European Food Safety Authority

ALPHA UNIT

Scientific Panel on Plant Health

Minutes of the 58th Plenary meeting

Held on 18 November, 2015, Parma, (Italy)
(Agreed on 28 January 2016) [1]

Participants

- **Panel Members**[2]

  Claude Bragard, Thierry Candresse, Elisavet Chatzivassiliou, Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz, Gianni Gilioli, Jean-Claude Gregoire, Josep Anton Jaques Miret, Michael Jeger, Alan MacLeod, Maria Navajas, Bjorn Niere, Roel Potting, Trond Rafoss, Vittorio Rossi, Gregor Urek, Ariena Van Bruggen, Wopke Van Der Werf, Jon West, Stephan Winter

- **EFSA**

  ALPHA Unit: Miren Andueza, Ciro Gardi, Gabor Hollo, Ioannis Koufakis, Svetla Kozelska, Tomasz Oszako, Marco Pautasso, Gritta Schrader, Giuseppe Stancanelli, Sybren Vos

  AMU Unit: Laura Martino

- **European Commission representatives (observers)**

  DG SANTE: Panagiota Mylona

- **European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) (observers)**

  European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO): Muriel Suffert

[1] The publication of the minutes shall be made without delay in compliance with the Founding Regulation and no later than 15 working days following the day of their agreement.

[2] Indicate first full name and then surname (John Smith) all throughout the document.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed EFSA PLH Panel members, as well as Panagiota Mylona from the European Commission, Muriel Suffert from EPPO and Miren Andueza who started her traineeship at EFSA ALPHA Unit in October 2015.

The EFSA PLH Panel and team expressed their gratitude to Tomasz Oszako, at his last attendance of an EFSA PLH Panel plenary meeting.

Apologies were received from David Caffier and Stephen Parnell (EFSA PLH Panel), who could not attend this meeting.

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 and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest and the Specific Declarations of Interest filled in
by the Scientific Panel Members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting were identified during the screening process nor at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting. Information was provided to the Panel about the EFSA policy on independence and declaration of interests.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 57th Plenary meeting held on 17-18 November 2015, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the 57th plenary meeting were adopted with minor editorial changes.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

5.1. Report and discussion from the *X. fastidiosa* workshop (EFSA-Q-2015-00527)

The Chair expressed gratitude of the EFSA PLH Panel to the EFSA PLH team for the organization of the workshop, preparation of the briefing notes, participation in the workshop, and support provided to the chairs and rapporteurs. Praises for the organization at such a short notice of a

very informative workshop and for the contributions by the session Chairs and Rapporteurs were expressed by the Panel members attending the meeting
The workshop, organised by EFSA together with DG RTD, DG AGRI and DG SANTE, focused on research gaps. It was stressed that research has also to address farmer and citizen expectations. The proposed open-field initiative in Salento to test olive variety susceptibility was found very positive.

EFSA confirmed the positive feedback obtained from the participants on the workshop, which provided a great opportunity for researchers from various countries and disciplines to come together, exchange views and start collaborating for the upcoming Horizon 2020 call on *X. fastidiosa*. The framework now established will make it possible to avoid duplication of research efforts in the future.

5.2. DG research mandate

This mandate, in addition to the organization of the *X. fastidiosa* workshop in November 2015, requested EFSA to produce periodically an update of research on *X. fastidiosa*. This could be achieved by a regular update of inventory research on *X. fastidiosa* conducted by researchers in the EU, Member States and elsewhere, in collaboration with other competent organisations such as Euphresco. An annual conference on *X. fastidiosa* could provide a framework to present and share results, and possibly to be connected to other European phytopathological event
The Chair pointed out that the Horizon 2020 call on research of *X. fastidiosa* has been very timely issued in connection with the EFSA workshop on "*Xylella fastidiosa*: knowledge gaps and research priorities for the EU", where it was presented to the participants by a speaker from EU Commission DG AGRI. Plant health, being one of the priorities, of DG SANTÉ, more mandates on emerging plant health risks are expected.

5.3. Discussion and possible adoption of Vitis sp. susceptibility to Xylella fastidiosa strain CoDiRO draft opinion (EFSA-Q-2015-00547)

The Composition of the WG was presented.

