

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

161 Panel Plenary meeting – OPEN to observers

16 – 18 June 2026

13:30-18:00 / 09:00-18:00 / 09:00-13:00

MINUTES - Agreed on 3 July 2026



Location: EFSA, Parma

Attendees:

o Panel Members:

In person: Vasileios Bampidis, Margherita Bignami, Laurent Bodin, James Kevin Chipman, Antonio Hernández-Jerez, Tim Hofer, Helle Katrine Knutsen (Chair), Stefano Landi, Kyriaki Machera, Evangelia Ntzani, Isabelle P. Oswald¹, Guido Rychen, Salomon Sand, Katharina Vejdovszky, Barbara Viviani

Online: Agneta Åkesson², Gisela Degen, Christer Hogstrand, Jean-Charles Leblanc³

o Hearing Experts⁴:

Keyvin Darney⁵, Ludovic Le Hegarat⁶, Laurence Castle⁷

o Applicants participating in a technical hearing⁸:

Not Applicable

o European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

EC: Frans Verstraete, Veerle Vanheusden

o EFSA:

FEEDCO Unit – CONTAM Team: Maria Anastassiadou, Elena Bogensperger, Anna Christodoulidou, Chantra Eskes (CONTAM Team Leader), Alexandros Georganas, Mary Gilsenan (FEEDCO Head of Unit), Eirini Kouloura, Anita Radovnikovic, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi (Panel Coordinator), Giulia Rampazzo, Elena Rovesti, Sofie Schryvers, Hans Steinkellner

MESE Unit: José Angel Gómez Ruiz, Rita Ferreira da Sousa, Francesca Riolo, Olaf Mosbach-Schulz

CSO Unit: Jean-Lou Dorne

o Observers:

Federico Cruciani, Annamarija Romac, Tuuli Tauriainen

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants and the observers.

2. Adoption of agenda

¹ On Day 3, present until 11:45 CET.

² On Day 1, participated from 14:30 CET onwards. On Day 2, absent 16:00-17:30 CET. On Day 3 participated until 10:00 CET.

³ On Day 2 participated until 17:00 CET.

⁴ 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>

⁵ Participated on Day 2 only from 9:00-14:30 CET (agenda item 8.3).

⁶ Participated on Day 2 only from 13:30-14:30 CET (agenda item 8.3).

⁷ Participated on Day 3 only from 11:20-11:50 CET (agenda item 8.7).

⁸ As defined in the "EFSA's Catalogue of support initiatives during the life cycle of applications for regulated products": <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/sp.efsa.2021.EN-6472>



The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Panel members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence⁹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management¹⁰, 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 matters discussed in these meetings were identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the Panel or Scientific Committee members at the beginning of these meetings.

4. Panel members introduction

The Panel members, EC representatives and EFSA staff introduced themselves to the Observers

5. Presentation of Guidelines for observers

The CONTAM Panel coordinator presented the Guidelines for participation of Observers to EFSA Open Plenary meetings.

6. Agreement of the minutes of the 160th Panel plenary meeting held on 21-22 May 2026, via teleconference

The minutes of the 160th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 12 June 2026.

7. Report on written procedure

None

8. Scientific output(s) submitted for discussion/adoption

8.1 Draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of emerging and novel BFRs in food (EFSA-Q-2018-00436)

The Chair of the WG on BFRs in food and the responsible EFSA Scientific Officer presented the draft Opinion on the update of the risk assessment of emerging and novel BFRs in food for possible adoption following a targeted consultation. The CONTAM Panel agreed to the replies provided to the comments received, and to the revisions introduced in the draft Opinion. The Panel adopted the Opinion and thanked the WG, EFSA staff and other contributors for the work done.

8.2 Draft Opinion on the risk for public health due to the presence of matrine and oxymatrine in food matrine (EFSA-Q-2025-00323)

The Chair of the WG on Matrine/Oxymatrine presented the draft Opinion for possible endorsement for a targeted consultation. Besides the sections endorsed at the previous Plenary meeting, the CONTAM Panel discussed the new sections on Occurrence in food, Dietary exposure assessment, Risk Characterisation, Uncertainty analysis, Conclusions,

⁹ https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/independence-policy-2024.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-11/decision-ed-on-competing-interest-management-25-11.pdf>



Recommendations, Summary and Abstract as well as other sections relevant for the assessment, such as the Toxicokinetics section. The Panel overall agreed to the outcome of the risk assessment. Due to the nature of the updates requested, it was agreed to discuss the draft Opinion at the next Plenary meeting for possible endorsement.

