SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

136th Panel Plenary meeting

19 & 20 November 2025
9:00-18:00 / 9:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 09 December 2025

EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Location: EFSA On Site and Online

Attendees:

- Panel Members:

Paula BAPTISTA, Anna BERLIN, Elisavet CHATZIVASSILIOU, Antonio Vicent CIVERA, Jaime CUBERO, Nik CUNNIFFE, Eduardo DE LA PEÑA, Nicolas DESNEUX, Francesco DI SERIO, Anna FILIPIAK, Paolo GONTHIER, Beata Anna HASIÓW-JAROSZEWSKA, Hervé JACTEL, Blanca LANDA, Lara MAISTRELLO, David MAKOWSKI, Panagiotis MILONAS, Nikolaos PAPADOPOULOS, Roel POTTING, Hanna Sinikka SUSI, Dirk Jan VAN DER GAAG

- European Commission DG SANTE: MARQUEZ GARCIA Maria Belen, Wolfgang REINERT, Paul ROQUINY
- EFSA:

PLANTS: Efterpi ADAMOU, Etienne BABIN, Paula CALUSINSKA, Matteo CROTTA, Ewelina CZWIENCZEK, Ciro GARDI, Oumayma JEMEI, Agata KACZMAREK, Florian KUNTZE, Andrea MAIORANO, Dora MIJIC, Marco PAUTASSO, Marica SCALA, Goda SIMONELYTE, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Franz STREISSL, Emanuela TACCI, Anastasia TERZIDOU, Rachel VAUGHN, Beatriz WINTER,

MESE: Olaf MOSBACH-SCHULZ

- Hearing experts: PICARD Camille (EPPO)
- Hearing experts: CARDOSO PEREIRA Josè Alberto & RODRIGUES Isabel (Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB)), BARONCELLI Riccardo, PRODI Antonio(University of Bologna (UNIBO), GUARNACCIA Vladimiro, SPADARO Davide (University of Torino (UNITO)
- Observers: Alex GOBBI and Chiara MORENA (art 36 Tasking Grant, CREA, Italy), Alzbeta MIKULOVA (Art. 36 Tasking Grant, University of Padova, Italy; Oresteia SFYRA (Art. 36 Tasking Grant, Benaki Phytopathological Institute, Greece); Monia LOMBARDO; Tarla MURPHY; Anita Benko; Nuno Faria; Telma Ferreira, Isabel Calha, Elisabete Figueiredo, Maria Clara Serra, Bruno Nogueira, Pedro Sousa, Ana Aguiar, Paula Sá-Pereira, Ilaria Marengo; Célia Mateus, Pedro Talhinhas, Ana Paula Ramos, Teresa Nascimento, Ilaria Martino; Madalena Ramos

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Panel 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[1] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management[2], EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Working Group members invited to the present meeting.

Certain interests were declared orally by the members before the beginning of the meeting. For further details on the outcome of the screening of the Oral Declaration of Interest made at the beginning of the meeting, please refer to the Annex I.

4. Report on the written approval procedure of the 135th PLH Panel plenary meeting

The Panel was informed that the minutes were published on time.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption

5.1 Scientific Opinion on Commodity Risk assessment on CRA *Castanea* UK

The European Commission requested the EFSA Panel on Plant Health to prepare and deliver risk assessments for commodities listed in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/2019 as 'High risk plants, plant products and other objects'. This Scientific Opinion covers plant health risks posed by graftwood, bare root plants (including whips) and potted plants of *Castanea sativa* imported from the United Kingdom. The assessment was performed considering the available scientific information, including the technical information provided by the UK. All pests associated with the commodities were evaluated against specific criteria. Three EU Regulated pests (*Cryphonectria parasitica, Dryocosmus kuriphilus, Phytophthora ramorum*), present in the UK and associated with the commodity, were considered relevant for this Opinion. One pest that is not regulated in the EU (*Phytophthora kernoviae*) fulfilled all relevant criteria and was selected for further evaluation. For the selected pest, the risk mitigation measures described in the submitted technical dossier were evaluated. An expert judgement was given on the likelihood of pest freedom taking into consideration the risk mitigation measures acting on the pest, including uncertainties associated with the assessment. The degree of pest freedom varied among the commodities evaluated, with *P. kernoviae* being most frequently expected on the imported bare root and potted plants. The Expert Knowledge Elicitation indicated with 95% certainty that 9,060 or more units per 10,000 will be free from *P. kernoviae*.

The scientific opinion was adopted on 19 November 2025.

