

PARMA, 20/21 MARCH 2012

**Minutes of the
6th Meeting of the EFSA Network on
Microbiological Risk Assessment**

Brussels, 20/21 March 2012

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Declarations of interest
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Work programme of EFSA's Panel on Biological Hazards
5. Identification of risk factors and quantitative monitoring of <i>Campylobacter</i> spp. in Belgian broiler slaughterhouses
6. BIOHAZ opinion on STEC and other pathogenic bacteria in seeds and sprouted seeds
7. Verocytotoxin producing <i>E. coli</i> (VTEC) - scientific criteria regarding pathogenicity assessment
8. Discussion note on control options for pathogenic <i>E. coli</i>
9. Risk assessment in a new organization – some experiences from the Swedish National Food Agency
10. Discussion note on the detection of diffuse food-borne outbreaks.
11. Follow-up on self-tasking mandates initiated at the request of MRA Network and/or MS's

12. Overview of ongoing EFSA work on the meat inspection mandate
13. BIOHAZ Panel activities related to Applications in the BIOHAZ area
14. General discussion
15. Date and venue for next meeting and AOB
16. Closure of the meeting

Participants

Members States and other National representatives:

Austria (Monika Matt), Belgium (Isabel De Boosere), Bulgaria (Hristo Miladinov Naydenski), Cyprus (Georgios T. Papageorgiou), Czech Republic (Renáta Karpíšková), Denmark (Bjarke Bak Christensen), Finland (Pirkko Tuominen), France (Coralie Bultel), Germany (Matthias Hartung), Hungary (László Mészáros), Ireland (Judith O'Connor), Italy (Monica Gianfranceschi), the Netherlands (Benno ter Kuile), Norway (Danica Grahek-Ogden), Poland (Halina Ścieżyńska), Slovak Republic (Lubomir Valík), Spain (Elena Carrasco jimenez), Sweden (Roland Lindqvist), Switzerland (Hans Schmid), United Kingdom (Paul Cook), Croatia (Brigita Hengl), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Biljana Chakovska), Montenegro (Ljubica Teric) and Turkey (Tevfik Boğaçhan Altunkaynak).

Hearing Expert

Lieven De Zutter (Ghent University)

EFSA (BIOHAZ)

Marta Hugas (Chair), Ernesto Liebana, Michaela Hempen

Minutes

1. Opening, welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Greece, Lithuania, Portugal, and from the European Commission.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

3. Declaration of interest

No conflicts of interest of a general nature were identified for any of the persons attending the meeting.

4. Work programme of EFSA's Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ)

The Biological Hazards Unit presented current and recent MRA activities of the BIOHAZ Panel. The mandates presented were:

- Minimum hygiene criteria for clean seawater
- Public health risks represented by certain composite products containing food of animal origin
- Reflecting on experiences and lessons learnt from modelling of biological hazards
- Development of a risk ranking framework
- Public health risk related to food of non-animal origin

5. Identification of risk factors and quantitative monitoring of *Campylobacter* spp. in Belgian broiler slaughterhouses

Lieven De Zutter from Ghent University presented results from a study on *Campylobacter* in Belgian broiler slaughterhouses. This study was initiated to further investigate the variability between slaughterhouses that was described in EFSA's scientific report "Analysis of the baseline survey on the prevalence of *Campylobacter* in broiler batches and of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* on broiler carcasses, in the EU, 2008, Part B". The study aimed to establish the distribution pattern of *Campylobacter* on six skin sites of broiler carcass after chilling and to quantify the *Campylobacter* contamination on broiler carcasses throughout the slaughter process during the slaughter of *Campylobacter* positive flocks in selected abattoirs in Belgium. The study is continued in a four-year project, which will include more slaughterhouses and which will additionally investigate the transfer of *Campylobacter* to carcasses from negative flocks slaughtered after positive flocks.

6. BIOHAZ opinion on STEC and other pathogenic bacteria in seeds and sprouted seeds

The BIOHAZ Unit gave a presentation on the adopted opinion on STEC and other pathogenic bacteria in seeds and sprouted seeds.

Discussions on possible controls such as irradiation followed and whether it would be possible to label / identify seeds that are intended for production of sprouted seeds for consumption and other uses.

Irradiation is a valid method but the dose used needs to be adapted for each product.

Labelling is difficult and would need to be followed by risk managers.
But the sector of sprout production is much better described than it was before the outbreak.

7. Verocytotoxin producing *E. coli* (VTEC) - scientific criteria regarding pathogenicity assessment

Monika Matt (AT) presented the nomenclature and seropathotype concept of VTEC and the problems in relation to pathogenicity assessment. She presented a case of STEC in wild game sausages in Austria and some Austrian VTEC monitoring data. Austria seeks to improve the scientific basis for assessing the pathogenicity of VTEC.

8. Discussion note on control options for pathogenic *E. coli*

Benno ter Kuile (NL) presented a discussion note on control options for pathogenic *E. coli*. He also stressed the need for a better suited assessment of pathogenicity for VTEC. The discussion note has been distributed to the MRA Network. Comments on the document should be sent to the BIOHAZsecretariat. The MRA Network intends to propose the final document to the Chair of the BIOHAZ Panel for its consideration.

9. Risk assessment in a new organization – some experiences from the Swedish National Food Agency

Roland Lindqvist (SE) presented the structure of the Swedish authorities in food safety and the re-structuring of the Swedish National Food Agency. One focus was on the advantage and disadvantages of having both risk management and risk assessment in the same organization.

10. Discussion note on the detection of diffuse food-borne outbreaks

Benno ter Kuile (NL) presented a discussion note on the detection of diffuse outbreaks. He encourages the development of an improved EU-wide detection system. Outbreak investigation is a risk management task but risk assessors can advise on the design of such a system. Within EFSA, it is the Biological Monitoring Unit (BIOMO) that provides such advice. The BIOHAZ Unit will inform colleagues from BIOMO Unit on this issue.

11. Follow-up on self-tasking mandates initiated at the request of MRA Network and/or MS's

The BIOHAZ Unit gave a presentation on the self-tasking mandates that were initiated following discussions at the MRA Network (food-borne viruses and biogenic amines). The opinions are published on the EFSA website.

12. Overview of ongoing EFSA work on the meat inspection mandate

The BIOHAZ Unit gave an overview on the meat inspection mandate which was already discussed at the last MRA Network meeting. The conclusions and recommendations of the opinion on meat inspection of swine were presented and the status of the on-going working groups (poultry, bovines, small ruminants, solipeds and farmed game).

13. BIOHAZ Panel activities related to Applications in the BIOHAZ area

The BIOHAZ Unit presented the activities of the Bpanel with regard to applications, which were:

- Safety and efficacy of Listex™ P100 for the removal of *Listeria monocytogenes* surface contamination of raw fish
- Decontamination of poultry: Cecure®
- ‘Biomation’ application for an alternative method for the treatment of animal-by-products

14. Date and venue for next meeting and AOB

The MRA Network members proposed to maintain the bi-annual meeting schedule. The format of a lunch-to-lunch meeting was appreciated.

France suggested that before the next meeting a table should be distributed via email to collect information on MRA activities of the Member organisations. The Network agreed to the suggestion.

Sweden proposed to organise break-out sessions on specific subjects during the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in October 2012 in Parma.

15. Closure of the meeting

The meeting was closed at 13 h.