EFSA was requested by the European Commission DG SANTE' to provide a Scientific Opinion on whether *Vitis* sp. is susceptible to *Xylella fastidiosa* strain CoDiRO[3]. This request followed a submission of a report from the Italian authorities supporting the proposal to delist *Vitis* sp. from Annex I ('specified plants') of the Commission Implementing Decision (EU)

[3] Reference of CODIRO

2015/789 of 18 May 2015 to prevent the introduction into and the spread within the Union of *Xylella fastidiosa* (Wells et al.).

The evidence provided with the mandate included a scientific report prepared by the National Research Council (Bari, Italy) and University of Bari, dated 2 September 2015, containing three main lines of evidence:

1. Surveys in vineyards and nurseries located in the epidemic zone of *X. fastidiosa* with diseased olive trees showing CoDiRO symptoms,

2. Inoculation experiments to infect grapevines with the *X. fastidiosa* isolate "De Donno" obtained from CoDiRO diseased olives,

3. Vectors transmission experiments with *X. fastidiosa* CoDiRO strain infective *Philaenus spumarius* L. adults to infect *V. vinifera* plants.

Part of the inoculation experimental data presented in the dossier submitted by the Italian Authorities were preliminary results of an EFSA funded pilot project. which is expected to be finalized by the CNR by February 2016, with a final report published on the EFSA website soon afterwards. The main scope of this pilot project was however not the proof of non-susceptibility of a specific plant species but the identification of plant species which are hosts of *X. fastidiosa* strain CoDiRO.

The WG acknowledged the importance of the hearing organised with the authors of the Italian report which helped clarifying methodologies and data presented in the report[4].

The Panel acknowledged the difficulties in providing evidence about this hitherto unknown pathogen/vector/host interaction to support the hypothesis that a plant species cannot be infected with a pathogen. Although field surveys to detect *X. fastidiosa* in grapevine were negative, there was no supporting information on infective vector populations present in the vineyards. Hence absence of infection pressure could not be excluded. Furthermore the failure to infect grapevine plants either by artificial inoculation or by vector transmission might be due to inoculation conditions not appropriate to induce infections in grapevine. The detection of *X. fastidiosa* DNA in inoculated grapevine plants even 12 months after inoculation, although localised at the inoculation points, could not exclude that the DNA amplified by qPCR was from viable cells. The results presented were coherent and provided converging lines of evidence that grapevine (*Vitis vinifera*) is not a major susceptible host of *X. fastidiosa* strain CoDiRO. However, from the experimental evidence it is premature

[4] Minutes of the hearing are accessible at the following link, under notes of meeting 4 http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/codirowg.pdf

to conclude that *V. vinifera* cannot become infected and is not a host of *X. fastidiosa* strain CoDiRO. Because of the lack of data this also applies to other *Vitis* spp.
The opinion was carefully screened, including a discussion on the appropriate terminology regarding host susceptibility. The Opinion was then adopted by the EFSA PLH Panel.

6. New mandates

6.1. Citrus Black Spot: assessment of new scientific information (EFSA-Q-2015-00601)

Following the publication of the EFSA PLH Panel Scientific Opinion on *Phyllosticta citricarpa* pest risk assessment on the EFSA website in February 2014, some new scientific publications on the topic have appeared. The European Commission thus asked EFSA to assess two scientific articles published in the course of 2015 and other scientific information that may have been published after the finalisation of the EFSA scientific opinion. If, in the light of the newly available scientific evidence, it should become apparent that the above mentioned Scientific Opinion on CBS needs to be revised, EFSA is asked to do so by April 2016.

The Composition of the WG was presented.

The WG Chair reminded the EFSA PLH Panel that not only the two papers highlighted in the mandate of the European Commission have appeared in the press, but various other papers were published. Consequently, the work required will be quite intensive. For the review of the two papers cited in the mandate, the Working Group intends to organise a hearing of the lead authors of the papers to ask questions and clarifications.

The procedure for involving hearing experts was explained. Hearing experts are only invited to give presentation on specific topics, reply to questions or provide clarifications but cannot contribute to the drafting of the scientific opinion. The hearing of the authors of scientific papers or dossiers can be useful when a mandate focuses on the review of a particular publication and there is a need for clarification.

If the Working Group will need a to run models based on climatic or weather data, this will be done with support from the EFSA AMU and PTT Units and the JRC IES.

With regard to citrus diseases, a recent, not yet confirmed report of Huanglongbing in Portugal was noted.

