

23-24 April 2025

09:00-17:00 / 09:00-12:30

MINUTES - Agreed on 8 May 2025

Location: Web-Conference

Attendees:

- 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

- Hearing Experts¹:

Romolo Nonno (item 5.1)

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

Kris De Smet, Gunilla Eklund (EC DG SANTE)

- EFSA:

Simone Baldassa, Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil, 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, Valentina Rizzi, Mirko Rossi, Eleonora Sarno, Pietro Stella, Frank Verdonck (BIOHAW Unit)

Fulvio Barizzzone, Justine Dastouet (MESE Unit) (item 6.2)

Rosella Brozzi (FEED Unit) (items 6.2, 6.7)

- 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 176th Panel Plenary meeting held on 12-13 March 2025

The minutes of the 176th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 27 March 2025.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for adoption/endorsement

5.1 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 possible adoption. The WG Chair explained the final structure of the answer to assessment question 4 and the conclusions. Then, he went through the conclusions, summary and abstract addressing the comments of Panel members and answering any questions they had. Some of the editorial suggestions were taken on board immediately in the text. No major comments or reservations about the text were raised by the Panel. The draft opinion was then adopted.

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 2 April 2025. The next WG meeting is scheduled on 20 May. No meetings took place since last plenary and no changes to the draft opinion were made since then. The deadline for adoption of this opinion is 31 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 2 April 2025. The next WG meeting is scheduled on 20 May. Forty-seven notifications were received between October 2024 and March 2025 (inclusive): 25 as feed additives, 7 as food enzymes, food additives and flavourings, 6 as novel foods, 8 as PPPs and 1 as food contact materials. From these, 41 were excluded from the current QPS evaluation for the following reasons: 16 were not evaluated because belong to taxonomic units excluded from the QPS evaluation (11 filamentous fungi, 4 *E. coli* and 1 *Streptomyces* spp.) and 21 belong to taxonomic units that already have a QPS status. Two of the other 6 notifications were already evaluated for a possible QPS status in previous Panel Statements: *Bacillus thuringiensis* and *Ensifer adhaerens*. The other 2 TUs were *Vibrio natriegens* (notified for the first time) and *Papiliotrema terrestris* (already assessed in 2022) which will be assessed for a possible QPS status in this Panel Statement. Two TUs were assessed for a possible QPS status in response to an internal request: *Bacillus sonorensis* and *Corynebacterium stationis* (already assessed in 2022), which will also be assessed for a possible QPS status in this Panel Statement. The deadline is 30 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](#))

No WG meeting to discuss the revision of the guidance was held since last plenary. The WG dealing with the revision of the draft guidance on the characterisation and risk assessment of



microorganisms used in the food chain will be addressing the three sub-questions under their remit (see agenda item 6.7).

6.4 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 replied on 8 April 2025 to EFSA's clarification request of 5 March 2025. The original deadline for adoption of the scientific opinion (10 December 2025) has been extended till 18 February 2026. The public consultation of the application is ongoing till 28 April 2025⁴. The last WG meeting was held on 25 March 2025. The next WG meeting will be held on 15 May 2025.

6.5 Scientific opinion on the microbiological safety of ungulates meat intended to be frozen ([EFSA-Q-2024-00663](#)) and on frozen meat of ungulates: defrosting ([EFSA-Q-2024-00711](#))

The last WG meeting was held on 7 and 10 April afternoon and the next WG meeting will take place on 12 and 13 May afternoon. The WG coordinator updated the Panel on the discussions with the WG during the last two meetings as well as on the ongoing activities and the European Commission (EC) provided positive feedback on the progress of the work. The deadline for delivery of the single scientific opinion is 31 December 2025.

6.6 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](#))

Two WG meetings were held since the last plenary meeting; one was held on 17 March 2025 and the other on 7 April. The problem formulation (step 1) of the protocol to deal with TOR 2e was already agreed at the previous plenary. The approach has been added and was presented by the WG vice-chair. After discussion, the BIOHAZ panel approved the protocol. The next WG meeting will be held by web-conference on 21-22 May 2025. The deadline for delivery of the scientific opinion is 30 November 2025.

6.7 EFSA Guidance on the risk assessment of microorganisms used in the food chain ([EFSA-Q-2022-00249](#))

EFSA is revising the replies to the comments received through the Public Consultation on the "Draft guidance on the characterisation and risk assessment of microorganisms used in the food chain". A Report will be prepared with all comments received from interested parties together with EFSA responses and explanations how the comments were considered in the final Opinion. The guidance will be adopted by the scientific Committee.

