

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 79th plenary meeting

Held on 26-27 11 2013, Parma
(Agreed on 16 12 2013)

Participants

- **Panel Members:**

Edith Authié, Charlotte Berg Anette Bøtner, Howard Browman, Klaus Depner, Mariano Domingo, Sandra Edwards, Christine Fourichon, Aline de Koeijer, Frank Koenen, Simon More, Mohan Raj, Hans Spoolder, Jan Arend Stegeman, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Ivar Vågsholm, and Antonio Velarde,

- **EFSA:**

- AHAW Unit: Franck Berthe, Denise Candiani, Elzbieta Ceglarska, Sandra Correia, Maria Ferrara, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Justyna Jaskiewicz, Per Have, Silvia I. Nicolau Solano, and Frank Verdonck
- SAS Unit: Gabriele Zancarano and Jose Cortinas Abrahantes

- **European Commission**

- Unit 03: Marina Marini (via phone conference),
- Unit G2: Francesco Berlingieri and Nicolas Krieger (item 5.1 and 5.2, via telephone conference), Francisco Reviriego Gordejo (item 6.2, via telephone conference)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair of the Panel, welcomed the participants.

Apologies were received from Liisa Sihvonen and Preben Willeberg

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted with no changes.

3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy regarding Declarations of Interests², EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of interest (ADoI) and the 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 have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of interest at the beginning of this meeting.

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 78th Plenary meeting held on 22-23 10 2013.

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 05 12 2013 and published on the EFSA website.

5. New mandates

Two new requests were received.

5.1. Request for a Scientific Opinion on Sheep Pox and Goat Pox

Sheep pox and goat pox (Capripox) are viral diseases of sheep and goats. Sheep pox and goat pox are endemic in Africa north of the Equator, the Middle East, Turkey, and some parts of Asia. Sheep pox and goat pox are exotic to the EU, even if several outbreaks occurred in the past years and decades in Greece and Bulgaria, and especially in 2013 where sheep pox has been reintroduced in Greece since August 2013 and in Bulgaria since September 2013. The Commission is in need of scientific advice on the assessment of the significance of the risk posed by sheep pox and goat pox considering the current control measures.

5.2. Request for a Scientific Opinion on Lumpy Skin Disease

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) is a pox disease of cattle caused by capripoxvirus, of the genus Capripoxvirus, in the family Poxviridae. Transmission of LSD virus appears to occur predominantly by insects (possibly through mechanical vectors like mosquitoes, flies and ticks), natural contact transmission in the absence of insect vectors being a minor source of infection, while feed and water contaminated with infected saliva may also be transmission routes. LSD is exotic to the EU. It has been reported in the African continent as well as in the Middle East and in Asia. Turkey reported the first occurrence of LSD in 2013. The Commission is in need of scientific advice on the assessment of the significance of the risk posed by LSD considering the current control measures.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption

6.1. Monitoring procedures at slaughterhouses ([EFSA-Q-2012-00840](#))

This focused on the three remaining groups of animal species to be covered: pigs, small ruminants, and poultry.

For this mandate, the conceptual model is an assessment based on sensitivity and specificity of indicators for consciousness when considering slaughter with stunning, and indicators for unconsciousness and death when considering slaughter without stunning. The methodological approach includes a systematic literature review, an online survey, as well as a hearing expert meeting in order to get information about specificity, sensitivity and feasibility of the indicators that are being selected for inclusion in the monitoring procedures.

The three draft opinions (on poultry, pigs, sheep and goats) were discussed by the Panel. For each species and method, a flowchart showing the toolbox of selected indicators and, eventually, actions to be undertaken at each key stage of the stunning process was discussed. The statistical model for the sampling protocols remains the one which was presented for bovines.

The Panel, after reviewing comments and discussing the draft documents, agreed that the three opinions be circulated for written adoption within the weeks following the plenary meeting.

In light of the discussions, it was agreed that the scientific opinion on bovines be briefly re-discussed, more specifically related to the issue of slaughter without stunning. The capacity of the indicators to correctly identify conscious and alive animals is important under these circumstances. Therefore, the reasoning for including indicators in the toolbox should be driven by both sensitivity and specificity in slaughter without stunning. It was proposed to include this clarification in the material and method section of the adopted opinion and to

amend some of the conclusions and recommendations to clarify this aspect. Those changes were adopted by the Panel.

