

Parma, 17 May 2012
EFSA/CONTAM/1729

**MINUTES OF THE 52ND PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD FROM
2 TO 4 MAY 2012 IN PARMA**

Agreed on 1 June 2012

PARTICIPANTS.

CONTAM Panel Members:

Jan Alexander, Diane Benford (vice-chair), Alan Boobis, Sandra Ceccatelli, Bruce Cottrill, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Alessandro Di Domenico, Daniel Doerge, Eugenia Dogliotti, Lutz Edler, Peter Farmer, Metka Filipič, Johanna Fink-Gremmels, Thierry Guérin, Helle Knutsen, Miroslav Machala, Antonio Mutti, Martin Rose, Josef Schlatter (chair) and Rolaf van Leeuwen (vice-chair)

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA):

Unit on Contaminants (CONTAM unit)

Katleen Baert, Marco Binaglia (acting deputy head of unit), Gina Cioacata, Carolina Di Bona, Mari Eskola (acting head of unit), Nicklas Gustavsson (trainee), Silvia Nicolau Solano, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Doina Stoica and Natalie Thatcher

Unit on Dietary and Chemical Monitoring (DCM unit)

Valeriu Curtui, Jose Angel Gomez Ruiz and Francesco Vernazza (deputy head of unit)

European Commission (EC):

Marina Marini (DG Health and Consumers, unit 03), Frank Swartenbroux (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3) and Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3).¹

1. WELCOME.

The chair of the CONTAM Panel welcomed the members to the 52nd CONTAM plenary meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Fürst (CONTAM Panel) and Almut Bitterhof (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3).

¹ Available by tele-web conferencing.

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. DRAFT OPINION ON MINERAL HYDROCARBONS IN FOOD (EFSA-Q-2010-00170). FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION.²

The chair of the CONTAM WG on mineral hydrocarbons in food (EFSA-Q-2010-00170) presented the draft opinion where the European Commission had asked EFSA to evaluate the risk for public health related to the presence of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting³. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation to the members of the WG on mineral hydrocarbons in food and EFSA staff for the preparatory work of this draft opinion.

6. DRAFT OPINION ON THE EVALUATION OF THE SUBSTANCES CURRENTLY ON THE LIST OF THE ANNEX TO COMMISSION DIRECTIVE 1996/3/EC AS ACCEPTABLE PREVIOUS CARGOES FOR EDIBLE FATS AND OILS – PART II OF III (EFSA-Q-2010-01463). FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION.

The chair of the CONTAM WG on Previous Cargoes – re-evaluation presented the draft opinion on the re-evaluation of the substances in the Annex to Commission Directive 1996/3/EC as acceptable previous cargoes Part II of III (EFSA-Q-2010-01463) where the European Commission had asked EFSA to re-evaluate the substances in the above-mentioned annex according to the review of the criteria performed by EFSA in 2009. 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 WG Previous Cargoes – re-evaluation and EFSA staff for the preparatory work of this draft opinion.

² Agenda item 5 was chaired by Rolaf van Leeuwen, the vice-chair of the CONTAM Panel.

³ The opinion was adopted according to the approach of leading panel opinion of the Decision of the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority regarding the multisectoral issues. The sections of the opinions in relation to food packaging materials were prepared by the CEF Panel.

7. DRAFT CHAPTERS OF THE OPINION ON ERGOT ALKALOIDS IN FOOD AND FEED (EFSA-Q-2010-01000): INTRODUCTION, LEGISLATION, METHODS OF ANALYSIS, HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISATION. FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ENDORSEMENT.

The vice-chair of the CONTAM WG on alkaloids presented the draft sections of introduction, legislation, methods of analysis, hazard identification and hazard characterisation of the draft opinion on ergot alkaloids in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-001000) where the European Commission had asked EFSA to assess the risk for public and animal health related to the presence of ergot alkaloids in food and feed. The CONTAM Panel agreed to the presented sections and provided further proposals for exposure assessment and hazard characterisation. The opinion will be presented for possible adoption at the 53rd CONTAM Panel meeting (27 to 29 June 2012).

8. PRESENTATION ON DRAFT OPINION ON STERIGMATOCYSTIN IN FEED AND FOOD (EFSA-Q-2010-01005). DISCUSSION ON THE APPROACH TO TAKE.

