

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE UNIT

MINUTES OF THE 59th PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

15-16 September 2011, Parma

1. PARTICIPANTS

AHAW PANEL MEMBERS

Anette Bøtner, Don Broom, Marcus Doherr, Jörg Hartung, Linda Keeling, Frank Koenen, Simon More, David Morton, Pascal Oltenacu, Fulvio Salati, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa, Mike Sharp, Jan Arend Stegeman, Endre Szücs, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Philippe Vannier, J. Webster, and Martin Wierup.

AHAW UNIT

Scientific officers: Ana Afonso, Franck Berthe, Denise Candiani, Sandra Correia, Sofie Dhollander, Milen Georgiev, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Tomasz Grudnik, Per Have, Karen MacKay, and Oriol Ribó.

Administrative assistant: Ewa Krzeminska.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Nadege Leboucq (OIE), Keith Sumption (FAO, EU-FMD).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Marina Marini (DG Sanco, Unit 03, Science and Stakeholders), Sigird Cabot (DG Sanco, Unit D1, Animal Health), and Judit Krommer (DG Sanco, Unit D5, Animal Welfare), and Danièle Tissot (DG RTD, Unit E4).

2. OPENING, APOLOGIES AND AGENDA

The Chairman welcomed the Panel members and other participants to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mariano Domingo. Franck Berthe informed the Panel that Albert Osterhaus officially sent his resignation from the AHAW Panel in July 2011.

The agenda was adopted.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests (DoI), EFSA screened the Annual and Specific Declaration of Interest (SDoI) provided by the Panel Members for the present meeting. No new interests were declared in the SDoIs submitted in relation to the

current agenda. The Panel Members confirmed that no further declarations of interests were to be made in the context of the adopted agenda.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the 58th plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel were unanimously adopted by written procedure and published on the EFSA web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

5. NEW MANDATES

Following the discussion with Pia Makela (EFSA/BIOMO) in June 2011, Franck Berthe confirmed the request to initiate a review of the EU summary report on zoonoses. He informed the Panel that a mandate is under preparation. Mo Salman agreed to coordinate the review with the help from other Panel members: Simon More, Mike Sharp, Hans-Hermann Thulke, and Mariano Domingo. The review should address non-food-borne zoonoses and animal health (e.g. brucellosis, echinococcosis, rabies, tuberculosis).

6. DRAFT OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR ADOPTION

6.1. Risk posed by Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome

The mandate: On 1 December 2010, EFSA received a request from the European Commission for a scientific opinion on the risk posed by Epizootic ulcerative syndrome (EUS). The mandate specifically requests to assess: 1) the risk of introduction of EUS in the EU by means of import from third countries 2) the risk of EUS to spread and persist within the EU and the possible significance and impact in the European Aquaculture taking account of the epidemiology, the available diagnostic methods, the susceptible species range, and the relevant environmental conditions. The mandate deadline was November 2011.

The approach: EUS is an infection by the oomycete *Aphanomyces invadans* that affects wild and farmed freshwater and estuarine fish. The disease is listed by the OIE and is included as an exotic disease in the list of diseases of Directive 2006/88/EC for which import, placing on the market and control rules applies. However, the trade in ornamental live fish that is to be placed in closed ornamental facilities is allowed from infected areas and countries. An expert WG has prepared a report with relevant scientific information and data available for the completion of an import risk assessment. Data gaps were recognised and the report also contains a section on uncertainty.

In June 2011, EFSA has organized a technical hearing with different stakeholders to receive feedback on proposed pathways and collect expert opinion and commercial data where peer reviewed information is not available. A report from that meeting will be published by EFSA.

The draft opinion was presented for discussion at the June plenary meeting of the Panel. The WG has considered the AHAW panel comments and made amendments to the scientific opinion.

The scientific opinion was adopted on September 15.

6.2. Use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of dairy cows

The mandate requests to: 1) identify how animal-based measures could be used to ensure the fulfilment of the recommendations of EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare of dairy cows; 2) identify how the Welfare Quality assessment protocols cover the main hazards identified in EFSA scientific opinions (and vice-versa); 3) identify which relevant animal welfare issues cannot be assessed using animal-based measures for dairy cows and what kind of alternative solutions are available to improve the situation; and 4) list main factors in the various husbandry systems which have been scientifically proven to have negative effects on the welfare of dairy cows.

EFSA has published a report on methodologies applicable to the validation of animal based indicators of welfare¹. EFSA also procured a study on relationships between animal welfare hazards and animal-based welfare indicators with objectives to: integrate of different data sources generated from welfare assessment protocols, to identify and quantify of associations between welfare hazards identified by the 2009 EFSA scientific opinion and animal based welfare indicators and to identify an optimal set of indicators for the assessment of specific welfare aspects of dairy cows.

In agreement with the European Commission, the proposed deadline for adoption of this opinion is December 2011 in order to allow time for public consultation on the draft opinion during the autumn.

The draft scientific opinion was presented for discussion with the AHAW Panel in June and was subsequently reviewed to address Panel comments. It was presented again in September; the Panel endorsed the document prior to public consultation.

7. DRAFT OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION

7.1. Guidance on Risk Assessment for Animal Welfare

The mandate: EFSA launched in 2007 a self-mandate to define a comprehensive harmonised methodology to assess risks and benefits in animal welfare, taking into consideration the various procedures, management and housing systems and the different animal welfare issues, with reference to the methodologies followed in the previous EFSA Opinions on various species. The methodology should take into account and adapt current risk assessment methodologies, for example those for animal diseases and food safety, and also the complex range of measurable welfare outcomes. The guidance document should concisely define the generic approach for working groups addressing specific areas of assessment of risks and benefits in animal welfare.

