SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

163 Panel Plenary meeting

20 – 22 October 2026
13:30-18:00, 09:00-18:00, 09:00-13:00
MINUTES - Agreed on 6 November 2026

EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Location: Parma

Attendees:

- Panel Members:

On site: Agneta Åkesson, Vasileios Bampidis, Margherita Bignami, Laurent Bodin, James Kevin Chipman, Gisela Degen, Antonio Hernández-Jerez, Tim Hofer, Christer Hogstrand[1], Helle Katrine Knutsen (Chair), Stefano Landi, Jean-Charles Leblanc, Isabelle P. Oswald, Guido Rychen, Salomon Sand[2], Barbara Viviani

Online: Kyriaki Machera[3], Evangelia Ntzani, Katharina Vejdovszky

- Hearing Experts[4]:

Laurence Castle (item 6.1)

- Applicants participating in a technical hearing[5]:

Not Applicable

- European Commission and/or Member States representatives:

EC: Stylianos Koulouris (item 6.7)

- EFSA:

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

FEEDCO Unit – FEED Team: Paola Manini

MESE Unit: Rita Ferreira da Sousa, José Angel Gómez Ruiz, Francesca Riolo

iDATA Unit: Daniela Brocca

COM Unit: Georgios Alaveras

- Observers:

Elena Zoe Bogensperger, Federico Cruciani[6], Giulia Rampazzo[7], Annamarija Romac, Tuuli Tauriainen[8]

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Veerle Vanheusden (DG-SANTE) and Frans Verstraete (DG-SANTE).

[1] Absent on 22 Oct.
[2] On 20 Oct participated from 16:00 to 18:00 CET.
[3] On 21 Oct 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] 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
[6] Participated on 22 Oct.
[7] Participated on 20 and 22 Oct.
[8] Participated on 20-21 Oct.

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[9] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management,[10] EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the Panel members invited to the present meeting and to the preparatory meeting(s) listed under the agenda item "Preparatory meeting(s) with Risk Assessment". 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. Agreement of the minutes of the 162nd CONTAM Panel Plenary meeting held on 7, 29 and 30 September 2026, webconference

The minutes of the 162nd CONTAM Panel plenary meeting were agreed on 20 October 2026.

5. Report on written procedure

None.

6. Scientific output(s) submitted for discussion /endorsement / approval

6.1 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 presented the draft Opinion on the risks for human health related to the presence of SEM in food for possible adoption, including the draft responses to the comments received during the public consultation on the draft Opinion (held from 1 April 2026 to 18 May 2026). The Panel discussed and agreed on the replies and amendments introduced by the WG in the draft Opinion. Proposals for improvement were made and implemented during the meeting. Based on these, the Panel adopted the Opinion and thanked the WG members and EFSA staff and all other contributors for their work, as well as all stakeholders that provided data and comments.

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

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

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

[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/corporate_publications/files/decision-ed-on-competing-interest-management-2024.pdf

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 draft Opinion for discussion. The CONTAM Panel went through the sections on six contaminants of interest for the assessment. Proposals for improvement were made in those sections and implemented during the meeting, and the Panel endorsed these sections. In addition, the Panel also made minor comments on other sections presented. Although these could not be discussed in detail at the meeting due to time constraints, the Panel considered them endorsed too, subject to the comments being addressed. The Panel also discussed the methodological approach for risk characterisation and agreed to it.

6.4 Draft Opinion on on the combined exposure to Brominated Flame Retardants (BFRs) in food (EFSA-Q-2020-00825)

The Chair of the WG on BFRs in food presented the draft Opinion on the combined exposure to BFRs in food for first reading of selected sections and a general discussion on the approach. The Panel provided advice on the approach and made comments to the sections presented which could not be discussed in detail at the meeting due to time constraints. The comments provided will be taken into account by the WG in the further development of the assessment.

6.5 Draft Opinion on the risks for public health related to the presence of chlorate in food from all sources, taking also into account its presence in drinking water (EFSA-Q-2025-00706)

The Chair of the WG on chlorate presented the draft protocol for possible approval. The CONTAM Panel discussed and proposed improvements that were implemented during the meeting. The Panel approved the draft protocol, which will be made available on OpenEFSA[11].

6.6 Draft Opinion on the update of the assessment on the shucking of certain species of scallops contaminated with domoic acid with a view to the production of edible parts meeting the safety requirements foreseen in the Union legislation including new data from EU Members States (EFSA-2025-00620)

The Chair and coordinator of the WG on sanitary shucking of scallops (domoic acid), presented the draft protocol for possible approval. The CONTAM Panel discussed and proposed improvements that were implemented during the meeting. The Panel approved the draft protocol which will be made available on OpenEFSA[12].