The chair of the CONTAM WG on Aspergillus toxins made a brief presentation to the members of CONTAM Panel on the draft opinion on sterigmatocystin in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-01005). Some difficulties have been encountered in relation to the occurrence data. The members of the CONTAM Panel discussed the difficulties and provided further steering. Other parts of the draft opinion are progressing well. The draft opinion will be presented for possible adoption in the second half of 2012.

9. PRESENTATION OF THE OVERALL SUMMARY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC OPINION ON MEAT INSPECTION OF POULTRY (EFSA-Q-2011-00110). DISCUSSION.

The chair of the CONTAM WG on meat inspection presented the overall summary of the Scientific Opinion on meat inspection of poultry (EFSA-Q-2011-00110)⁴. The parts of the summary in relation to the sections of the opinion within the CONTAM Panel remit were discussed. The CONTAM Panel agreed to the parts of the summary subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The CONTAM Panel was also reminded that the final adoption of the overall opinion on poultry meat inspection will be by a written procedure in May 2012. The overall opinion will be adopted on the same day with the BIOHAZ and AHAW Panels.

⁴ Endorsed by the CONTAM Panel at its 50th CONTAM Panel meeting (31 January to 2 February 2012).

10. TWO RECEIVED REQUESTS IN RELATION TO SCIENTIFIC OPINION ON T-2 AND HT-2 TOXINS IN FOOD AND FEED. DISCUSSION.

The CONTAM Panel had received two requests for clarification in relation to the Scientific Opinion on T-2 and HT-2 toxins in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-00962)⁵. The first request received from the European Commission (EC) was on the small margin between the dietary exposure for the 95th percentile toddler-consumers and the established group tolerable daily intake (TDI), and whether this would indicate some health concern. The CONTAM Panel discussed the request and pointed out that it is not realistic that the exposure would occur continuously at the 95th percentile concentrations. Therefore the mean concentrations are used for dietary exposure estimations. In addition T-2 and HT-2 toxins do not cause acute health effects which would call for the use of 95th percentile concentrations for the calculations of the dietary exposure estimates. In the opinion the exposure for 95th percentile toddler-consumers was from 23 ng/kg b.w. per day (minimum lower-bound) to 91 ng/kg b.w. per day (maximum upper-bound). This is a large range indicating a high proportion of left censored data. The CONTAM Panel pointed out that the upper-bound estimate is always an overestimate. It was also noted by the CONTAM Panel that the maximum upper-bound exposure estimate relates to only one food consumption survey for toddlers out of nine surveys and is thus not representative for the whole European toddler population. The CONTAM Panel confirmed the previous conclusion of the opinion that since the estimates of chronic dietary exposure for populations of all age groups to the sum of T-2 and HT-2 toxins are below the group TDI of 100 ng/kg b.w., there is no health concern.

The second request regarding the use of BMD modelling in the opinion had been sent to a member of the CONTAM Panel. The CONTAM Panel discussed the request and concluded that as this had arisen following discussion on the issue in the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES) it would be more appropriate for ANSES to approach EFSA directly. If such a request is received, the CONTAM Panel asked EFSA to prepare a letter in reply to ANSES based on the outcome of the discussion in the Panel about the use of BMD modelling.

11. WORK PROGRAMME.

11.1. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EC) SERVICES ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE CONTAM PANEL.

The EC reported on the follow up of risk management in relation to the recent CONTAM Panel opinions and in particular: T-2 and HT-2 toxins in food and feed, *Alternaria* toxins in food and feed, opium alkaloids in poppy seeds and zearalenone in food.

⁵ Adopted by the CONTAM Panel at its 49th CONTAM Panel meeting (29 November to 1 December 2011).

11.2. OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA FOR THE CONTAM PANEL.

No official requests have been received.

11.3. UPDATE FROM WG ALKALOIDS.

The vice-chair of the WG on alkaloids informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the WG will start working on the opinion on tropane alkaloids. The draft opinion will be presented for possible adoption in the second half of 2012.

11.4. UPDATE FROM WG ON ASPERGILLUS TOXINS.

For an update from the WG on Aspergillus toxins see point 8.

11.5. UPDATE FROM WG BFRs.

The chair of the WG on BFRs made a brief presentation to the members of CONTAM Panel on the structure of the draft opinion on emerging and novel BFRs (EFSA-Q-2010-00220). The draft opinion is progressing well and it will be presented for possible adoption at the 53rd CONTAM Panel meeting (27 to 29 June 2012). This will be the last opinion of the series of opinions on BFRs in food.

