

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE UNIT

MINUTES OF THE 67th PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE (AHAW)

21-22 June 2012, Parma

1. PARTICIPANTS

AHAW PANEL MEMBERS

Anette Bøtner, Don Broom, Mariano Domingo, Jörg Hartung, Linda Keeling, Frank Koenen, Simon More, David Morton, Toni Oltenacu, Fulvio Salati, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa, Mike Sharp, Jan Arend Stegeman, Endre Szucs, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Philippe Vannier and Martin Wierup.

AHAW UNIT

Ana Afonso, Sofie Dhollander, Chiara Fabris, Maria Ferrara, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Tomasz Grudnik, Per Have, Karen Mackay, Frank Verdonck and Katriina Willgert.

European Commission

Marina Marini, Judith Krommer (joined the discussion on animal based measures for broiler welfare on 21 June 2012 AM, by tele/web conference), Moritz Klemm during discussion of the casings opinion.

2. OPENING, APOLOGIES AND AGENDA

Philippe Vannier welcomed the Panel members. Apologies were received from Marcus Doherr and John Webster. 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.

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

4. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 66th plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel were unanimously adopted by written procedure and are available on the website of EFSA .

5. DRAFT OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR ADOPTION

5.1 Use of animal based measures to assess the welfare of broilers

The mandate: The mandate is the third of the series on animal based measures. The deadline was agreed as end of June 2012. 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 broilers 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 broilers 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 broilers and to what extent these negative effects can be or not prevented through management.

A preparatory work has been outsourced. The objectives were to: i) systematically review the relevant scientific literature from 2000 for new available scientific evidence on the welfare of broilers, ii) propose possible amendments to the conclusions and recommendations of the SCAHAW scientific opinion, and iii) identify hazards for broiler welfare.

The approach: The working group drafted a table responding to TOR1, listing animal-based measures that could be used to ensure the fulfilment of the recommendations of the EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare of broilers. For each animal based measure (proposed by WQ), two separate scores will be assigned; one score for sensitivity (probability that the animal-based measure detects a problem, given that the animal is suffering from the adverse effect) and one for specificity (probability that the animal based measure does NOT detect a problem, given the animal is NOT suffering from the adverse effect) of the animal based measure in relation to the adverse effect (0-4). Another table was developed for addressing TOR2, based on the main factors (hazards) in the EFSA opinion. The hazards will be cross-linked to the animal-based measures proposed by the Welfare Quality protocol. The methodology is supposed to identify the animal-based measures which cover the main hazards identified in EFSA scientific opinions (and vice-versa). In order to address TOR3, gap identification will be based on TOR 1 and TOR 2. To address TOR4, the working group decided to separate, and give different scores (0 not possible-5 very good), to hazards (that can be prevented through short term management BETWEEN FLOCKS or WITHIN a FLOCK) and adverse effects (assuming presence of hazard).

Discussion: Changes reflecting discussion at the 66th plenary meeting were introduced to the opinion by the WG. Further comments received from the Panel were addressed and agreed during the plenary. The list of available animal-based measures (ABM; Table 1) was re-structure according with the Panel comments, underlining which of the listed ABMs come from the Welfare Quality protocols. The text regarding the issues covered by the Panel

Statement on the use of animal-based measures (EFSA, 2012¹) was reduced. Section 2.2 addressing TOR 2, on the links between factors and consequences (including figures) was reviewed to better present sensitivity and specificity as two attributes describing how animal based measures relate to consequences. A paragraph on the role of biosecurity and health issues on the welfare of the broilers on-farm has been added as well as a new conclusion of biosecurity and health managements.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

5.2 Risk mitigation treatments as regards imports of animal casings

The mandate: Animal casings are imported into the European Union from a variety of third countries with different animal health status *inter alia* for use in the production of meat products like sausages. It is requested to assess whether the NaCl treatment has been refined in recent years as regards temperature and/or duration of treatment in a way that would lead to an increased level of safety as regards animal pathogens. It is also requested to assess whether alternative treatments have been developed that give equivalent or better results in the inactivation of pathogens possibly present in casings derived from animals of the bovine, ovine, caprine, porcine and equine species, taking into account scientific developments and technological progress. Finally, the request includes to assess whether the modified phosphate salt treatment, as described by the OIE Terrestrial Code in 2011, can be considered as an effective and reliable alternative to the standard NaCl treatment so as to provide at least equivalent animal health guarantees as regards the elimination of animal health risks posed by pathogens other than FMDV possibly present in casings derived from animals (taking into account the effects of both the temperature and the duration of treatment).

