Parma, 8 December 2011
EFSA/CONTAM/1567

MINUTES OF THE 48TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD FROM 4 TO 6 OCTOBER 2011 IN PARMA

Agreed on 7 December 2011

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:
Jan Alexander, Diane Benford (vice-chair), Alan Boobis, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Bruce Cottrill, Alessandro Di Domenico, Daniel Doerge, Eugenia Dogliotti[1], Lutz Edler, Metka Filipič, Peter Fürst, Thierry Guérin, Helle Katrine Knutsen, Miroslav Machala, Antonio Mutti, Martin Rose, Josef Schlatter (chair), and Rolaf van Leeuwen (vice-chair)

EFSA:
Unit on Contaminants (CONTAM unit)
Katleen Baert, Marco Binaglia, Gina Cioacata, Carolina Di Bona, Mari Eskola (deputy head), Claudia Heppner (head), Silvia Nicolau Solano, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Natalie Thatcher and Elena Zeraschi

Unit on Dietary and Chemical Monitoring (DCM unit)
Valeriu Curtui, Stefan Fabiansson (head), and Liisa Valsta

European Commission:
Marina Marini (DG Health and Consumers, unit 03), and Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3)[2]

1. WELCOME

The chair of the CONTAM Panel welcomed the members to the 48th CONTAM plenary meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sandra Ceccatelli, Peter Farmer and Johanna Fink-Gremmels of the CONTAM Panel and from Almut Bitterhof, and

[1] Present from 4 to 5 October 2011
[2] Present by phone on 4 October 2011

Frank Swartenbroux (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3) of the European Commission.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The draft agenda was adopted.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) and/or Specific Declaration of interest (SDoI) filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed in this meeting were identified during the screening process or at the beginning of this meeting.

5. OPIUM ALKALOIDS IN POPPY SEEDS. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the working group (WG) on poppy seeds presented the draft opinion on opium alkaloids (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-00961). The European Commission had asked EFSA to assess the potential risks for public health due to the presence of opium alkaloids in poppy seeds. The CONTAM Panel discussed two different proposals for an uncertainty factor to be applied to the lowest-observed-effect level in order to establish an acute reference dose (ARfD). The CONTAM Panel decided to apply an uncertainty factor of 3 to the lowest known single oral therapeutic dose of 30 µg morphine/kg body weight (b.w.) and established an ARfD of 10 µg morphine/kg b.w. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation to the members of the CONTAM WG poppy seeds and EFSA staff for the preparatory work of this draft opinion.

6. PYRROLIZIDINE ALKALOIDS IN FOOD AND FEED. DRAFT OPINION.

The chair of the WG on alkaloids introduced the draft opinion on pyrrolizidine alkaloids in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-01004). The European Commission had asked EFSA to assess the potential risks for public and animal health due to the presence of pyrrolizidine alkaloids in food and feed. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation to the members of the CONTAM WG alkaloids and EFSA staff for the preparatory work of this draft opinion.

7. ALTERNARIA TOXINS IN FOOD AND FEED. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the CONTAM WG *Alternaria* toxins presented the draft opinion on *Alternaria* toxins in food and feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-00960). The European Commission (EC) had asked EFSA to assess the potential risks for public and animal health due to the presence of *Alternaria* toxins in food and feed. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation to the members of the CONTAM WG *Alternaria* toxins and EFSA staff for the preparatory work of this draft opinion.

8. TOXICOLOGICAL STUDY ON 3-MCPD ESTERS. PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN CONCLUSION OF AN ART. 36 GRANT PROJECT

Antonio Mutti presented on behalf of the University of Parma (beneficiary) the main outcome of an Art. 36 grant project in relation to a 90-day toxicity study on 3-MCPD esters in rats[3]. The CONTAM Panel took note of the interesting toxicity results, particularly the greater susceptibility of female rats, but stated that the results of a toxicokinetic study on 3-MCPD esters in rats which will be carried out by the Fraunhofer Institute are needed in order to validate the hydrolysis rate of 3-MCPD esters as stated by the CONTAM Panel in 2008.

9. BMD CALCULATIONS FOR T-2 AND HT-2 TOXINS. DISCUSSIONS

Lutz Edler presented the outcome of the benchmark dose-response calculations on anti horse-globulin (Rafai et al. 1995[4]) and anti ovalbumin (Meissonnier et al. 2008[5]). Changes of circulating levels of these antibodies are used to assess the immunological effects of T-2 toxin in the opinion on T-2 and HT-2 toxins in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-00962). The CONTAM Panel recommended that the WG should use the data from the Rafai et al. study. Due to lack of time it was not possible to go through the draft animal exposure chapters. The draft opinion on T-2 and HT-2 toxins will be presented for possible adoption at the 49th CONTAM Panel meeting (29 November to 1 December 2011).