11.6. UPDATE FROM WG FUSARIUM TOXINS.

The chair of the WG on Fusarium toxins informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the draft opinion on nivalenol (EFSA-Q-2010-01003) is progressing well and that it will be presented for possible adoption in the second half of 2012.

11.7. UPDATE FROM WG MEAT INSPECTION INCLUDING THE EFSA OVERARCHING WG.

The chair of the WG on meat inspection informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that both draft opinions on bovine meat inspection (EFSA-Q-2011-00111) and domestic sheep and goat meat inspection (EFSA-Q-2011-00960) are progressing well and that they will be presented for possible adoption in the second half of 2012. The chair also provided feedback on the technical hearing on small ruminants with stakeholders held at EFSA in April 2012.

11.8. UPDATE FROM WG ON MERCURY IN FOOD.

The chair of the WG on mercury in food informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the draft opinion on mercury and methylmercury in food (EFSA-Q-2011-00923) is progressing well and that it will be presented for possible adoption in the second half of 2012.

11.9. UPDATE FROM WG ON PREVIOUS CARGOES – RE-EVALUATION.

The chair of the WG on previous cargoes re-evaluation informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the WG has started working on the third and last draft opinion on the re-evaluation of substances as acceptable previous cargoes (Part III

of III, EFSA-Q-2010-01464). The draft opinion on Part III will be presented for possible adoption in the second half of 2012.

11.10. UPDATE FROM WG ON REFERENCE POINTS FOR ACTION.

The chair of the WG on RPAs informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the draft opinion on reference points for action (EFSA-Q-2011-00149) is progressing well and that it might be presented for possible adoption at the 53rd CONTAM Panel meeting (27 to 29 June 2012).

11.11. FEEDBACK FROM SC MEETING 17 TO 18 APRIL 2012.

The chair of the CONTAM Panel, who attended the 54th plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC), reported that the draft opinion on the threshold of toxicological concern (TTC) approach was endorsed. A few minor issues are still to be clarified with the stakeholders. The draft opinion on TTC has been scheduled for possible adoption at the 55th SC meeting in May 2012. The opinion on risk assessment terminology was adopted and will be published soon. This guidance should also be used in the opinions of the CONTAM Panel. In addition it was discussed that a standing WG on emerging risks will be set up under SC. One member from each scientific panel will be requested to join the WG. Similarly, a standing WG on statistical reporting will be set up and also for this WG one member from each scientific panel will be requested to join. The development of a chemical hazard database at EFSA was also presented at the SC meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel also reported that observers attended the 54th SC meeting. The minutes of the 54th SC meeting will be available on the EFSA website⁶.

11.12. FEEDBACK FROM EFSA.

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

New director of RASA directorate

Bernhard Url will start as Director of the RASA Directorate from 1 June 2012 onwards. He was previously a managing director of the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety. He is veterinarian by profession and served as a member of EFSA's Management Board until March 2012.

Advisory Forum meeting and Management Board meeting 14-15 March 2012

Since the previous CONTAM Panel meeting, no Advisory Forum or Management Board meeting took place. The next Management Board meeting will be in June 2012.

Other matters

The official publication of the names of the nominees for the eight Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee for 2012-15 has been delayed from 8 May to

⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/120417.htm>

28 June 2012 due to the approval process of declarations of interest (DOIs). More information is available on the EFSA website⁷.

Outsourcing activities

The procurement to collate the literature on toxicity data on mercury in experimental animals and humans is ongoing.

The Article 36 grant project on an experimental study on uptake of coccidiostats in vegetables has been concluded. The external report is available on the EFSA website⁸.

Procurement on to collate the literature on toxicokinetics, toxicity and allergenicity data on substances to be evaluated as acceptable previous cargoes for edible fats was concluded. The external report will be published later together with the last scientific opinion on previous cargoes of the series of the three opinions.

The call for proposals for Article 36 grant for a study on the influence of food processing on nitrate levels in vegetables was launched.⁹

The call for tender for procurement on a combined toxicokinetic and *in vivo* genotoxicity study on *Alternaria* toxins was launched.¹⁰

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

The members of the CONTAM Panel were informed about the outcomes of the SC WG on TTC Approaches and the SC WG on Default Assumptions (see 11.11).

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A few comments linked to the approval process of DOIs and the process of panel renewal were raised. These will be further communicated internally at EFSA.

⁷ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scpanels/memberscall2011.htm>

⁸ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/doc/273e.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/art36grants/article36/gpefsacontam201201.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/tenders/tender/ocefsacontam201201.htm>