

**Location:** Teleconference

**Attendees:**

- o Panel Members:  
ALVAREZ Julio, BOKLUND Anette, DIPPEL Sabine, DÓREA Fernanda, FIGUEROLA Jordi, HERSKIN Mette, MICHEL Virginie, MIRANDA CHUECA Miguel Ángel, NANNONI Eleonora, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose, NONNO Romolo, RIBER Anja, STAHL Karl, STEGEMAN Arjan, THULKE Hans-Hermann, TUYTTENS Frank, WINCKLER Christoph
- o Hearing Experts<sup>1</sup>:  
Not applicable
- o European Commission and/or Member States representatives:  
EC: MITEVA Aleksandra, TOFT HOLM Lærke
- o EFSA:  
AMATO Laura, AMORE Giusi, ASHE Sean, AZNAR ASENSIO J Inmaculada, BALDINELLI Francesca, BALTUSYTE Ieva, BENEDETTI Beatrice, BIGONI Fabio, BROGLIA Alessandro, CANDIANI Denise, DHOLLANDER Sofie, FEREIDOUNI Sasan, GERVELMEYER Andrea, HEMPEN Michaela, KOHNLE Lisa, KRYEMADHI Kamela, LIMA Eliana, LOPEZ Aitana, MANAKIDOU Aikaterini, MELO Miguel, MOSBACH-SCHULZ Olaf, MUR Lina, ROJO GIMENO Cristina, RUSINA Alessia, STOCKER Anna Sophia, VAN DER STEDE Yves, VERDONCK Frank, VITALI Marika
- o Others:  
Not applicable

## **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 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 the Panel members invited to the present meeting. No conflicts of interest related to the

<sup>1</sup> As defined in Article 34 of the document "Implementing Rule of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority laying down the rules on the selection, appointment and operations of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and of their Working Groups":  
<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/paneloperation.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/independence-policy-2024.pdf](https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/independence-policy-2024.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/decision-ed-on-competing-interest-management-2024.pdf](https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/decision-ed-on-competing-interest-management-2024.pdf)

issues discussed have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the Panel members at the beginning.

#### **4. Agreement of the minutes of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Panel plenary meeting held on 27-28 May 2026**

The minutes of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 15 June 2026.

#### **5. Scientific output(s) submitted for discussion/adoption**

##### **5.1 Art.29 – Specified Risk Material (SRM) removal ([EFSA-Q-2025-00442](#)) – Submission of selected sections of the draft opinion**

The Panel welcomed the draft Opinion and expressed overall satisfaction with its scientific content. However, members agreed that the document should be restructured to improve readability by reducing background information and focusing more clearly on the assessment findings. EFSA staff will revise the structure accordingly.

Several amendments were agreed, including clarifying that the Opinion does not quantitatively assess risks from imported tissues, shortening the historical review of SRM legislation, and improving descriptions of model inputs, assumptions and hypothetical re-emergence scenarios. The Panel also agreed to simplify the presentation of results by removing material outside the scope of the assessment and reporting median values rather than means for model outputs. Further discussion is required on how best to present the probability of releasing an undetected infected animal and the associated infectivity entering the feed and food chains. Additional written comments submitted outside the meeting will be addressed by the Working Group.

##### **5.2 Art 29. Risk posed by VBDs: mitigation measures ([EFSA-Q-2025-00186](#))**

The Panel was updated on the expert elicitation for assessing risk mitigation measures for vector-borne diseases. The approach combines individual expert scoring based on disease dossiers with collective discussions to review divergent views, refine assessments and reach consensus where possible. The methodology has been piloted and further refined through the development of common assumptions, definitions and assessment scenarios.

The assessment framework considers different epidemiological scenarios, including disease introduction into free areas, primary outbreaks and endemic situations, and evaluates the contribution of mitigation measures against surveillance and control objectives. Measures are classified according to their expected contribution to achieving the objective, ranging from minor or supportive roles to core measures. First ten diseases have been assessed, and further scoring sessions are scheduled during summer.