10. DISCUSSION ON APPROACH TAKEN FOR CITRININ IN FOOD AND FEED

The chair of the CONTAM WG *Aspergillus* toxins presented the approach being taken for the risk assessment on citrinin in food and feed (question number: (EFSA-Q-2010-01009). The European Commission (EC) had asked EFSA to assess the potential risks for public and animal health due to the presence of citrinin in food and feed. The CONTAM Panel agreed to use for the exposure

[3] External scientific report available at URL: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1048.htm
[4] Rafai P, Tuboly S, Bata Á, Tilly P, Ványi A, Papp Z, Jakab L and Túry E, 1995. Effect of various levels of T-2 toxin in the immune system of growing pigs. The Veterinary Record, 136, 511-514.
[5] Meissonnier GM, Laffitte J, Raymond I, Benoit E, Cossalter AM, Pinton P, Bertin G, Oswald IP and Galtier P, 2008. Subclinical doses of T-2 toxin impair acquired immune response and liver cytochrome P450 in pigs. Toxicology, 247, 46-54

assessment occurrence data on citrinin in food as reported in the literature in the absence of sufficient data from Member States and agreed to use the endpoint nephrotoxicity in the dose-response modelling. The draft opinion will be presented for possible adoption at the 50th CONTAM Panel meeting in January 2012.

11. DISCUSSION ON APPROACH TAKEN FOR PHOMOPSINS IN FOOD AND FEED

The chair of the WG on phomopsins informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the opinion on phomopsins in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-01001) is progressing well. The WG had fruitful discussions despite the fact that this WG meets mainly by conference call due to the geographical distribution of its members. It was pointed out that the toxicological database is incomplete and a full risk assessment might not be possible. The draft opinion will be presented for possible adoption at the 50th CONTAM Panel meeting in January 2012.

12. DISCUSSION ON PREVIOUS CARGOES – BATCH 1

The chair of the WG on previous cargoes – re-evaluation informed the CONTAM Panel that the WG has to re-evaluate approximately 100 substances which are currently in the European list of acceptable previous cargoes (EFSA-M-2010-0308). This will be done based on the review performed by the CONTAM Panel in 2009 of the SCF and CCFO criteria. For this purpose the work was split into three different batches. The WG started with the assessment of batch I (EFSA-Q-2010-1002) which comprises, among others, substances where an ADI or TDI has been established. The draft opinion related to batch I will be presented for possible adoption at the 49th CONTAM Panel meeting (29 November to 1 December 2011). In addition, EFSA has outsourced some preparatory work in relation to toxicological aspects for the substances in question in order to facilitate the work of the WG. However, the completion of this mandate (batches I, II and III) within the given time remains challenging.

13. FEEDBACK FROM SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (SC) MEETING

The chair of the CONTAM Panel who attended the 50th plenary meeting of the SC meeting in September 2011 reported that the SC adopted the opinion on genotoxicity testing strategies. In addition, the SC commented on a draft report in relation to procedures currently used in the assessment of exposure to chemicals by EFSA´s Panels and Units. This report was prepared by the Dietary and Chemical Monitoring (DCM) Unit of EFSA. The SC welcomed this report and proposed that the report and its recommendations should be shared with Panels (see also item 14). The SC was also invited to elaborate on the draft Science Strategy which will be presented for public consultation in November 2011 before it will be adopted by the Management Board of EFSA in December 2012.

Additionally, the SC was informed about new risk assessment approaches. More details can be found in the minutes from the 50th SC meeting[6].

14. FEEDBACK FROM EFSA

- **Draft exposure assessment report**

  Stefan Fabiansson, head of the DCM unit, outlined the changes proposed by the SC in the conclusion and recommendation section of the draft report on exposure assessments to chemicals prepared by the DCM unit. The CONTAM Panel welcomed the report and was invited to provide additional comments, if any, to Stefan Fabiansson directly.

- **Other matters**

  The head of the CONAM unit informed the members of the CONTAM Panel on the following matters:

  - **Advisory Forum 28 to 29 September 2011**

    During the Advisory forum meeting in Krakow the draft science strategy, management plan 2012, data collection, and cooperation in the area of the scientific committee were discussed.

  - **Outsourcing activities**

    Due to the tight deadline for the mandate on mercury in food (see item 15.1) the CONTAM unit proposed outsourcing as preparatory work the collection of toxicity data available in the public domain. This draft background document will hopefully facilitate the work of the WG.

    In a negotiated procedure INRA was awarded support to carry out an *in vitro* study on n-alkanes. The outcome of this study will be included in the opinion on mineral hydrocarbons.

  - **CONTAM Unit**

    Nicklas Gustafsson from Sweden will join the CONTAM unit as a trainee from 16 November 2011 onwards. Hubert Deluyker was nominated as Director of the newly created Scientific Strategy and Coordination (SCISTRAT) Directorate. Claudia Heppner was asked to become the acting Director of the Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance (RASA) Directorate from 16 October 2011 onwards. This post was previously held by Hubert Deluyker. Mari Eskola will become the acting head of the CONTAM unit and Marco Binaglia the acting deputy head from 16 October 2011 onwards.