6.7 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 the progress of the risk assessment and selected sections of the Opinion on the health risks related to the presence of capsaicin in food for possible endorsement. The CONTAM Panel went through the sections on Data and methodologies, Immune effects, Endocrine effects, Carcinogenicity, Mode of action, and Occurrence data. The CONTAM Panel provided proposals for improvement which were implemented during the meeting and endorsed these sections.

7. Other scientific topics for information/discussion

11 https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2025-00706

12 https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2025-00620

7.1 Panel feedback on NAMs implementation

A presentation was given on EFSA's activities regarding NAMs including the European Commission Communication adopted on 1 June 2026 on the Roadmap for the phasing out of animal testing in chemical risk assessment. The presentation also addressed EFSA's role in supporting the implementation of the Roadmap. Feedback from the CONTAM Panel was collected and discussed regarding the opportunities, challenges, needs, priorities and recommendations regarding the use of NAMs in CONTAM scientific Opinions. Such feedback will be shared with EFSA's Scientific Committee as agreed during its thematic discussions on NAMs from 8 May 2026[13].

7.2 Review of the agreed way of working

The CONTAM Panel Coordinator and CONTAM Team Leader presented an overview of the agreed way of working and role of Panel members in the development of CONTAM Panel outputs. Activities already under implementation, as well as potential future initiatives to further increase efficiency and consistency in the development of CONTAM Panel outputs, were presented and discussed.

8. Update on new mandates

8.1 Request to review the toxic equivalence factors established by EFSA in 2009 in relation to the determination of the total toxicity of PSP toxins based on new evidence available and provide the recommendation on the possible update of the TEFs (EFSA-Q-2026-00458)

An overview presentation was given to the CONTAM Panel on the Background and Terms of Reference of the mandate. The composition of the WG and the agreed timelines were also presented.

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

9.1 European Commission

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

9.2 Scientific Panel Working Groups

- **WG Enniatins and beauvericin[14]**

The Chair of the WG provided an overview about the progress of the draft Opinion noting that the exposure assessment for food-producing and non-food producing animals is progressing. The draft Opinion will be presented to the Panel at upcoming Plenary meetings.

- **WG on BFRs in food[15]**

[13] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-06/130th%20SC%20Plenary%20draft%20minutes.pdf
[14] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-10/wg-enniatins-food-feed_0.pdf
[15] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/wgs/chemical-contaminants/wg-BfRs.pdf

See item 6.4.

- **WG Semicarbazide**[16]

  See item 6.1.

- **WG Conventionally Smoked Foods**[17]

  See item 6.3.

- **WG Thebaine and oripavine**[18]

  The Chair of the WG informed that, following the endorsement of the draft Opinion at the last Plenary meeting, the public consultation was launched on 12 October and will remain open until 23 November 2026[19].

- **WG Matrine and oxymatrine**[20]

  See item 6.2. The Chair of the WG informed that during the targeted consultation (that ended on 8th of October) comments have been received from a single stakeholder. The WG will provide responses to these comments, and where applicable, update the draft Opinion which will be tabled for possible adoption at the next Plenary.

- **WG Capsaicin**[21]

  See item 6.7.

- **WG OPFRs**[22]

  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.

- **WG micro- and nanoplastics**[23]

  The Chair of the WG on micro- and nanoplastics and the responsible EFSA Scientific Officer presented the progress on the assessment. The CONTAM Panel was informed on the recent publication of the Protocol, which was made available on OpenEFSA[24], and about the webinar on the progress of the mandate which took place on the 20th October 2026[25].

- **WG on Chlorate**[26]

  See item 6.5.

[16] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-03/minutes-wg-semicarbazide-food.pdf
[17] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-03/wg-conventionally-smoked-foods.pdf
[18] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-05/wg-thebaine-oripavine-minutes.pdf
[19] https://connect.efsa.europa.eu/RM/s/consultations/publicconsultation2/a0lTk00000AtXOz/pc2111
[20] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-06/wg-matrine-oxymatrine-in-food.pdf
[21] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-08/wg-contam-capsaicin-in-foods-m.pdf
[22] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-10/wg-contam-OPFRs-minutes.pdf
[23] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/CONTAM%20Minutes%20WG%20on%20micro%20-%20and%20nanoplastics%20in%20foods.pdf
[24] https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2025-00702
[25] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/webinar-micro-and-nanoplastics
[26] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-04/wg-contam-chlorate-food-drinking-water-minutes.pdf

- **WG on Scallops domoic acid**[27]

  See item 6.6.

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 meeting, held on 23-24 Sept[28].

For the SC Working Groups of interest to the CONTAM Panel, updates were provided on the activities of the Cross-cutting WGs on Genotoxicity. Updates on other SC WGs were deferred to the next meeting.

9.4 EFSA

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

10. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 9-10 December 2026, web conference.

[27] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-07/WG%20Scallops%20Domoic%20acid.pdf
[28] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-10/132nd_sc_plenary_minutes_1.pdf