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

7.1. PLH Panel Working Group "Directive 2000/29 Methods": development of fit for purpose risk assessment methodologies and process to update EU listing of regulated plant pests (EFSA-Q-2014-00351)

The Composition of the WG was presented.

An update on the progress of the Methods WG was provided by the WG Chair, with focus on the mechanistic (population-based) approach. The idea is to follow the changes in the population abundance from the production unit in the country of origin of the pest whose risk is to be assessed, to the production or service providing unit in the risk assessment area.
Some reflections were shared on the experience of applying this approach with the pilot organisms, *Ditylenchus destructor* and *Ceratocystis platani*. This has been an informative learning experience. A common comment to the new scheme highlighted the lack of data to use the quantitative approach. However, the new approach makes it also easier to identify which data gaps should be filled. Developments have included the clarification of definitions and procedures, as well as the preparation of a simple excel tool. This excel tool (for moving from abundance (or proportion of infected units) in the country of origin to the following steps in the entry process) was presented, with a short demonstration of how it works. For the moment, only the entry step is fully developed. Further work is planned to develop and refine the tool and template.

EFSA Scientific Officer (SO) provided an overview of the progress of the Methods subgroup dealing with Risk Reducing Options. The definitions already presented at previous EFSA PLH Panel meetings were repeated, as well as the envisaged interaction with risk managers for the decision of scenarios. Two types of measures were distinguished: i) control measures having an effect on pest abundance, and ii) supporting measures, facilitating the choice of control measures. Also, the typical combination of measures in the risk management toolkit needs to be characterized. An example of a template developed for a particular risk reducing option was presented (description, risk factors, effectiveness, applicability/feasibility, existing documentation, datasets and data requirements, similar risk reducing options, combinations and conclusions). The next steps include starting the interaction with the various Working Groups (so as to be able to develop the priority fiches), rating the effectiveness and combination of measures, as well as populating the database.

A question was raised as to whether there is a plan to work retrospectively, obtaining information from already published EFSA PLH Panel Opinions. It was replied that the list of potentially useful risk reducing options that has been prepared so far is based also on that kind of information. A potential problem of combining 18 different risk reducing options with the various steps of the risk assessment, with an estimate of 2^{18} potential combinations was pointed out. Reply was that a list with all the possibilities could be provided to the risk managers for their screening. An early engagement with risk management could also help with reducing the number of permutations (three-tiered approach). There is also a need to better match the number of steps in the risk assessment and in the risk reducing options.

It was also asked whether a risk reducing option fiche was seen as a standard one, or whether it could be further modified. It was answered that the fiche is meant to be a generic one, i.e. a tool assisting in the identification of the possible control measures. It was also pointed out the high number of potential ratings that would be needed when combining the quantitative steps of the risk assessment with the various risk reducing options. The importance of interaction with the risk managers was stressed as a way to focus on key risk reducing options. The lack or limited data for many pathogens on the effectiveness of risk reducing options was emphasised . In fact the focus on particular risk reducing options depends also on the Terms of Reference received. The Panel Chair added that this new approach provides the opportunity to customise how the EFSA PLH Panel deals with risk reducing options.

7.2. Request from the European Commission to complete the Pest Risk Assessment (step 2) of 7 regulated pests, following the analysis and exchange of views with Member States of the pest categorisations delivered: update by PLH Panel Working Groups.

(1) *Ditylenchus destructor* Thorne, (EFSA-Q-2015-00268) and *Radopholus similis* (Cobb) Thorne.), (EFSA-Q-2015-00269)

The Composition of the WG was presented.

The WG Chair outlined the progress of the WG on nematodes, focusing on *Ditylenchus destructor*. Eight different pathways were identified and described. Only two pathways were deemed to be important for the risk assessment (seed potatoes and ornamental bulbs). Pathway unit and subunits were then defined. Two scenarios for each pathway were outlined i) current situation, ii) without phytosanitary measures. Risk reducing options were described. Quantile values were estimated for the entry and establishment sub-steps. The spread section still needs work.