The approach: In this mandate the AHAW working group is focused on scientific analyses of information of treatments of casings against pathogens causing animal diseases in line with the requested mandate rather than a thorough risk assessment on the risk of introduction in the EU. Particular attention is going to be paid on viruses considered to present risk for the EU according to the legislation. A critical review of the literature obtained by a broad scope search and provided the hearing experts was used to extract relevant information. The work flow follows logic consequences in the analyses (i) defining most risky pathogens for the EU, (ii) describing some biological characteristic with implications on potential survival of the pathogens (iii) analysing the practices in production of casings (iv) analysing available treatments. The basic biological features of the pathogens are investigated in well known/recognised sources (scientific books, OIE manual and etc.). Specific outcome of various treatments are going to be based on the information of published literature. Differentiation is made on studies on casings from experimentally infected animals, in-vitro experiments. Some assumptions are made and indicated when information for characteristics of a pathogen or options for treatments can be extrapolated to another

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2767.htm>

cause of infection or method in use. Various treatments would be presented in more structured way (e.g. table).

The draft opinion is foreseen to be presented for discussion at the AHAW Plenary on 22-23 May 2012 and submitted for potential adoption on 21-22 June 2012. Mariano Domingo accepted to chair the working group to be formed to prepare this opinion. The deadline is 30 June 2012.

Discussion: The comments received from the Panel have been addressed by the WG. Particular attention was paid to the potential risk of mycobacteria introduction via casings: One study reported the survival of mycobacteria in salted pigs' "guts" for up to 7 months in an experiment where only mucosa of the intestines was removed. At +4° and near saturation of salt *M. avium* survived for 7 months in salted guts vs. 35 days in unsalted guts. Further data on the influence of salting on *M. bovis* should therefore be sought.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel following some modifications of conclusions and recommendations.

The opinion was adopted by the Panel.

6. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT MANDATES

6.1 Infectious Salmon Anaemia

The mandate: ISA is a fish disease listed in Part II of Annex IV to Council Directive 2006/88/EC on animal health requirements for aquaculture animals and products thereof, and on the prevention and control of certain diseases in aquatic animals. There are several strains of ISA virus, one of which is not known to cause clinical disease (HPRO). Virulent strains of the virus are usually regarded as HPRO deleted strains. It is requested to assess: 1) the capability of HPRO ISA strains to cause disease in Atlantic salmon, and 2) the risk of HPRO-deleted ISA emerging from HPRO ISA and, if relevant, indicating the risk factors causing such an emergence.

The approach: The Panel recognised the similitude of situation with highly pathogenic and low pathogenic avian flu viruses.

Discussion: The TORs will be addressed by analysing published scientific literature on the genetics of ISA in relation to field and experimental evidence of pathogenicity. The chairman of the WG gave a short presentation on the approach and status of the work.

6.2 Risk of introduction and spread of the small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) and *Tropilaelaps* in the EU

The mandate: The mandate has 4 Terms of Reference: 1) the risk of introduction of small hive beetle (SHB) and *Tropilaelaps* into the EU through importation from 3rd countries of live queen bees, queen bumble bee colonies and bees products destined to be used in apiculture; 2) the risk mitigation factors that have proven to be or that could potentially be

effective in ensuring safe international trade as regards the transmission of the SHB and *Tropilaelaps* in bees and their products; 3) the risk of introduction of the SHB and *Tropilaelaps* into the EU from neighbouring countries, especially through the natural movements of live bees and of the SHB; 4) the risk of introduction of SHB and *Tropilaelaps* into the EU through importation from 3rd countries of products other than bee products (e.g. fruits, vegetables, other possible vectors and fomites, etc).

The approach: In order to consider information available from other mandates or projects on bees within EFSA, as well as other recent and on-going EU projects, EFSA formed an internal task force with the participation of EMRISK, SC, AHAW SAS, PLH, Pesticides, GMO, and Communication. The task force will better address horizontal issues concerning bees in EU. For this specific mandate, AHAW works with PLH, EMRISK and SAS units. A risk flowchart has been developed which is based on the PLH RA of pests, as the mandate regards two pests.

Discussion: Frank Koenen presented the status of the mandate. For both pests, a risk assessment needs to be done on introduction via bees, via bee products, via non-bee products (like fruit and vegetables) and via natural movements. The commission confirmed that spread is not included in the TORs. After a comparison of the OIE and PLH approach, everyone agreed that the PLH approach was preferred to perform the risk assessment but this will be further discussed with the experts during the first working group meeting end June. The panel supported the need to involve a risk assessor in the preparation of the opinion.