8.3 Draft Opinion on the risks for animal and public health related to the presence of *Alternaria* toxins in feed and food (EFSA-Q-2024-00285)

The Chair of the WG on *Alternaria* toxins presented the draft Opinion for possible endorsement for public consultation. In particular, the sections on Hazard identification/characterisation, Risk characterisation, Uncertainty analysis, Conclusions, Recommendations and Summary were discussed. The CONTAM Panel overall agreed to the outcome of the risk assessment. Due to the nature of the updates requested, it was agreed that once the revisions are made, the draft Opinion will be sent for possible endorsement via written procedure.

8.4 Draft Opinion on the health risks related to the presence of capsaicin in foods (EFSA-Q-2025-00304)

The Chair of the WG on Capsaicin presented selected sections of the draft Opinion for possible endorsement. In particular, the CONTAM Panel went through the sections on Genotoxicity and Effects on the immune system. The Panel endorsed the sections presented, and provided comments that will be taken into account by the WG to revise the draft Opinion and continue with the development of the draft risk assessment accordingly.

8.5 Draft Opinion on the risks for public health related to the presence of thebaine and oripavine in poppy seeds and derived products (EFSA-Q-2024-00400)

The Chair of the WG on Thebaine and oripavine in food presented the draft Opinion for possible endorsement of sections and discussed the approaches used for risk characterisation. The CONTAM Panel discussed and provided comments to the sections on Toxicokinetics, Toxicity in animals, Studies in humans and Hazard characterisation. The comments received will be taken into account by the WG to revise the draft Opinion accordingly, and discuss it at the next Plenary meeting.

8.6 Draft Opinion on the safety of conventionally smoked food (EFSA-Q-2024-00692)

The Chair of the WG on Conventionally smoked foods and the responsible EFSA Scientific Officer presented the progress of the risk assessment and selected sections of the Opinion for discussion. The CONTAM Panel went through the sections on the Smoking techniques, Parameters that influence contamination in smoked foods, Contaminants of interest, and Heterocyclic aromatic amines (HAAs). The Panel endorsed these sections and agreed to the proposed approach for exposure assessment. In addition, the Chair of the WG gave an overview of the latest developments regarding the proposed risk characterisation approach.

8.7 Draft Opinion on the risks for human health related to the presence of semicarbazide (SEM) in food (EFSA-Q-2024-00581)

The Chair of the WG on SEM provided an overview of the comments received during the public consultation. The comments are under consideration by the WG and will be addressed in a dedicated annex of the draft Opinion individually, and in the draft Opinion, as appropriate.



9. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/ Scientific Panels/EFSA/ EC

9.1 European Commission

The European Commission representatives gave a brief update on the follow-up activities in relation to the scientific Opinions of the CONTAM Panel. Several legislative measures are under discussion with the Member States as an outcome of the CONTAM Panel Scientific Opinions.

9.2 Scientific Panel Working Groups

- **WG Enniatins and beauvericin¹¹**

The Chair of the WG provided an overview about the progress of the draft Opinion noting that it is planned to develop the exposure assessments for humans and food-producing and non-food producing animals by autumn this year.

- **WG Alternaria¹²**

See item 8.3

- **WG on BFRs in food¹³**

See item 8.1.

- **WG on Phomopsins¹⁴**

The Chair of the WG provided an overview about the progress of the draft Opinion noting that it will be submitted for possible adoption at one of the upcoming Plenary meetings.

- **WG Semicarbazide¹⁵**

See item 8.7.

- **WG Conventionally Smoked Foods¹⁶**

See item 8.6.

- **WG Thebaine and oripavine¹⁷**

See item 8.5.

- **WG Matrine and oxymatrine¹⁸**

See item 8.2.

¹¹ https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-10/wg-enniatis-food-feed_0.pdf

¹² <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-10/wg-alternaria-toxins-feed-food.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/wqs/chemical-contaminants/wg-BFRs.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-04/wg-phomopsins.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-03/minutes-wg-semicarbazide-food.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-03/wg-conventionally-smoked-foods.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-05/wg-thebaine-oripavine-minutes.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-06/wg-matrine-oxymatrine-in-food.pdf>



- **WG Capsaicin¹⁹**

See item 8.4.

