

Location: Parma

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 Experts¹:

Not applicable

o European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

EC: MESMAN Sanna, MITEVA Aleksandra, TOFT HOLM Laerke.

o EFSA:

AMATO Laura, AMORE Giusi, Anette Ella Boklund, ASHE Sean, AZNAR ASENSIO J Inmaculada, BALDINELLI Francesca, BALTUSYTE Ieva, BENEDETTI Beatrice, BIGONI Fabio, BROGLIA Alessandro, CANDIANI Denise Francesca, CARO Eleonora, DHOLLANDER Sofie, FEREIDOUNI Sasan, GERVELMEYER Andrea, HEMPEN Michaela, KOHNLE Lisa, KONDRASHOVA Julia, LIMA Eliana, LOPEZ Aitana, MANAKIDOU Aikaterini, ROJO GIMENO Cristina, STOCKER Anna Sophia, VAN DER STEDE Yves Pascal D., 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 and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest submitted by the Panel members invited to the meeting. No conflicts of interest related to the issues discussed have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the Panel members at the beginning.

¹ 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>

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 174th Panel plenary meeting held on 30 June 2026

The minutes of the 174th Panel plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 30th of June 2026.

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

5.1 Art. 29 - Specified Risk Material (SRM) removal ([EFSA-Q-2025-00442](#))

The Panel reviewed the draft opinion and provided guidance on scientific content, document structure, and the formulation of conclusions and responses to the Terms of Reference (ToRs). Discussions focused on the placement of text within the opinion, further reduction of background information, and refinement of the risk assessment conclusion and instructions regarding the risk assessment summary.

The meeting participants considered the evidence supporting the efficient transmissibility of L-type BSE beyond cattle and discussed the skewed distribution of the TSEi model outputs, particularly with regard to the estimated number of infected carcasses per year and the associated range of infectivity for classical BSE (C-BSE). The annual probability of occurrence of C-BSE and the probability of occurrence of a highly infectious BSE-infected carcass, representing the upper 97.5th percentile of infectivity, were also reviewed. This was in contrast to the epidemiological situation for L&H types of BSE where the number of infected carcasses is consistent if significantly higher.

The selection of alternative risk measures was discussed (options for specified risk material (SRM) removal beyond those currently applied under WOH standards). The meeting participants also considered the range of outcomes associated with these alternative measures (changes in the upper threshold for the removal of SRM tissues) at the 97.5th percentile of infectivity, as well as the probability of recycling C-BSE within the cattle population.

Regarding answers to the ToRs, the probability of occurrence (for classical BSE) or occurrence (number of infected carcasses per annum for L- and H-BSE), together with the associated consequences (infectivity released relative to infection thresholds) should be clearly presented. The assessment should provide clear answers to the ToRs without making a recommendation as to which, if any, of the alternative measures should be implemented. Clear and distinct responses should be provided for classical BSE and atypical BSE (L- and H-BSE), with separate presentation of the respective results.

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

The Panel was updated on the assessment of risk mitigation measures for vector-borne diseases, including the last version of the assessment framework covering different epidemiological scenarios and surveillance and control objectives, and the results of the assessment (overview tables). Each surveillance and control measure was scored by experts according to its contribution to achieving the relevant objective as minor/not applicable, supportive or core measures, with non-consensus scores discussed collectively. The Panel was also presented with the approach for addressing uncertainty and the proposed structure of the Scientific Opinion, which will summarise the main supportive/core measures, relevant

combinations of measures and comparison with measures foreseen in legislation. First reading is planned for the October Plenary, with adoption envisaged by the end of 2026.

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

The draft sections responding to ToR 2 and ToR 3 of the mandate were submitted for first reading to the Panel. The comments provided by Panel members were reviewed before the meeting and the most relevant points were discussed during the meeting.

The Panel agreed that the Animal Based Measures (ABMs) sections will be presented as a separate table that includes the definition, interpretation and welfare consequences measured by the ABM.

The Panel commented on the drafted conclusions of ToR3 and was also informed that the WG is currently developing the conclusions of ToR 2.

The panel was informed that as next step, all the comments and discussion on the draft Scientific Opinion will be addressed by the Working Group and a new version of the text will be submitted to the Panel for thorough reading and discussed in the October plenary meeting.

5.4 Art. 29 - Request for a Scientific Opinion concerning the welfare of donkeys and hybrids ([EFSA-Q-2024-00189](#))

The draft Scientific Opinion concerning the welfare of donkeys and hybrids was submitted for first reading prior to the meeting, and a discussion was carried out during the meeting on selected relevant aspects.