6.2. Vaccine for bovine tuberculosis (EFSA-Q-2013-00241)

The Panel reviewed the draft document and specific comments were discussed. An additional paragraph was added to explain why DIVA is defined as 'Detecting Infected among Vaccinated Animals' and minor changes were introduced in the conclusions and recommendations of the opinion.

At the end of the discussion, the Panel adopted the opinion.

6.3. Use of low atmosphere pressure system (LAPs) for stunning of poultry (EFSA-Q-2013-00322)

This mandate follows the previous 2 mandates for a Scientific Opinion concerning electrical parameters for the stunning of lambs and for a Scientific Opinion concerning the use of carbon dioxide for stunning of rabbits, received by the Commission in February. The common background is the following: Council Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing lays down in Annex I the allowed stunning methods and related specifications. Such Annex can be amended to take into account of scientific and technical progress, on the basis of an EFSA opinion.

At present, the Regulation does not allow the use of low atmosphere pressure system for stunning of poultry; EFSA was requested to assess 4 scientific publications received by the Commission to support a possible inclusion of this method in the EU Regulation.

The draft scientific opinion was presented to the Panel for discussion. The Panel adopted the opinion.

6.4. Self-task for a guidance on assessing studies evaluating the efficacy of stunning interventions regarding animal protection during stunning (EFSA-Q-2013-00532)

The AHAW Panel agreed to develop a guidance document, which defines the criteria against which studies evaluating the efficacy of stunning interventions regarding animal protection during stunning will be assessed. The approach followed in the guidance document was agreed with the panel. The draft guidance document will be sent to the panel members for endorsement for the public consultation of the guidance document, which will take place from 15 July to 08 September 2013 before its adoption in November.

7. Progress report on other scientific outputs

7.1. Self-task for bovine tuberculosis (EFSA-Q-2013-00531)

The Panel recognised that the draft conceptual model reflects the complexity of bTB and that it might help to place future risk questions in the broader perspective of the disease. However, the complexity of the conceptual model makes it difficult to be translated into a model. It was agreed that the use of the model could be explained by describing how three possible risk questions could be assessed via models based on the conceptual framework. It was mentioned that the non-biological context should be (1) partially integrated into the anchor model (e.g. effect of human behaviour on the implementation of sampling and testing) and (2) partially surrounding the anchor model (e.g. perception of the society). Social scientists will be contacted to assist in describing these aspects of the Statement. The Panel also requested a dialogue with a number of experts to challenge the conceptual model and to identify data gaps that hamper the understanding of bTB in the European context.

7.2. Request for an update of the 2010 scientific opinion on African Swine Fever (EFSA-Q-2013-00834)

The ASF epidemiological situation has changed significantly in Eastern Europe in the last year and the presence of the disease close to the EU border represents a serious risk to the livestock population of the Union and a challenge for animal health risk managers. It is therefore necessary to better determine the extent of the problem in order to better target preventive and control measures in the light of the current evolution of the ASF epidemic at the EU border updating the scientific opinion issued by EFSA in 2010³.

The methodology to address the 2 ToR's were presented to the Panel and agreed upon.

ToR 1: Update the significance of the occurrence and risk of endemicity of ASF in the countries neighbouring the EU at higher risk;

A narrative literature review will be carried out, describing the geographic distribution of ASFV in the neighbouring countries, the epidemiological features of the outbreaks, the possible risk factors for spread, and challenges for ASFV prevention and control in the eastern neighbouring countries of the EU. The same qualitative risk assessment model will be used as in 2010, but the parameters for which sufficient evidence is found, possibly resulting in a change of the risk estimates, will be elicited through a nominal group technique (NGT) expert knowledge elicitation approach.

ToR2: The evaluation of all the possible pathways of introduction of ASF into the EU, ranking them on the basis of their level of risk with a view to enhance preparedness and prevention.

Different matrices will be rated according to their risk of being contaminated and possibly containing infectious ASFV, when transported into the EU. Again, for this exercise, a narrative literature review looked into the infection dynamics of the Caucasian ASFV strain inoculated in susceptible animals and into the survival time of the virus in different matrixes. Then, the matrices will be rated according to their risk, based on expert knowledge elicitation. This ranking will not take into account possible volumes of these matrices transported into the EU.

This scientific opinion does not aim to update the actual risk of introduction of ASFV as such, but only compared the plausibility of possible virus sources to contain infectious virus at the moment of introduction.