(2) *Ceratocystis platani* (Walter) Engelbrecht et Harrington, (EFSA-Q-2015-00265) and *Cryphonectria parasitica* (Murrill) Barr, (EFSA-Q-2015-00266)

The Composition of the WG was presented

The WG Chair sketched the progress of the WG on fungi, focusing on *Ceratocystis platani*. In Europe, the pathogen is present in three Member States (France, Italy and Greece), and Switzerland and Albania. The climatic conditions in Europe are not expected to limit the potential establishment and spread of the pathogen. This is a destructive and infectious tree fungal pathogen, with important consequences for *Platanus* trees, both planted and in the wild. Completed work so far included: retrieval and analysis of the literature, retrieval of data from EUROSTAT and EUROPHYT, description of relevant pathways, clarification of the use of the new template. The opportunity of enlarging the WG was discussed with involvement of other EFSA PLH Panel members. Various difficulties encountered were described. A question about host resistance was posed; the reply was that there is very little resistance against this exotic pathogen.

The WG plans to work on *Cryphonectria parasitica* after having completed the risk assessment for *C. platani*.

(3) Grapevine Flavescence dorée, (EFSA-Q-2015-00271)

The Composition of the WG was presented

The WG Chair described the progress of the WG on Flavescence dorée. The recommendations received from the EC Annexes WG were summarized. The terms of reference (requiring further information on the potential distribution of the vector and probability of establishment of the pest, as well further analysis of control methods) were explained. Work done so far: discussion of the new template, interpretation of the Terms of Reference, identification of critical parameters in the pest categorization. The option of a conditional risk assessment was chosen, as the pest is already present in the risk assessment area and therefore there is no need to assess the entry and establishment step by step. Issues to be clarified include: how to deal with the entry of vectors, what would be the area potentially colonised by the vector (climate matching), and how can the spread pathways be assessed. The WG concluded that work must focus on spread, impacts and risk reducing options. “Spread” in this context refers to the movement of infected plants, infected vectors and non-infected vectors. The possible scenarios discussed are i) current phytosanitary measures in place, ii) current phytosanitary measures lifted. The relevant pathways of spread of the vector and the pathogen were identified. Questions were asked to Member States where Flavescence dorée is present on the use and effectiveness of control measures. Further feedback is needed from the Methods WG. The meeting plan was presented.

(4) *Diaporthe vaccinii* Shaer, (EFSA-Q-2015-00267)

The Composition of the WG was presented.

The WG Chair summarized the progress of the WG on *D. vaccinii*. Since September 2015, the WG has collected literature data on global *D. vaccinii* occurrence, occurrence data from USA plant health clinics have been collected and species distribution models applied to *D. vaccinii* presence data, prepared a guidance for the planned *D. vaccinii* survey in the EU, discussed modelling results and further steps needed for risk assessment,. Preliminary predictions indicate that the potential distribution of *D. vaccinii* is wider than previously thought. EFSA SO mentioned the involvement of Yoannis Koufakis, who started a traineeship at EFSA ALPHA Unit in September 2015 (a graduate working in the Alpha Unit and that they have started analysing the ISEFOR database of plants for planting for data on import of blueberry plants

(5) *Eotetranychus lewisi* (McGregor), (EFSA-Q-2015-00270)

The Composition of the WG was presented

The WG Chair provided an update on the progress of the WG on *Eotetranychus lewisi*. The WG is waiting for the results of surveys in the Member States. Indications for surveillance have been provided. ALPHA Team Leader informed that an extension of the deadline for delivery of the risk assessments for this pest, as well as for *Radopholus similis* and *Diaporthe vaccinii*, is being discussed, depending on when the results from the 2016 surveys will be made available.

7.3. Discussion of self-tasks 2016-2018

Some potential future self-tasks for the EFSA PLH Panel were outlined an discussed, from a guidance on quantitative pathway analysis of plant pest introduction with commodities (based on work done during the EFSA PLH Panel Opinions on *Tilletia indica*, *Phyllosticta citricarpa*, as well as two recent EFSA PLH procurements on pathway analyses) to the update of the guidance on a harmonised framework for pest risk assessment and the identification and evaluation of pest risk management options (based on the current Methods WG, to be finalised in 2017).

A third possibility would be to update Environmental Risk Assessment guidance based on the SC guidance and the results of a COST Action on the same topic. The need to take into account the recent Opinions related to Environmental Risk Assessment of the Scientific Committee, as well the recent EFSA PLH Panel Opinion on a potential biological control agent of an invasive alien species was pointed out.

The Panel Chair reminded the EFSA PLH Panel the need to review published guidance documents every three years, even if the outcome of such revisions would identify no need for change.