##### **5.3 Art.29. Vector Borne Disease – Risk posed by VBDs: Risk intro, spread, impact ([EFSA-Q-2025-00185](#))**

Comments on the draft opinion assessing the first nine vector-borne diseases (Crimean–Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF), Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE), Japanese encephalitis (JE), leishmaniosis (Leish), lumpy skin disease (LSD), Rift Valley fever (RVF), tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) and West Nile fever (WNV)) were discussed. Several improvements were suggested, including the removal of maps displaying incursion risks in areas where the diseases are already present. It was agreed that the assessment of the first nine diseases would be considered for endorsement at the September Plenary, allowing an improved draft of the opinion to be presented.

### **5.3 5.3. Art. 29 - Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the welfare of horses ([EFSA-Q-2024-00188](#))**

The draft TOR 2h on Human-Equidae interaction and TOR 2i on Working activity were presented. For TOR 2h, it was agreed to expand the introduction to include technical terminology deriving from science of behaviour and learning that are used in the hazard description, e.g., negative and positive reinforcement.

For TOR 2i, the EKEs on Age at the start of training and maximum weight carrying and pulling were discussed as well as the draft of these sections in the horse welfare opinion, in addition to working conditions during gestation. The Panel agreed on the EKE approach for deriving the maximum temperature and duration of effort. It was suggested to further explain the rationale for the selection of the ABMs, to consider additional evidence of heat stress where available, and to include, when relevant, the related uncertainties and limitations of the available evidence. Both scientific opinions, welfare of horses and donkeys and hybrids, will be presented for first reading at the September plenary.

### **5.4 Protocol for New World Screwworm mandate ([EFSA-Q-2026-00275](#))**

The Panel reviewed the draft protocol and provided comments on the interpretation of the Terms of Reference (ToRs), the scope of the assessment and the proposed methodology. Clarifications were introduced to better align the ToRs with the assessment questions and to explicitly address the entry, establishment and spread of New World Screwworm (NWS).

The assessment questions were revised following the comments received, including the separation of animal and human health impacts and the inclusion of additional entry pathways, such as travellers, commodities and migratory birds.

The importance of surveillance and early detection was also highlighted, leading to further refinement of the assessment questions, evidence collection approach and proposed adaptations to EU surveillance systems.

Editorial comments regarding numbering, nomenclature and consistency with the APRIO table were noted and will be addressed during the final revision. Subject to these amendments, the Panel unanimously endorsed the protocol.

### **5.5 Art.31and Art. 29. Vaccination against Newcastle diseases ([EFSA-Q-2026-00300](#) and [EFSA-Q-2026-00301](#))**

An update on the mandate progress was provided to the experts by EFSA staff. The Panel was presented with the proposed methodology and data collection strategy for both Terms of Reference. Data will be gathered from affected Member States, EMA, National Reference Laboratories, pharmaceutical companies and scientific literature to support the assessment of the epidemiological situation, vaccine characteristics and vaccine efficacy against currently circulating ND virus strains, including genotype VII. For the scientific opinion, additional information on vaccination practices and outbreak data will be collected from Member States, with mathematical modelling foreseen to support recommendations on vaccination protocols and surveillance.

The Panel was also informed of the proposed Working Group composition involving experts from the AHAW Panel, EURL, EMA, Member States and EFSA. Planned timelines were also presented, including data collection activities during 2026, protocol endorsement in September 2026, approval of the scientific report in November 2026 and adoption of the scientific opinion in June 2027.

## **6. Update on New Mandates**

**6.1 Art 29. Risk posed by movements of products of susceptible animals from a restricted zone due to outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever and on the risk mitigation treatments enabling those movements ([EFSA-Q-2026-00333](#))**

The Panel was informed of the new European Commission mandate on Rift Valley Fever (RVF) concerning the risk posed by movements of products from susceptible animals originating from restricted zones and the effectiveness of risk-mitigation treatments. The mandate requests EFSA to develop a methodology for assessing the risk of disease transmission through products, using RVF as a pilot case, and to assess the risks associated with different commodities, transmission pathways, and available mitigation treatments, including the related uncertainties. Deadline of the mandate is 30 June 2027.

## **7. Any other business**

## **8. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 22 and 23 September 2026, in EFSA, Parma.