7.3. Request for a scientific opinion on canine leishmaniosis (EFSA-Q-2013-00835)

Scientific evidence from EFSA is required in order to support the European Commission in determining if canine leishmaniosis complies with the characteristics of a disease for which the Commission might adopt preventive health measures for its control pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 998/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Those measures shall be scientifically justified and proportionate to the risk of spreading those diseases due to such movement. *Leishmania infantum* is the most widespread etiological agent of zoonotic cutaneous and visceral leishmaniosis in human and of canine leishmaniosis in dogs in Mediterranean areas. Canine leishmaniosis is a major global vector-borne zoonotic disease and potentially fatal to humans and dogs.

Preparatory work has been developed in order to select experts for a working group. A work plan is being developed.

7.4. Request for a scientific opinion on the main welfare risks related to the farming of sheep for wool, meat and milk production (EFSA-Q-2013-00580)

Sheep farming for milk, meat and wool production is of increasing importance worldwide, including in the EU and particularly in Eastern European countries.

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1556.htm>

Council Directive 98/58/EC lays down minimum standards for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes, including sheep. The EU Strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015 foresees the option of a revised animal welfare framework, introducing the use of animal-based welfare indicators to simplify the current legal framework and to enhance the applicability of general principles to all farm animals. The European Commission requested EFSA to review the scientific literature on the welfare of sheep farmed for wool, meat and milk production, and in particular to identify the main risk factors and welfare consequences for the different farming productions. Main factors and welfare consequences common to the different production systems should also be identified. EFSA formally accepted the mandate and established an ad hoc Working Group for the development of the Opinion. The chair of the WG presented the preliminary approach discussed by the WG to address the terms of reference of the mandate and also he also highlighted that contacts are being undertaken with stakeholders and international organisations involved in the welfare of sheep to gather information.

7.5. Request for a scientific opinion on Enzootic bovine leukosis ([EFSA-Q-2013-00546](#))

Enzootic bovine leukosis (EBL) is a disease caused by the bovine leukaemia virus (BLV). Most infections appear to be subclinical, but a proportion of cattle over 3 years old develop persistent lymphocytosis, and a smaller proportion develop lymphosarcomas in various internal organs. While the infection appears to be widespread globally, in the EU there are many Member States that are officially free (Decision 2003/467/EC), or have one or more regions recognised as officially free.

There is a need to assess if EBL is a disease for which control measures are still justified. This is linked to the existence of free areas within the EU and in some of its trading partners and the possible risk of reintroduction of the disease in these currently free areas. Another important aspect is related to estimating the morbidity rate and whether it can be considered significant at country or regional level; this consequently needs to be assessed against the control measures and their impact on cattle production.

The opinion will include information that allows to contextualise the disease situation before controls were implemented, achievements of control programs and possible scenarios if controls are abandoned.

An update on the work in progress was given. The outstanding questions concern mainly impact assessment and control options. M Raj kindly agreed to provide a section on welfare consequences of EBL. Due to time constraints it was decided not to launch the systematic review on impact and to refer a review of publications identified to the WG.

7.6. Request for a scientific opinion concerning a multifactorial approach on the use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs ([EFSA-Q-2013-00667](#))

The Commission is planning to develop guidelines to facilitate the proper implementation of the requirements of Council Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs as part of the EU Animal Welfare Strategy 2012-2015. We therefore request EFSA to deliver a scientific opinion to assess the multi-factorial interaction and associations between risk factors, welfare consequences and animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs bearing in mind the objective of their use in assessing degree of compliance with legal requirements.

The Commission requests EFSA to use a multi-factorial approach on the use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs especially those welfare parameters regulated in Directive 2008/120, Articles 3 and 4 and Annex I Chapter I-II as well as Directive 98/58 Annex numbers 10, 13 second paragraph, 14, 15 and 16. The assessment should be based

on and linked to the risk assessment of the previous EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare of pigs. In particular the Commission highlights the importance of the chosen indicators use in assessing compliance with legislative requirements as listed above.

The preliminary approach taken by the WG to address this mandate was presented and briefly discussed with the Panel. SAS colleagues delivered an overview on the possible mathematical models to be used and commented the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. Following a general discussion, it was agreed to appoint two members of the Panel as deep-readers for this opinion (one animal welfare expert and one mathematical modeller). The draft opinion will be presented for discussion at the 80 Plenary meeting (4-5 February 2014) and for possible adoption at the 81st Plenary meeting (24-25 March 2014).

8. Next meetings

Next meetings in 2014: Feb 4/5, March 24/25 (Dublin), May 13/14, June 24/25, Sept 16/17, Oct 21/22, and Dec 02/03.