ALPHA Team Leader reminded the EFSA PLH Panel the possibility to receive further mandates related to guidance documents (e.g. on surveillance) also from the European Commission. It was pointed out that it might be also possible to frame such work on surveillance methodologies in a self-task on needs of the EFSA PLH Panel in terms of surveillance data for risk assessment, not necessarily as guidance for the Member States about how they should conductt plant pest surveys.
Further topics could include plant pest outbreak containment, as well as advice on plants for planting (both inspired by the *Xylella* outbreak in Apulia).
Self-tasks topics can also be proposed by the EFSA PLH Panel to the European Commission, to check whether there would be a need from risk managers for such advice. It was also discussed that the forthcoming new PLH legislation could lead to increased need for commodity risk assessment, i.e. the risk assessment not of single plant pests, but of all (or the main) pests associated with a certain type of plant commodity (e.g. wood, plants for planting, cut flowers, citrus fruit with or without leaves).

The Panel Chair added that other topics could include the assessment of protected zones, as well as voluntary certification schemes. It was mentioned that both protected zones and certification schemes have been identified as potential risk reducing options, so these topics could be integrated in an overall guidance about such control measures.

Also the topic of impacts and critical values might deserve guidance, as well as early warning

The Panel Chair concluded the discussion on this topic by reminding the EFSA PLH Panel that plant health is now one of the priorities of DG SANTÉ, so it is a very suitable time to further develop guidance documents relevant to the Panel in order to support the EU in this area. Further comments and input of the EFSA PLH Panel members on this topic are welcome and should be sent to the ALPHA PLH Team Leader.

7.4. Report/feedback from Scientific Committee and its working groups

The Panel Chair updated the EFSA PLH Panel on the uncertainty WG, whose guidance went to public consultation. When it is updated following the received comments, the Opinion will be circulated amongst the EFSA Panels for feedback. This guidance on uncertainty will not have to be followed compulsorily, but will provide information on the various available approaches and how to choose the appropriate one for a given situation. The EFSA PLH Panel is likely to receive the Opinion for feedback in February 2016. The final version will probably be published in the autumn of 2016.

The developments of the WG on biological relevance were summarized. The WG is still compiling input on this topic. The Panel Chair pointed out the connection of the potential guidance topic on impacts and critical values with this topic.
Progresses and discussion from the SC ERA WG, particularly related to the topic of protection goals, were presented.

The Panel Chair added an update on the WG about weight of evidence, where the current EFSA PLH Panel is actually not represented (at the moment only a former PLH panel member is l in the WG).

The EFSA PLH Panel was updated on a WG on pesticides. The work involves the assessment of claims from some Member States that if some pesticides / herbicides are not approved for use there could be problems for plant health. EFSA SO described some problems encountered during the work, due to differences in the data made available from different Member States. The Panel Chair reminded the EFSA PLH Panel that for pesticide risk assessments, it is the EFSA Pesticide Unit that does the risk assessment together with MSs, not the Panel on Pesticides residues so it is a very different system compared to plant health paneò. The ALPHA Team Leader added that this WG is likely to be the start of a routine activity (various similar dossiers are in the pipeline), and guidance on the topic might be needed. He also added that it might be worthwhile to invite colleagues from the EFSA Pesticide Unit to make a presentation at the next EFSA PLH plenary meeting.

The EFSA PLH Panel and members of the PLH team are also involved in a project on bee health. The related Opinion will be sent to the EFSA PLH Panel for commenting and endorsement, before being adopted by the EFSA AHAW Panel. This is a subgroup of the overarching Must-bee project (on multiple stressors on bees, with deadline in 2018) of the EFSA Scientific Committee.

7.5. Presentation and discussion of the EFSA Prometheus project by AMU Unit

An horizontal EFSA project “Prometheus” on how to deal with evidence in risk assessment was presented. The objectives and deliverables of the project were presented. The deliverable 1 (on principles and process for dealing with data and evidence) has already been published in June 2015, with involvement of the Alpha Unit and PLH Panel endorsement of the EFSA Scientific Committee. The aim is to further develop and improve the consistency, transparency and openness with which EFSA deals with data and evidence, a key issue across the EFSA Scientific Panels.

