

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH
Minutes of the 54th plenary meeting of the Scientific Panel on Plant Health
Held on 18-19 March 2015, Parma

(Agreed on 27 May 2015)

Participants

• **Panel Members:**

Richard Baker, Claude Bragard, David Caffier, Thierry Candresse, Gianni Gilioli, Jean-Claude Gregoire, Imre Holb, Michael John Jeger, Olia Evtimova Karadjova, Christer Sven Magnusson, David Makowski, Maria Navajas, Trond Rafoss, Vittorio Rossi, Jan Schans, Gritta Schrader, Gregor Urek, Irene Vloutoglou, Stephan Winter, Wopke Van Der Werf.

• **EFSA:**

Animal and Plant Health Unit: Franck Berthe, Gabor Hollo, Ilaria Inverardi, Virag Kertesz, Svetla Kozelska, Tomasz Oszako, Marco Pautasso, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Sybren Vos.

• **External presenters:**

Dan Chapman, James Bullock, Steven White

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Panel Chair welcomed the participants to the 54th Plenary meeting of the EFSA Plant Health Panel. Apologies were received from Robert Luttik of the EFSA Scientific Committee and Françoise Petter of the EPPO.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes regarding Declarations of Interests (Dols)¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy², EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI) and the Specific Declarations of Interest (SDoI) filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed at this meeting have been identified during the screening process or in the Oral Declarations of Interest (ODoI) at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 53rd plenary meeting held on 28-29 January 2015

The minutes were agreed without changes.

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

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

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion or possible adoption

5.1. Scientific opinion on risk to plant health posed by *Trichilogaster acaciaelongifoliae* for the EU territory ([EFSA-Q-2014-00241](#)), for discussion and possible adoption

A presentation was given by the Chair of WG - Michael John Jeger - who summarized the scientific opinion on the risk to plant health posed by *Trichilogaster acaciaelongifoliae* for the EU territory. He also presented the background of the plan to release the bud-galling wasp *T. acaciaelongifoliae* for the biological control of the invasive plant *Acacia longifolia* in Portugal. The Panel discussed the opinion and particularly the ratings for establishment and spread of the insect and its consequences on invasive *Acacia* species. The Panel members discussed the uncertainty of the consequences to other plant species, particularly ornamental *Acacia* species. Some observations on the process of risk assessment of biological control agents were discussed and it was agreed to propose EFSA a self-task to present these observations in a separate PLH panel statement, that could be prepared for May plenary discussion and possible adoption.

After the amendments following the plenary discussion, the Opinion was adopted by the Panel.

5.2. Scientific opinion on the risk to plant health of soil and growing media ([EFSA-Q-2013-00405](#)), for discussion

The progress was presented by the Chair of the WG and the draft opinion was discussed by the Panel.

- Different definitions of soil and growing media were presented and in particular the two definitions of growing media provided in Annex III and Annex IV of the Council Directive 2000/29/EC were discussed.
 - Different categories of soil and growing media have been defined based on their probability of association with pests. These categories were developed using the indicative list of soil and growing media resulting from the inventories developed by an EFSA funded outsourced procurement project. The list of 880 different soil and growing media should be treated as indicative because each year new growing media are developed as a result of new technological developments.
 - The probability of association of the pests was rated for each soil and growing media category
 - The effectiveness of methods to reduce the pest presence was evaluated based on peer reviewed papers presenting experimental results (300 tested methods were scrutinised). Regarding heat, pesticide and fumigation treatments, the literature review showed that they were able to reduce the presence of harmful organisms in soil and growing media, but that these treatments were not systematically 100% efficient. The effectiveness of these measures is highly uncertain as they depend on several factors, especially on soil characteristics, type of harmful organisms, and procedure of application. An overview of regulations of soil and growing media in the EU, Canada, Australia, USA and New Zealand was presented highlighting the main differences with the EU regulation.
 - There is currently no definition of soil in the Directive 2000/29/EC. Inorganic growing media are not regulated in the current EU legislation, however this category of growing media could be associated with harmful organisms based on a literature review. The EU regulation does not provide details on the required implementation of risk reduction options in order to maintain production sites and consignments of soil and growing media free of harmful organisms. Regulations
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on soil and growing media implemented by the above mentioned non-EU countries are, in some cases, simpler and provide clearer guidance on how to reduce the risk of entry of harmful organisms in their territories with soil and growing media.

The preliminary conclusions of the draft opinion were presented. The final draft will be presented for adoption to the May 2015 Panel Plenary.

5.3. Three draft scientific opinions on environmental risk assessment by EFSA Scientific Committee, for discussion and commenting.