6.3 Public health hazards to be covered for animal health and welfare by meat inspection (bovine, solipeds, goats, sheep, and farmed game)

The mandate: The Commission requested a scientific opinion and technical assistance on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat. The scope of this mandate is to evaluate meat inspection primary in a public health context and secondary the implications for animal health and animal welfare of any changes suggested. The following species or groups of species should be considered: domestic swine (deadline September 2011), poultry (deadline June 2012), bovine animals over six weeks old, bovine animals under six weeks old (deadline June 2013), domestic sheep and goats (deadline June 2013), farmed game (deadline June 2013) and domestic solipeds (deadline June 2013).

The approach: The AHAW Panel ensures whether any change in current inspection does not jeopardize the capacity to detect animal diseases nor compliance with the animal welfare regulation. For this, it is essential to determine the importance and integration of meat inspection in the EU animal health surveillance and monitoring. Two methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) are in use to assess the quality of both the current and proposed modified meat inspection systems. The former relied on expert opinion and a review of the literature, and the latter used a three stage modelling approach. The modelling exercise was outsourced to a external contractor COMISURV.

EFSA delivered comments to the bovine meat inspection report from COMISURV and a revised version will be submitted for approval in the coming days. The remaining reports (small ruminants, farmed game, solipeds) were presented by COMISURV on the 19/6/2012 and comments are due till the 22/6/12. The revised versions will be submitted for approval by the 6/7/12. Publication is only due after the respective opinions in June 2013.

Discussion: After the Executive director decision of 20/2/12 on multisectoral issues a decision was taken that the opinion on meat inspection falls largely in the remit of BIOHAZ panel and in accordance with Article 3 the BIOHAZ panel is the leading panel adopting the opinion. A Scientific Coordinating WG (SCICOWG) chaired by the chair of the BIOHAZ Panel will be established with the mandate to coordinate the work of all the involved parties (BIOHAZ, CONTAM and AHAW) and the aim to produce consistent and integrated draft opinions which will be adopted by the BIOHAZ Panel. It was proposed that the composition of the SCICOWG will be experts of each existing WG's including the WG chair, the secretariat of the different units plus the chair of the BIOHAZ Panel. The AHAW new panel will have its first meeting in 11-12 July where WG chairs will be appointed and the WG composition confirmed. The first meeting of the SCICOWG will take place after the summer break.

6.4 Comments to the zoonoses summary report (part II)

The mandate: The mandate was prepared by the BIOMO Unit and requests the AHAW Panel to review the EU summary report on zoonoses. The review should address non-food-borne zoonoses (e.g. brucellosis, echinococcosis, rabies, tuberculosis). The AHAW panel was asked to: i) review the European Union Summary Report on trends and sources zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks in 2009 and 2010. This review should in particular focus on data related to bovine tuberculosis, Echinococcus, Q fever, brucellosis, and non-food-borne zoonoses including the current analyses of the available data; ii) evaluate the appropriateness of the data collected at EU level; iii) consider what data are needed at EU level to provide an accurate picture of the epidemiological situation in the EU and the Member States; iv) assess if the analyses methods used in the report are appropriate; v) consider if collection of sampled based data for the report's aim instead of aggregated data would improve the quality and analyses of data at EU level; vi) consider if the data collection should be extended to additional zoonoses, or zoonotic agents, such as vector-borne zoonoses; and vii propose any improvements to the data collection, the presentation of the data and their analyses, as appropriate.

The panel has adopted a opinion concerning the first term of reference which is now published (EFSA Journal 2012;10(6):2765 [13 pp.]. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2765,

Available online: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2765.htm>).

The deadline of November 2012 was agreed with EFSA for the panel to answer the terms of reference 2-7.

The approach: The adhoc WG has developed a table of contents and general approach to the Tors and a meeting is planned for September 2012. The AHAW new panel will have its

first meeting in 11-12 July where WG chairs will be appointed and the WG composition confirmed.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

7.1 The AHAW panel 2009-2012: lessons learnt

The Panel discussed the lessons learnt in assessing animal health and welfare risks for EFSA in the previous years.

7.2 EFSA scientific report on Schmallenberg virus

The fourth EFSA report on the Schmallenberg virus ("Schmallenberg" virus: Analysis of the Epidemiological Data and Assessment of Impact) was published (EFSA, 2012²).

7.3 Scientific and technical assistance on *Echinococcus multilocularis* infection in animals

EFSA received a request from the Commission for scientific and technical assistance in the context of Article 31 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 to analyse and critically assess the *Echinococcus multilocularis* monitoring programmes of Member States in the context of Regulation (EU) No 1152/2011, specifically the sampling strategies as well as the data collected in the framework of these programmes and the detection methods used. This assessment is to be carried out annually (submission of MS reports by 31 May, delivery of technical report by October). AHAW will collaborate with the SAS unit on this mandate.

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2768.htm>