The panel was informed that as next step, all the comments and discussion on the draft Scientific Opinion will be addressed by the Working Group and a new version of the text will be submitted to the Panel for thorough reading and discussed in the October plenary meeting.

5.5 Art. 29 - Vector-borne diseases: risk of introduction, spread and impact ([EFSA-Q-2025-00185](#))

The updated umbrella protocol was presented and endorsed by the AHAW Panel experts. The updated protocol provides a clearer description of the different assessment components and their associated reports and protocols, including the Knowledge Mapping, Pathway Assessment, LORA Risk Assessment and HYSPLIT Wind-borne Incursion Assessment.

The comments received on the LORA risk assessment outcomes for Batch 1 and Batch 2 vector-borne diseases were reviewed and the proposed responses were agreed.

The outcomes of the LORA incursion risk assessment for the Batch 1 vector-borne diseases (CCHFV, EEEV, WEEV, JEV, *Leishmania infantum*, LSDV, RVFV, TBEV and WNV) were presented and endorsed.

An update on the methodology for assessing wind-borne pathogen incursion using the HYSPLIT model was presented. The comments received on the wind-borne incursion assessments covering all three disease batches were reviewed and addressed. The proposed methodological updates and responses to comments were agreed by the Panel.

5.6 Art. 29 - Scientific Opinion on the notification by Sweden of stricter national measures according to Article 26(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 ([EFSA-Q-2025-00653](#))

The draft Scientific Opinion was submitted to the Panel as first reading. It was agreed to replace the Table of the duration of unconsciousness with narrative text including advice on the interpretation of the values given by different countries, to improve clarity of another two Tables, to put the text of the protocol regarding the uncertainty also in the section of methodology, to move the description of the stunning method at the beginning of the assessment section and to separate the literature according to its category, making also a reference to the Report of EC on the "Preparation of best practices on the protection of animals at the time of killing". The Opinion will be submitted to the Panel in October for thorough discussion.

5.7 New World Screwworm mandate ([EFSA-Q-2026-00276](#))

An update on the progress of the drafting of the Scientific Report was provided. After a brief recap of the terms of reference and the working group members, the structure of the report as well as the timelines for its finalization were explained. The draft report will be discussed with the AHAW Panel members at the October plenary meeting.

5.8 Art. 31 and Art. 29 - Vaccination against Newcastle disease ([EFSA-Q-2026-00300](#) and [EFSA-Q-2026-00301](#))

The protocol, previously circulated to the Panel, was discussed. It included the interpretation of the Terms of Reference (ToRs), their translation into assessment questions and sub-questions, the proposed assessment methodology and the associated data needs. Comments received from Panel members had been addressed prior to the meeting, while a limited number were discussed during the plenary. It was clarified that surveillance activities aimed at demonstrating freedom from disease are outside the scope of ToR 2 and, therefore, will not be considered in the assessment. The indicative timelines for the preparation and approval/adoption of the Scientific Report and the Scientific Opinion were presented. The Panel endorsed the protocol.

5.9 Art. 29 - RVF: Product movement from restricted zones - Update on mandate and Working Group composition ([EFSA-Q-2026-00333](#))

The Panel was updated on the new RVF mandate and the proposed approach for developing a modular risk-assessment methodology for Category A diseases, using RVF as a pilot.

The Panel was also informed about the Working Group (WG) composition, the preliminary planning of the work and Jan Arend Stegeman was appointed as WG chair. First draft of the protocol is planned to be shared with the AHAW Panel in October and the final deadline for the adoption of the Scientific Opinion is foreseen in June 2027.

6. Any other business

6.1 Presentation of the R4EU tool

EFSA presented the EKE Core tool of the R4EU platform (<https://r4eu.efsa.europa.eu/app/eke-core>) to the AHAW panel members. It was explained how the tool could be used by AHAW panel members and their institutes and how they can

request their role as facilitator. A demo was provided for elicitation of distribution, ranking of welfare items and uncertainty assessments of conclusions.

6.2 AOB

The Panel was informed about the Omnibus X and Biotech Act legislative proposals, which following their publication, have been transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, which will develop their positions through the ordinary co-decision process. The experts were informed that updates on this item are shared on the Expert's corner site. The Panel expressed also interest in receiving more detailed explanations on these two proposals in the next Plenary meeting.

7. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 28-29 October 2026, online.