- **WG OPFRs²⁰**

The Chair of the WG informed the CONTAM Panel about the progress of the scientific Opinion on the risks for public health related to the presence of OPFRs in food and drinking water.

- **EFSA WG on Mercury²¹**

The Chair of the WG reported that the statement was due to publication on Monday 22 June.

- **WG micro- and nanoplastics²²**

The Chair of the WG on micro- and nanoplastics and the responsible EFSA Scientific Officer presented the progress on the assessment. In particular, the structure of the meetings in subgroups and the progress made regarding the review of the vast available evidence on this topic were presented. The CONTAM Panel was informed on the recent targeted consultation on the Protocol, and the planned webinar on the progress of the mandate due to take place during the 2nd half of the year.

- **WG on sanitary shucking of scallops – okadaic acid²³**

The Chair of the WG reported that the Statement endorsed by the CONTAM Panel at its 160th Plenary meeting, has been approved by EFSA on 10 June and is in the process to be published in the EFSA Journal.

- **WG on Chlorate**

The Chair of the WG reported that the work on the draft Opinion is progressing well.

9.3 Scientific Committee including their Working Groups

The Chair of the Panel informed about the main topics discussed at the last Scientific Committee (SC) Plenary meetings, held on 7-8 May²⁴.

For the Working Groups of interest to the CONTAM Panel, updates were provided on the activities of the Cross-cutting WGs on Genotoxicity, SC WG Biomarkers of effects, SC WG Default values, SC WG Margin of exposure, SC WG BMD, SC WG Critical appraisal of evidence and SC WG RBA. The members were informed about a recent SC WG on the update of Guidance for Weight of Evidence and for Biological Relevance.

9.4 EFSA

¹⁹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-08/wg-contam-capsaicin-in-foods-m.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-10/wg-contam-OPFRs-minutes.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/wg-mercury.pdf>

²² <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/CONTAM%20Minutes%20WG%20on%20micro%20-%20and%20nanoplastics%20in%20foods.pdf>

²³ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/WG%20Scallops.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-06/130th%20SC%20Plenary%20draft%20minutes.pdf>



The CONTAM Panel members were informed about the ongoing public consultations of several EFSA Scientific Committee outputs: the 'draft mandate to update the EFSA Guidance on the safety assessment of botanicals and botanical preparations'²⁵, and the 'draft protocol for the risk-benefit assessment of fish'²⁶. The members were also informed about the launching of the SC work-programme 2027-2029 and about the thematic discussion on new approach methodologies (NAMs)²⁷.

The members were reminded about the upcoming dates of Plenary meetings in 2026 and new meeting dates in 2027.

10. Questions from and answers to Observers (in application of the guidelines for Observers)

The CONTAM Panel received the following questions from observers at the time of registration:

Questions related to agenda item 8.1:

Question: Will EFSA explicitly classify matrine/oxymatrine in licorice products as an unintentional natural contaminant rather than an unauthorized pesticide violation?

Response from the CONTAM Panel: The classification of matrine/oxymatrine is outside the scope EFSA's assessment. The draft Opinion will address however, the different routes of contamination of food samples from the European market.

Question: Given the latest scientific consensus that genotoxicity is unlikely, will EFSA adopt a Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) approach?

Response from the CONTAM Panel: In the absence of relevant data for setting health-based guidance values for MT/OMT, the TTC value 1.5 µg/kg bw per day has been proposed to be used for the combined exposure to MT and OMT in the draft risk assessment.

Question: How will EFSA account for the limits of sorting technologies in wild collection when suggesting potential Maximum Levels (MLs)?

Response from the CONTAM Panel: The setting of MLs is outside EFSA's remit.

Response from the EC representative: Considerations will be made regarding to what can be achieved through good practices, including sorting technologies, to reach the lowest attainable levels. The EC will also discuss what is feasible and what is regarded as unavoidable contamination, once the EFSA Opinion has been finalised.