[6] Available at URL: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/110913.htm

15. WORKING PROGRAMME

15.1. OFFICIAL REQUEST TO EFSA FOR CONTAM PANEL

EFSA received a new request for a scientific opinion on mercury in food (EFSA-Q-2011-9023) with a deadline of June 2012. The CONTAM Panel flagged its concern since this is a very tight deadline for a full risk assessment on mercury in food. The DCM unit indicated that although the deadline for submission of occurrence data for mercury in food is October 2011, not many data have been submitted yet, and it is expected that quite some data will arrive after the deadline in October. It can be envisaged that a first draft exposure assessment will be only available by April 2012. The European Commission (EC) indicated that some of the fifteen currently ongoing requests could be delayed in order to facilitate the timely delivery of the opinion on mercury. Further discussions on this matter will take place between EFSA and EC. The CONTAM Panel agreed to initiate a new WG on mercury in food and Helle Knutsen kindly agreed to become the chair of this WG.

The Panel was informed that in relation to the mandate from a Member State (Germany) on dioxin levels in food for infants and small children (EFSA-Q-2011-01091) a positive reply on the acceptance of the terms of reference, as proposed by EFSA, was received by the BfR. However, Germany requested that human milk should not be considered in this assessment. Further clarifications are needed, as dioxin levels in human milk might need to be taken into account when body burden calculations are carried out. The CONTAM Panel agreed to initiate a new WG on dioxins in food and Rolaf van Leeuwen kindly agreed to become the chair of this WG.

15.2. UPDATE FROM WG BROMINATED FLAME RETARDANTS

The chair of the WG on brominated flame retardants (BFRs) informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the WG is progressing well with the preparation of the last two BFR opinions on (i) tetrabromobisphenol A (TBBP-A) and other phenols (EFSA-Q-2010-00219) in food and on (ii) BFRs other than the ones already tackled, including novel and emerging BFRs, in food. A slight extension of deadline is needed for these two opinions. The draft opinion on TBBP-A will be presented for possible adoption at the 49th CONTAM Panel meeting (29 November to 1 December 2011).

15.3 UPDATE FROM WG MEAT INSPECTION - CONTAMINANTS

EFSA informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the WG meat inspection – contaminants is progressing well on the draft opinion on meat inspection of poultry. The draft CONTAM chapter will possibly be ready for endorsement in February 2012. The WG will soon start working on the meat inspection of bovine meat, which will be the third opinion.

15.4 UPDATE FROM WG MINERAL HYDROCARBONS

This agenda item was deferred to the 49th CONTAM Panel meeting (29 November to 1 December 2011) due to lack of time.

15.5 UPDATE FROM WG REFERENCE POINTS OF/FOR ACTIONS

This agenda item was deferred to the 49th CONTAM Panel meeting (29 November to 1 December 2011) due to lack of time.

15.6. UPDATE FROM WGS OF SC OF INTEREST TO CONTAM PANEL

This agenda item was deferred to the 49th CONTAM Panel meeting (29 November to 1 December 2011) due to lack of time.

16. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION SERVICES ON MATTERS RELATING TO CONTAM

Due to lack of time it was not possible to present this information to the CONTAM Panel. However, the EC agreed to include the feedback in written form into the minutes of this plenary meeting.

Dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs:

Food & feed: conversion of the current maximum levels based on Toxic Equivalency Factors (TEF) 1998 for dioxins and sum of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs into levels based on TEF 2005. This was done based on the information contained in the DCM (ex-DATEX) report of 2010 on the presence of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in feed and food. Derogation for certain fish species from Baltic region was extended. Discussions were finalised with a vote in the Standing Committee on 4 July 2011. The proposal is currently under scrutiny by Parliament and Council.

Non dioxin-like PCBs:

Food & feed: following the CONTAM Panel opinion in 2005 and the DCM (ex-DATEX) report of 2010 on the presence of non-dioxin-like PCBs in feed and food, discussions on setting maximum levels for non-dioxin-like PCBs in food have been concluded with a vote in the Standing Committee on 4 July 2011. The proposal is currently under scrutiny by Parliament and Council.

Dioxin in sheep liver:

Discussions following the EFSA's opinion (July 2011) have started, but proved difficult.

"Control measures on feed and food from Japan" adopted after the accident in the nuclear power plant station in Fukushima - extended until 31 December 2011. Results from controls at import are favourable and show a very low level of radio-active contamination for the radionuclides tested (Iodine-131, Caesium-134 and Caesium-137). Furthermore on Fukushima measures, points discussed at the EP ENVI Committee meeting of October were: the Commission highlighted that current measures ensure a high level of food safety, are science based and proportionate; and proved evidence of not exceeding its implementing powers. The Commission committed to consider MEPs' comments on the content of the measures at a next review.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The 53rd CONTAM Panel meeting which was originally scheduled on 4 to 7 June 2012 was moved to 27 to 29 June 2012 in order to avoid an overlap with the date of the 76th Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) meeting.