5.2 Scientific Opinion on Commodity Risk assessment on CRA *Lonicera* UK

The European Commission requested the EFSA Panel on Plant Health to prepare and deliver risk assessments for commodities listed in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/2019 as 'High risk plants, plant products and other objects'. This Scientific Opinion covers plant health risks posed by a) rooted plants in pots, and b) bare root plants and whips of *Lonicera ligustrina* var. *pileata*, *L. ligustrina* var. *yunnanensis* and *L. periclymenum* from the United Kingdom (UK). The assessment was performed considering the available scientific information, including the technical information provided by the UK. All pests potentially associated with the commodities were evaluated against specific criteria. Five EU-quarantine pests [honeysuckle yellow vein virus (*Begomovirus macrotylomae*), *Bemisia tabac*i, *Meloidogyne fallax*, *Phytophthora ramorum*, and *Scirtothrips dorsalis*], present in the UK and which could be associated with the commodity, were considered relevant for this Opinion. No pests not-regulated in the EU were identified to be selected for further evaluation

[1] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf
[2] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf

The scientific opinion was adopted on 19 November 2025.

5.3 Scientific Report on Köppen-Geiger climate classification for EFSA plant health risk assessments

A presentation was delivered on the report prepared by the PLH-RA Team concerning the use of the Köppen-Geiger climate classification for climate suitability assessment in pest risk assessments. The historical background of the classification system and its widespread application were briefly recalled.

The main objective of the report was providing a scientific justification for the adoption of the new Beck et al. (2023) version, replacing the currently used Kottek & Rubel version. The principal methodological differences between the two versions and the expected implications for assessing the climatic suitability of the EU for plant pests and diseases were highlighted.

Panel members provided comments on the scientific approach, interpretation of results and implications for pest risk assessment. All comments were addressed, and the report was revised accordingly. The only remaining adjustments concern the quality of maps and figures, which will be finalised prior to publication. The Panel endorsed the report.

5.4 Scientific Opinion on Commodity Risk assessment on Vitis Moldova

The European Commission asks EFSA to provide scientific opinions in the field of plant health in accordance with Article 29 of Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002. Annex VI of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 lists plants, plant products and other objects whose introduction into the Union from certain third countries are prohibited. This Scientific Opinion covers plant health risks posed by one to two year old grafted bare root plants without leaves of *Vitis* spp. to be exported from the Republic of Moldova, taking into account the available scientific information, including the technical information provided by Moldova. All pests associated with the commodity were evaluated for their relevance for this opinion. Eight pests (one EU quarantine pest and seven *Vitis* spp. RNQPs) that fulfilled all the criteria were selected for further evaluation. For the selected pests, the risk mitigation measures implemented in Moldova and described in the technical dossier were evaluated. For the selected pests, an expert judgement is given on the likelihood of pest freedom considering the risk mitigation measures acting on the pest, including uncertainties associated with the assessment. The degree of pest freedom varies among the pests evaluated, with grapevine fleck virus (*Maculavirus vitis,* GFkV) and '*Candidatus* Phytoplasma solani' being the pests most frequently expected on the imported plants. The Expert Knowledge Elicitation indicated with 95% certainty that 9,900 or more units per 10,000 will be free from the above-mentioned pests.

The scientific opinion was adopted on 19 November 2025.

5.5 Scientific Opinion on the asessment of vacuum and steam treated oak and walnut logs from the US (EFSA-Q-2024-00484)

The European Commission submitted to the EFSA Panel on Plant Health a dossier from the United States (US) proposing the use of a vacuum–steam–heat treatment as a stand-alone phytosanitary measure to mitigate the risk of entry of *Bretziella fagacearum*, *Geosmithia morbida* and its vector *Pityophthorus juglandis* (thousand cankers disease complex) into the EU when trading oak (*Quercus alba*, *Q. rubra*) and walnut (*Juglans nigra*) logs with bark from the US. The proposed treatment consists of heating the sapwood to 56°C for 30 min at a depth of 5 cm from the cambium under vacuum and steam conditions. EFSA assessed the likelihood that logs of oak and walnut target species would be free from EU quarantine pests, basing its evaluation solely on the efficacy of the proposed treatment. In addition to *B. fagacearum*, *G. morbida* and *P. juglandis*, 14 other EU quarantine pests were identified as relevant because they are present in the US and are potentially associated with the commodities. The assessment was based on the information provided by the applicant country and on systematic literature reviews conducted by EFSA to determine the survival temperature and wood colonisation depth of the target pests. The evidence gathered, was evaluated through an Expert Knowledge Elicitation (EKE) to estimate the likelihood

of pest freedom of logs after the treatment assuming that all logs were infested. The vacuum–steam–heat treatment substantially reduces the presence of target pests infesting the sapwood. The EKE indicated with 95% certainty that between 9,021 and 10,000 treated Q. alba logs per 10,000 and that between 9,347 and 10,000 treated Q. rubra logs per 10,000 will be free from *B. fagacearum.* The EKE indicated with 95% certainty that between 9,862 and 10,000 treated *J. nigra* logs per 10,000 will be free from *G. morbida* and that between 9,948 and 10,000 treated *J. nigra* logs per 10,000 will be free from *P. juglandis.* However, the treatment is expected to be much less effective against pests which infest wood deeper than 5 cm from the cambium such as the species *Arrhenodes minutus*. The EKE indicated with 95% certainty that between 1,109 and 10,000 logs per 10,000 will be free from *A. minutus*.

The scientific opinion was adopted on 19 November 2025.

