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/resources/data-collection-zoonoses>



10. AOB

EFSA staff presented a project on the extraction and production of a catalogue of all the documents produced by EFSA and the Steering Scientific Committee (SSC) in the area of animal by-products, currently being implemented by an external consultant.

The Panel Chair and EFSA staff updated the Panel on the finalisation of the *WaterManage4You*⁸, a free online tool based on the mathematical model developed within the recently adopted BIOHAZ scientific opinions on microbiological hazards associated with the use of water in the post-harvest handling and processing operations of fresh and frozen fruits, vegetables and herbs, that will help predict the transfer and accumulation of bacteria in process water in industrial scenarios.

EFSA staff reminded the Panel about the recently established “mutual feedback system”, an initiative by EFSA aiming at allowing Panel members and EFSA to provide reciprocal feedback on the collaboration through specific surveys. Panel members were invited to review the related information presented during the inaugural plenary in July 2024.

EFSA staff informed the Panel on the recent publication of a joint scientific report by EFSA, ECDC, ECHA, EEA, EMA and JRC on the impact of the use of azole fungicides, other than as human medicines, on the development of azole-resistant *Aspergillus* spp.

⁸ <https://r4eu.efsa.europa.eu/app/WaterManage4You>