Questions related to agenda item 8.7:

Question: How does EFSA justify using SEM data from nitrofurazone methods that may create SEM during acid extraction? Will EFSA distinguish free SEM, nitrofurazone-derived SEM and sugar-semicarbazones? What evidence supports full release of bound SEM at realistic postprandial gastric pH? How was Scenario 2 confirmed as nitrofurazone origin, not processing/storage SEM? Why were confirmatory nitrofurazone methods not required for dairy data? Are water/sugar-free diet toxicity studies relevant to SEM in foods? Why select tibia protrusion endpoint despite weak data and wide BMD uncertainty? What weight-of-evidence supports applying the genotoxic TTC? What weight-of-evidence supports applying the genotoxic TTC? Will EFSA revise the draft and reopen consultation if changes are substantive?

²⁵ <https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/consultations/publicconsultation2/a0ITk0000092649/pc1972>

²⁶ <https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/consultations/publicconsultation2/a0ITk0000092C1V/pc1973>

²⁷ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-06/130th%20SC%20Plenary%20draft%20minutes.pdf>



Response from the CONTAM Panel: The questions above correspond to the comments received during the public consultation of the draft Opinion which are currently under consideration by the WG. The draft Opinion will be revised as regarded appropriate, on the basis of the comments received during the public consultation, and all comments will be addressed in a dedicated Annex of the final Opinion. EFSA does not foresee additional consultations. However, in case technical clarifications are requested by the WG, a technical hearing could be organised with the related organisation(s) providing comments.

The CONTAM Panel received the following questions from observers via the chat during the meeting:

Question: dear EFSA, As these days the SEM draft Opinion is not discussed at all and given the various rather substantial and fundamental comments on aspects underlying the principles applied in the risk assessment of SEM, we would appreciate a further hearing session / public debate with EFSA on SEM. This in order to avoid substantial debates in the scientific literature after the Scientific Opinion is published. Thank you for your consideration.

Response from the CONTAM Panel: The comments received during public consultation are currently under consideration by the WG. The draft Opinion will be revised as regarded appropriate, on the basis of the comments received during the public consultation, and all comments will be addressed in a dedicated Annex of the final Opinion. EFSA does not foresee additional consultations. However, in case technical clarifications are requested by the WG, a technical hearing could be organised with the related organisation(s) providing comments.

11. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 30 September 2026, via teleconference.



Annex I. List of Observers to the Open Plenary

Online:

A total of 31 registered observers attended the meeting online (out of 51 registered observers):

Observers		Affiliation
ALQUATI	Eleonora	CAOBISCO
BALDI	Alessandra	Geocomp srl, NuTRE business division
BAUDOUY	Iyo	Laval University PARERA
BESSAIRE	Thomas	Nestlé research
BUCHMANN	Björn-Darjusch	Vereinigung der am Drogen- und Chemikalien-Groß- und Außenhandel beteiligten Firmen e.V.
COGALNICEANU	Elena	industry
COLOMBO	Gianluca	FoodDrinkEurope
CORDONNIER	Amélie	Danone
COURIVAUD	Fanny	European Dairy Association
ELBASYOUNY	Malak	African Faculty Postgraduates Studies
GADAJ	Anna	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
HAJJAR	Kalila	FEDIOL
HERMANN	Michael	HARIBO Holding GmbH & Co. KG
ILIEVSKA	Gordana	Faculty of Veterinary medicine, Skopje
LATINO	Alessio	Perfetti van Melle
LIESEN	Peter	BDSI e.V.
MAKAROW	Ramona	BDSI
NOEL	Laëtitia	Seppic (Air liquide)
PANDYA	Pranjal	University of Parma
PROCHAZKOVA	Jana	National Institute of Public Health, Centre for Health, Nutrition and Food
REJMAN	Lukas	Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic
RIGAMONTI	Valentina	Perfetti Van Melle S.p.A.
SANTOS	Valentina	Laboratório Regional de Veterinária
SEGUÍ LÓPEZ-PENÁLVER	Betania Cecilia	Universidad Internacional de Valencia (VIU)
SURMANOVA	Pavla	National Institute of Public Health - Centre for Health, Nutrition and Food
TOPTANCI	isra	İstanbul Food Control Laboratory
VERBRUGGEN	Marian	W. Ruitenberg Czn
VERHAGEN	Hans	Food Safety & Nutrition Consultancy
VLASIOU	Manos	School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Nicosia
VORONCHAK	Taras	Nestle Research
YILDIRIM	GULSAH	Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Onsite:

A total of 2 registered observers attended the meeting onsite (out of 5 registered observers):

Observer		Affiliation
KALANTARI	Ghazal	University of Parma
SHARIATI	Fatemeh	University of Parma