5.6 Scientific Opinion on Commodity Risk assessment on Petunia and Calibrachoa Uganda

The draft opinion was presented and discussed. The Panel endorsed the text and requested further minor revisions, proposing to postpone the adoption to the plenary meeting on December 10 2025.

6. Feedback from EFSA, Scientific Committee and European Commission

6.1 Update from WG PRA on the new protocol

The Panel received an update on the progress made under mandate M-2024-00135, which EFSA accepted in February 2025. The background and context of the request from the European Commission were presented to frame the ongoing work. EFSA outlined the current proposal for the development of the PRA protocol and reported on the advancements achieved to date. The Panel also received an overview of the current version of the decision tree intended for use in pest categorization, together with the next steps planned for further development of the methodology.

6.2 X-Vectors - project - presentation of final results

Prof. Jose Alberto Cardoso Pereira and dr Isabel Rodrigues from the Bragança Polytechnic University presented a recently published EFSA grant final report. The studies examined the biology of xylem-sap-feeding insect species in Portugal—especially those that may act as vectors of *Xylella fastidiosa*. Its aim was to identify which insect species feed on xylem sap, characterize their ecology and distribution, and assess their potential role in transmitting *X. fastidiosa* under Portuguese conditions. The data provides a basis for improving pest-surveillance and risk-assessment efforts within the plant-health framework of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and EU regulators.

6.3 Colletotrichum Art. 36 grant - presentation summarising/listing the uncertainties from the Colletotrichum pest categorisations and project progress update

The Panel was updated about the Colletotrichum Art. 36 grant to reduce uncertainties about the published EFSA pest categorisation on pathogens of that genus. The project started in December 2023 and will last until December 2026. Some background and a synopsis of the uncertainties of the published pest categorisation were presented.

The EFSA Plant Health Panel published in 2021/2022 some pest categorisations of *Colletotrichum* spp., where a key uncertainty on the geographical distribution of these fungi emerged:

1) *C. plurivorum* (criteria met, but with key uncertainty),
2) *C. fructicola* (no conclusion, due to the key uncertainty), and
3) *C. aenigma, C. alienum, C. perseae, C. siamense* and *C. theobromicola* (criteria met, but with key uncertainty)

The aim of the EFSA funded project presented today is to reduce such uncertainty.

The project is part of the Call: GP/EFSA/PLANTS/2023/06–"Experimental and observational evidence to reduce knowledge gaps for risk assessment of new and emerging plant pests", Lot1 (Improving the knowledge on the European and global distribution of plant pathogenic species of the genus Colletotrichum, recently subject to taxonomical changes.

The main objectives of the project are: 1): to clarify and update the taxonomy of *Colletotrichum* strains in culture collections in Europe under the current taxonomic criteria, 2) to reallocate taxonomically past records to investigate host association patterns and the global distribution of Colletotrichum, and 3) to collect and examine samples of anthracnose from selected host plans in the EU.

The PI of the project summarized the objectives, work packages, work done so far (including sampling), and next steps of the project. The host species target of the research project are apple and important crops such as almond, annona, avocado, banana, cherry, citrus, coffee, grapevine, mango, olive, papaya, peach, pear, pepper, persimmon, soya, strawberry, walnut, as well as ornamental plants.

6.4 Feedback from Scientific Committee

Panel chair informed Panel that during the last Scientific Committee in Valencia, the "Guidance on the characterisation of microorganisms in support of the risk assessment of products used in the food chain" was adopted. The guidance is available at: https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2025.9705.

6.5 Feedback from European Commission

The European Commission has recently published new legislation: the amendment of Regulation (EU) 2019/2072; measures to prevent the spread of *Candidatus* Liberibacter spp.; containment measures for *Ceratocystis platani*; establishment of temporary ban on fresh mangoes rom Mali. The EFSA Panel scientific opinions have provided support to the abovementioned first three pieces of legislation.

7. AOB

7.1 The 2025 -2026 PLH Plenary

A presentation of 2025 -2026 PLH Plenary Calendar was shown:

Next Plenary 10 Dec 2025 – Online plenary.

2026 Schedule: 4 on-site plenaries planned for 2026 for better interaction: March, June, September and November. 18 Feb half day – Open plenary online

Annex I

Interests and actions resulting from the screening of Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI)

With regard to this meeting, **Dr. Francesco Di Serio** declared the following interest with regard to one draft Scientific opinion:

5.1 Scientific Opinion on Commodity Risk assessment on CRA Castanea UK

5.4 Scientific Opinion on Commodity Risk assessment on Vitis Moldova

He informed the Panel that he participated in the work on this opinion as coordinator of an EFSA Art. 36 Tasking Grant Specific Contract. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence[1] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management[2], and taking into account the specific matters discussed at the meeting in question, the interest above was deemed to represent a Conflict of Interest (CoI).

This results in the exclusion of the expert from discussion or voting as PLH Panel Member of items 5.1, however, he can participate in this agenda meeting to present the work he conducted as coordinator of the related EFSA Art 36 Tasking Grant Specific Contract.