Three draft opinions of the EFSA Scientific Committee on environmental risk assessment, as listed below, have been submitted for comments to the four EFSA scientific panels contributing to these opinions: the Panel on Plant Protection Products and their Residues (PPR), the Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO for food and feed), the Panel on Feed additives (FEEDAP) and the Panel on Plant health (PLH). This exercise of Panels consultation aims to get Panels suggestions for improvement so that a finalised draft addressing these comments could be endorsed by the Scientific Committee (SC) and then submitted to a public consultation process before adoption. EFSA assesses the effects on the environment of plant protection products, GMOs, and feed additives in the risk assessment conducted before the products are authorised by risk management and placed on the market. EFSA also assesses the risks of invasive alien species harmful to plants or plant products and, within this process it also assesses the environmental impact of these plant pests. This EFSA self-task mandate aims to harmonise approaches, regardless of the type of stressor, when panels derive specific environmental protection goals (SPGs), consider endangered species (or species of conservation concern) as potential non-target organisms or address temporal/spatial recovery of non-target organisms. To consider stakeholders, risk managers and citizens point of view, public consultation are planned during July-August. During March and April the three draft SC ERA opinions are submitted for comments by the PPR, GMO, FEEDAP and PLH Panels. While no official adoption, constructive commenting is needed to reach agreement across the Panels.

a. EFSA SC (EFSA Scientific Committee), 2016a - in preparation. DRAFT Scientific Opinion on accounting for biodiversity and ecosystem services to define protection goals for environmental risk assessment ([EFSA-Q-2013-00289](#)).

Purpose of this opinion is to maintain a healthy environment and conserve biodiversity recognizing the different legal frameworks and stressors considered in the areas within EFSA's remit and protection goals. The Protection Goals guidance presents a conceptual framework accounting for biodiversity and ecosystem services to make policy protection goals operational for use in EFSA's ERAs. The derivation of protection goals could be done in three steps: the identification of relevant Ecosystem Services; the identification of service providing units supporting/providing relevant Ecosystem Services; and the specification of the degree/parameters of protection of the service providing units using interrelated dimensions (ecological entity and attributes to be protected, the spatial and temporal scale of protection and the magnitude of acceptable effect).

b. EFSA SC (EFSA Scientific Committee), 2016b - in preparation. DRAFT Scientific Opinion on coverage of endangered species as non-target organisms in single-stressor environmental risk assessments at EFSA ([EFSA-Q-2013-00901](#))

Attributes of invasive species causing differences in ERA between PLH ERA and other ERA at EFSA were identified. Invasive Alien Species are usually (with the exception of biological control agents of invasive plants) not intentionally applied. The distinction between in-field

and off-field is less relevant for IAS. The consequences of IAS are the result of ecological relationships with other species in the invaded ecosystems. The time scale of assessment is usually much longer (years to decades of years). The selection of focal taxa in the case of impacts of IAS focuses on SPUs, mostly at the supra-species level. The resilience is not defined according to the time scale of the life time of individuals, but according to the time scale of the overall ecosystem response. Do the current ERA schemes appropriately cover endangered species? The reference of endangered species is mainly based on the European Red List (6000 species) or more rarely on functional approach of Rabinowitz's classification (1981).

- c. **EFSA SC (EFSA Scientific Committee), 2016c - in preparation. DRAFT Scientific Opinion on the temporal and spatial recovery of non-target organisms for environmental risk assessments ([EFSA-Q-2013-00902](#)).**

Factors hampering ecological recovery of ecosystem structure and population abundance across stressors were presented and discussed with three aim of developing an integrated approach within Panels. In PLH risk assessment, ecosystem services may be reduced or increased. Population size and time are key factors in ecological recovery. The spatial aspect was also considered, especially in the contests of complexity of migratory organisms.

After a thorough discussion, it was agreed by the Panel to provide further suggestions on the three draft opinions in written during two weeks following the Plenary.

6. New Mandates

6.1. EFSA Technical report on categorization of *Xylella fastidiosa* host plant species ([EFSA-Q-2015-00103](#))

Following the PLH Panel Scientific Opinion on the pest risk assessment of *Xylella fastidiosa*, published in January 2015, the EU Commission DG Santé asked for further assistance to EFSA to rank the reported host plant species according to their life span (perennial, annual, biennial), the trade volume, the propagation type (vegetatively vs. seed propagated), the type of infection (natural infection vs. artificial inoculation) and the method of bacterium detection (e.g. ELISA, PCR, microscopy, culturing etc.). A database has been prepared together with an EFSA Scientific Report to be published on EFSA website this Friday. The work was reviewed by two Panel members and their contribution was acknowledged. An updated version of this database will be produced by EFSA using a systematic review approach and published by end of the year.

7. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission:

7.1. PLH Panel Working Group Dir_2000_29_Methods ([EFSA-Q-2014-00351](#))

In 2014 EFSA was requested to provide a pest categorisation of 38 pests for the EU territory (step 1). The Commission, after reviewing the pest categorisations produced in step 1, would then inform EFSA for which of these organisms it would necessary to complete the pest risk assessment and to identify and assess the efficacy of risk reduction options (step 2). Having the EFSA PLH Panel completed the step 1, the Panel will be soon requested to conduct the second step of full risk assessment and evaluation of risk reduction options for part of these pests. In order to conduct this exercise in a fit for purpose and standardised manner, a WG was established to develop template and approach for the pest categorisation (step 1) and later also for the step 2. The work on step 2 is being conducted with three main objectives:

Risk assessment: to develop a new commented template for entry, establishment, spread and impact;

RRO: to develop a new commented template for RRO; and

Ratings: to revise the rating systems of the RA and RRO parts and to assess uncertainties for each rating.

The issues regarding the development of fit for purpose risk assessment methodologies and template were presented and discussed by the PLH Panel:

- use of quantitative definitions in risk assessment ratings (e.g. using interval scales)
- Importance of impact as endpoint of the assessment, representing the overall outcome of the risk assessment;
- risk reduction options are to be identified for each step of the risk assessment chain, and evaluated under different scenario assumptions. One of the scenarios is without RROs; a series of other scenarios would then evaluate the degree to which the risk is reduced by RROs appropriate for the organism in question, applied at one or more steps in the chain; only RROs which are feasible for the organism in question are to be considered;
- further consideration can be given to incorporating population thresholds for each step in the assessment chain.

7.2. Scientific Committee and other Scientific Panels

a. SC WG on Review of Guidance documents

The WG has reviewed the overarching guidance documents by SC and EFSA and provided indications whether their application should be on a conditional or unconditional (mandatory) basis. Recommendations for timely update of guidance documents were also provided.

b. SC WG on Emerging Risks

The activities of the WG on emerging risks are now concluded and were presented and discussed. The Panel discussed that more specialists representing diverse background should be involved in identifying initial drivers and analysing different scenarios. The PLH Panel in its fourth mandate starting in July 2015 could contribute with a self-task to EFSA work on emerging risks looking for new ideas and approaches in relation to the emerging risks in plant health.

c. SC WG on Uncertainty

The SC draft opinion on Uncertainty is expected to be submitted for public consultation in summer 2015.

7.3. EFSA

a. Presentation with case studies of the EFSA funded procurement on a Review and inventory of modeling framework/techniques suitable for assessing the risk of pathogen introduction and establishment and the risk of pathogen transmission and spread ([EFSA-Q-2013-00243](#))

Steven White, James Bullock, and Dan Chapman from the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology presented to the Panel the results of the EFSA funded procurement project "OC/EFSA/PLH/2012/01-CT01- Inventory and review of quantitative models for spread of plant pests for use in pest risk assessment for the EU territory" focusing on overview on Application of the Decision Support Scheme (DSS) to *Xylella fastidiosa* followed by the practical demonstration of the DSS 4-step process to pick a modelling strategy. As an example two different scenarios for *X. fastidiosa* were shown. Because the current pest

distribution is established, but there is no information on the history of pest spread the 1st scenario was focussing on how fast the pest is spreading and the 2nd one was trying to predict where the pest will go (future spread). Therefore for the 1st model the published parameters were used to predict the spread rate (modelling knowledge) and sensitivity analyses was performed based on parameter values gained in Brazil. In the 2nd scenario the spread data were used to fit a model. To sum up, the DSS is useful for suggesting modelling strategies, especially when there is no existing model. The DSS is simple to use however modelling skills are required. It is useful for identifying lack of data or models. Discussions between pest experts and modellers are crucial to understand the problem/data before using the DSS.

b. Presentation on the EFSA Bee healthy project

The road map of the MUST Bee project was presented with a particular focus on the Healthy Bee sub project that is managed by a WG of the AHAW Panel. The latter is articulated around 4 terms of reference. In ToR 1 the attributes that could define a healthy bee colony are identified and the progress on this activity was presented. In ToR2 and ToR3, the indicators to measure them and the factors that influence them need to be identified and scrutinised providing a proposal of methods and tools (including emerging ones) to be applied. ToR4 consists of an exploration and scoping of the possible methods to analyse the data that will be collected by the EU wide survey defined in the MUST Bee project (planned field survey -“descriptive analysis” and data analysis e.g. for modelling) PLH Panel could mainly contribute to this project in the context of the identification of factors and the relevant methods to measure them (e.g. environmental factors that could influence the pollination services. Finally, the stakeholders’ participation in the project was discussed with the special regards to farmers and NGO’s.

c. Update on PLH Panel plenary open to observers

The May plenary meeting of the EFSA PLH Panel will be in Brussels will and kindly hosted by the Belgian Food Safety Authority (AFSCA) in its seat in Rue du Jardin Botanique. It will be a Plenary open to observers starting on 27 May (Wednesday) at h 14.00 and finishing on 29 May (Friday) at h 13.00. This last day will be a session dedicated to the questions asked by the observers to the Panel.

7.4. European Commission

8. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

8.1. Update on publications/presentations related to PLH Panel activity

9. Any Other Business