6.8 Scientific opinion(s) on the current status of the occurrence and spread of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales in the food chain in the EU/EFTA

The scientific opinion addressing the Part 1 of the mandate was published on 8 April. To generate new data (term of reference 2), a Monopole Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) was signed with the EU and National Reference Laboratories on antimicrobial resistance (2024-2027). 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 WG will continue supervising the outcomes of the FPA-consortium,

⁴ <https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/consultations/publicconsultation2/a0ITk000004AAi9/pc1414>



providing advice, and addressing any emerging issue related to the topic (e.g. drafting new scientific opinions). The duration of the activities of the whole mandate is up to the end of 2027, where an updated scientific opinion will be released.

7. Update on new mandates

EFSA informed the Panel that the new animal by-products-related application recently received and mentioned at the previous plenary meeting is being withdrawn. EFSA has received some preliminary background information from the EC in relation to a draft mandate on food safety culture, for which preparatory work by EFSA staff and some panel members to support EC is ongoing; discussion on this topic will take place during the next plenary meeting.

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

8.1 Scientific Committee

The Panel Chair and EFSA staff reported to the BIOHAZ Panel the main topics discussed within the 124th Plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC), that took place on 31 March 2025⁵. Two main topics were reported and discussed: proposals for future work in the area of omics and a recent report on the structure of scientific opinions. As requested by the SC and EFSA Chief Scientist, the Panel discussed the latter and identified the measures to be implemented by the Panel to reduce the length and improve the readability of BIOHAZ scientific opinions. The Panel Chair will provide detailed feedback to the SC during its June or July plenary meeting.

8.2 European Commission

The Panel Chair and EFSA staff informed the Panel of the invitation to present to the EC's Standing Committee on plants, animals, food and feed (PAFF) the set of BIOHAZ opinions on the microbiological hazards associated with the use of water in the post-harvest handling and processing operations of fresh and frozen fruits, vegetables and herbs (ffVHs), and the related WaterManage4You online tool.

8.3 Rapid Outbreak Assessments and related activities

EFSA staff from the BIOHAW Unit presented the latest published report on the assessment of a Prolonged cross-border multi-serovar *Salmonella* outbreak linked to consumption of sprouted seeds⁶. The event background was followed by a description of the food investigation and the joint EFSA-ECDC assessment.

8.4 EU Summary report on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and joint interagency reports on integrated analysis of antimicrobial consumption and occurrence of AMR (JIACRA)

EFSA Staff (BIOHAW Unit) presented the EU Summary report on AMR 2022-2023, which was published on 5 March 2025⁷. The report presents the main findings of the 2022-2023 harmonised AMR monitoring in *Salmonella* spp., *Campylobacter jejuni* and *Campylobacter coli* from humans and food-producing animals (broilers, laying hens and fattening turkeys, fattening pigs and cattle under 1 year of age) and derived meat. For animals and meat, AMR

⁵ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/124th-plenary-meeting-scientific-committee>

⁶ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/en-9315>

⁷ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2025.9237>



data on indicator commensal *Escherichia coli*, presumptive extended-spectrum beta-lactamase(ESBL)-/AmpC beta-lactamase-/carbapenemase-producing *E. coli* and the occurrence of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* are also analysed. Overall, the temporal trend analyses in key outcome indicators (complete susceptibility and prevalence of ESBL-/AmpC-producing *E. coli*) showed an encouraging progress in reducing AMR in food-producing animals in several EU MSs over the last 10 years.

EFSA Staff also presented the aims and main findings of the four past JIACRA reports, analysing the associations between antimicrobial consumption and AMR in/between humans and food-producing animals, the last of which published in 2024⁸. A new JIACRA mandate has been received by EFSA, ECDC, EMA and EEA, and a new report is expected by December 2026.

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.

10. AOB

EFSA staff informed the Panel that, to follow-up the request from the previous plenary meeting to discuss EFSA strategy and ongoing activities on social science, a presentation and discussion will be scheduled at the next plenary meeting. In addition, EFSA social scientists will be involved in the preliminary work being carried out in relation to a future mandate on food safety culture (see agenda item 7).

EFSA staff reminded Panel members to fill out a recent survey circulated by EFSA in relation to ongoing and future training activities.

EFSA staff informed the Panel of tentative dates for 2026 plenary meetings and asked Panel members to check dates and inform the secretariat of any known clashing events.

⁸ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/8589>