The approach: the original mandate was amended in 2009 and a WG formed from Panel members. The revised Terms of Reference included consideration for benefit assessment. However, the Panel recognised that risk and benefit analysis in the context of animal

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/171e.htm>

welfare may require further conceptual and methodological refinement. The Panel proposed that it concentrates on risk assessment aspects as a main priority. The Panel also recommended that benefit analysis be considered for further work and possible future inclusion in its methodological framework.

Following the discussions at the February Plenary meeting of the Panel, and the above-mentioned recommendations to concentrate on risk assessment, a complete revision of the document was prepared by the working group. The revised draft guidance was circulated to the Panel in April for endorsement by written procedure prior to public consultation. The public consultation was from the 4th of May to the 1st of July 2011. EFSA will prepare a report from the public consultation to be published simultaneously with the guidance when adopted.

The draft guidance was also discussed during a workshop of the AHAW Scientific Network on Risk Assessment for Animal Health and Welfare held in May 2011. The outcomes of this workshop were presented at the May plenary meeting of the Panel.

The draft guidance, including comments received during the public consultation, was discussed in view of a possible adoption in October.

8. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT MANDATES

8.1. Electrical requirements for waterbath stunning of poultry

The mandate: On 10 June 2011, EFSA received a mandate on electrical requirements for waterbath stunning of poultry. The Commission had received information from British and Dutch authorities that might justify amending the electrical requirements for waterbath stunning of poultry laid down in Table 2 of Chapter II of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009. EFSA is tasked to review relevant new scientific references on electrical stunning of poultry and in particular the ones provided by the British and Dutch authorities and to recommend, if necessary, new electrical requirements applicable for waterbath stunning equipment laid down in Table 2 of Chapter II of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009.

The approach: A technical hearing is being held on September 23 2011, at which British and Dutch scientists explain their findings that led to the requests of their authorities. A systematic review of scientific references on waterbath stunning of poultry will be carried out to collate the scientific evidence for electrical requirements of waterbath stunning of poultry in line with requirements of Article 4, Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 by EFSA staff. The draft opinion will be discussed at the plenary meeting of the Panel in November 2011 and should be adopted in December 2011.

8.2. Foot and Mouth Disease

Keith Sumption (EU-FMD) joined the meeting for the discussion, as a hearing expert.

After request from Bulgaria BFSA-RAC and Commission on FMD and in application of Regulations 178/2002 and 1304/2003 concerning requests from different parties on an

issue, EFSA proposed to address the questions in one single opinion. The two requests were discussed in a tri-partite meeting with a view to allow for a coordinated approach and response to questions arising from the current situation in the Balkans. It was agreed that mandate should address the following terms of reference:

- The relative significance of -and the role played by- wild and feral bi-ungulates, notably wild boar and deer species in the epidemiology of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in Thrace (Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece), taking into account the different FMD virus strains circulating in the region.
- The risk factors and other relevant epidemiological features, in particular for the different FMD virus strains circulating in Thrace (Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece) which must be taken into account for the design of surveillance systems (including estimation of advantages and disadvantages), that could be implemented for the early detection of any FMD virus incursion in the territory of Thrace (Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece).
- The relevance and significance of epidemiological data and genetic characteristics for the different FMD strains recently isolated in Bulgaria and Turkey, with regards to the hypothesis of single versus multiple introductions to Bulgaria.

8.3. Swine Vesicular Disease / Vesicular Stomatitis

The mandate: in June 2011, the European Commission requested EFSA to produce a scientific opinion on Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD) and Vesicular Stomatitis (VS). The Panel requested a meeting be organised with DG SANCO for clarification of the mandate and its terms of reference. At this meeting, DG SANCO explained the background and main purpose of the mandate. Given that current diagnostic methods allow for a rapid differentiation between FMD and SVD and VS, it is needed to reassess appropriate and proportionate surveillance/ control measures for these diseases. In an initial phase, it was agreed that EFSA concentrates on assessing the impact of these two diseases. It was also agreed that impact should include consideration for spread. The agreed deadline is March 31, 2012.

The approach: The approach to reply to the mandate has been discussed and a work plan being drafted. It was proposed to request assistance from the EFSA SAS unit. Data will be compiled in order to assess the impact of the two diseases through systematic literature review, SLR, and questionnaire to some Member states.

8.4. Use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs

The mandate: the mandate accepted by EFSA in March 2011. The deadline for the request is December 2011.

The request is to 1) identify how animal-based measures could be used to ensure the fulfilment of the recommendations of EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare of pigs 2) identify how the assessment protocols suggested by the Welfare Quality® project cover the main hazards identified in EFSA scientific opinions (and vice-versa); 3) identify which

relevant animal welfare issues cannot be assessed using animal-based measures for pigs and what kind of alternative solutions are available to improve the situation; and 4) list main factors in the various husbandry systems which have been scientifically proven to have negative effects on the welfare of pigs.

The approach: A preparatory work has been outsourced for the update of the previous opinions on pig welfare (EFSA, 2007) and two external reports were published^{2,3}. Overall, the approach taken by the working group is similar to the one for welfare of dairy cows.

8.5. Other mandates

Progress reports on other ongoing mandates of the AHAW Panel (Guidance on health and welfare of GM Animals, GMO and release into the environment, animal-based measures to assess the welfare of broilers, update the scientific opinions on the welfare of beef cattle and the welfare of intensive calf farming systems, public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat) were provided to Panel members with the briefing notes of the meeting.

9. OTHER ISSUES

9.1. FP7 and horizon 2020 by DG Research

Danièle Tissot (DG RTD, Unit E4) presented the last developments of FP7 as well as the next framework program, called horizon 2020. The presentation reviewed several research programs of relevance for the Panel.

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/178e.htm>

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/181e.htm>