Relevance, reliability and weight of evidence were briefly mentioned, as well as the use of expert judgment. Impartiality, openness and transparency (clarity and reproducibility), excellence (methodological quality), and responsiveness are the main principles that should be followed when dealing with evidence. Methods to achieve these objectives include careful planning, documentation and reporting, and the use of a fit-for-purpose, tailored methodology. Publishing the flowchart with the criteria for inclusion/exclusion, as well as the list of included/excluded studies, is a way to ensure data accessibility, openness and transparency.

The 2^{nd} deliverable (on the methodological needs of EFSA) is due in October 2016. A volunteer WG memberis still required from the EFSA PLH Panel. The main objective of this deliverable is to identify methodological needs to foster the principles for dealing with evidence. A preliminary list of needs has been compiled by the AMU unit in consultation with all relevant EFSA parties and the Prometheus WG. This list will be screened by the EFSA Panels and Units, including the EFSA PLH Panel and Team, with an online survey to be answered during the January 2016 EFSA PLH Plenary meeting. It would be helpful if the survey respondents could prepare themselves by reading beforehand the deliverable 1 of the project. The individual replies will remain anonymous. A commonly agreed reply from each Panel/Unit will be needed (at the March 2016 EFSA PLH Panel Plenary meeting).

The Panel Chair thanked AMU for the presentation and asked whether the preliminary list has already been made available to the Panels. This list will be provided when the Panels receive the questionnaire. The Panel Chair reminded the EFSA PLH Panel that the project is likely to be useful in order to make it possible to obtain new tools from EFSA. It was mentioned that the Prometheus project is now becoming less theoretical. The reason for not yet having an EFSA PLH Panel representative in the project is that the previous EFSA PLH Panel Member who was previously involved in the Prometheus WG, could not carry on with the activities after having left the panel. His contribution has been very valuable and instrumental in proposing the project to become cross-cutting, involving all the EFSA Panels.

7.6. Report/feedback from EFSA

During the week of the -22 to 26 August 2016 EFSA will host the Annual Conference of the International Pest Risk Research Group (previously called Risk Mapping Research Group) expecting up to 100 participants. This meeting is open for participation to the EFSA PLH Panel members. Website with information about this group was indicated. More information is coming.

ALPHA Team Leader also reminded the EFSA PLH Panel about the joint EPPO-EFSA workshop on modelling, which will also be hosted by EFSA in the first half of December 2016 (probably 13-15 December 2016).

7.7. European Commission

EC Representative thanked the EFSA PLH Panel for welcoming her, for the opportunity to get to know how the EFSA PLH Panel works and for the information exchanged during the meeting.

7.4. EPPO

EPPO Representative thanked the EFSA PLH Panel for the opportunity to attend the plenary meeting as observer. She looked forward to further collaboration and fruitful interaction.

8. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

It was discussed whether there would be an interest of the Panel to ask the network of plant health clinics in the USA about information on other plant pests in addition to the data already obtained about *Diaporthe vaccinii*. This will depend on the need of the other WGs working on *Radopholus similis* and *Eotetranychus lewisi*.

In addition, EFSA has been invited to present the EFSA PLH Panel Opinion on soil and growing media at an EPPO working group dealing with risk assessment of soil-related plant pests. two ALPHA SOs will travel to Budapest for an EPPO-organized workshop on the regulation of biological control agents, where they will present the recently published EFSA PLH Opinion on the risk posed to plant health in the EU by the voluntary release of *Trichilogaster acaciaelongifoliae* as a biological control agent of the invasive alien plant *Acacia longifolia* in Portugal, as well as the related EFSA PLH Panel statement, focusing also on the possible links to the EFSA PLH Panel guidance on environmental risk assessment

It was mentioned that, following a meeting hosted by FERA trying to foster collaboration in plant health among researchers, economists and policymakers, the related publications are now starting to appear in the journal Food Security.

The EFSA PLH Panel was informed that, of a new EU-funded project entitled Pest Organisms Threatening Europe (POnTE). This started on 1st November 2015 with duration of over 4 years, iaiming to respond among other things to the outbreak of *Xylella fastidiosa* in Europe.

9. Any other business

The next PLH Plenary meeting will be held in EFSA (Parma) on 27th (9.00-18.00) and 28th January 2016 (9.00-13.00). The PLH Panel meetings calendar was confirmed (at EFSA in Parma, unless otherwise specified): 16-17 March 2016; 25-26 May 2016 (open Plenary in Bruxelles); 29-30 June 2016; 28-29 September 2016; 23-24 November 2016.