Network on BSE-TSE
Minutes of the 11th meeting

Held on 5-6 October 2016, Parma

(Agreed on 2 December 2016)

Participants

- **Network Representatives of Member States (including EFTA Countries):**

Country	Name[1]
Austria	Hermann Schildorfer
Belgium	Stefan Roels
Bulgaria	Ilian Boykovski
Croatia	Branko Sostaric, Karmen Branovic
Cyprus	Penelope Papasavva-Stylianou
Czech Republic	Pavel Vodrážka
Denmark	Tim Jensen
Estonia	Olga Piirik
Finland	Tapani Lyytikäinen
France	Thomas Maignien
Greece	Aikaterini Karanikolaou
Hungary	Eszter Kanyorszky
Ireland	Justin Byrne
Italy	Giuseppe Ru, Romolo Nonno
Luxembourg	Stefan Roels
Netherlands	Jolanda van der Vaart
Poland	Miroslaw Polak
Romania	Theodora Vasile
Slovakia	Martin Mojzis
Slovenia	Polona Juntes
Spain	Soledad Collado Cortés
Sweden	Maria Nöremark
United Kingdom	Mark Bond
Norway	Michael Tranulis
Switzerland	Peter Braam

- **Hearing Experts**

Gordon Mitchell (OIE reference laboratory for CWD and scrapie, Canadian Food Inspection Agency – web-conference, for points 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)

1 Indicate first full name and them surname (John Smith) all throughout the document

- **European Commission:**

Lucie Carrouée (6 October), Kris De Smet (5 October), Ankica Labrović (DG SANTE)

- **EFSA:**

BIOCONTAM Unit (Ernesto Liebana-Criado – chair; Angel Ortiz-Pelaez, Pietro Stella, Yves Van Der Stede – secretariat)

DATA Unit (Mario Monguidi – secretariat, for item 6.3)

- **Others:**

Morgane Dominguez (OIE)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

Apologies were received from Anne Buschmann and Martin Groschup (Germany), Edvins Olsevskis (Latvia), Petras Maciulskis and Kristina Stakyte (Lithuania), Maria Jose Pinto (Portugal), and Sigrún Bjarnadóttir (Iceland).

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Review the minutes of the 10th meeting of the Network on BSE-TSE held on 7-8 October 2015, Parma.

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 4 December 2015 and published on the EFSA website on 8 December 2015.

4. Topics for discussion

4.1. Round-the-table on activities of Network Members in the TSE field since the last meeting

The Members of the Network provided an update on TSE-related scientific activities, including risk assessments and other initiatives, which had been undertaken in their respective countries since the previous Network meeting. Belgium informed the Network that they are working on the optimisation of criteria of cases identified as suspected cases in the slaughterhouses, because this is not always clear and easy. Croatia was interested in the future outcome of this optimisation. Croatia indicated interest and support to the development of surveillance programmes for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), especially in countries with significant populations of cervids. France and the United Kingdom updated the Network on recently published risk assessments from their countries. Italy updated the Network on the progress in the coverage of sheep flocks in the breeding programme for genetic resistance to classical scrapie, and on ongoing TSE-related research projects. Spain indicated that the evolution of the distribution of genotypes in sheep as a result of the implementation of the Spanish breeding programme is being analysed.

4.2. TSE activities of EFSA BIOHAZ Panel and BIOCONTAM Unit

The EFSA BIOCONTAM Secretariat presented the EFSA activities on TSE completed and ongoing since the 2015 Network meeting. Completed activities include four Scientific Reports of EFSA (on the evaluation of applications of Member States for the negligible risk of classical scrapie: link Denmark, link Finland, link Sweden; on the revision of the BSE monitoring programme regime in Croatia - link), and one section of a Scientific Opinion of the EFSA Scientific Committee (on a risk profile related to production and consumption of insects as food and feed – link). Ongoing activities of the BIOHAZ Panel include three mandates for Scientific Opinions: a) on the genetic resistance to TSE in goats; b) on CWD in cervids; c) on BSE cases born after the reinforced ban (BARB). In addition, a procurement activity on an experimental study on the infectivity of sheep embryos is ongoing and will be completed in 2017. Finally, from 2016 onwards EFSA will take over from the European Commission (EC) the production of the European Union (EU) TSE annual report (see items 6.2 and 6.3).

4.3. CWD in Norway: update on the epidemiological situation and risk assessment activities

Dr. Michael Tranulis, representative of Norway, updated the Network on the epidemiological situation of CWD in Norway. At the time of the Network meeting, five cases of disease in reindeer and moose have been so far detected in Norway since April 2016. Uncertainty still surrounds the pathway through which the disease arrived or appeared in Norway. Dr. Tranulis gave an overview on the past and future plans for surveillance in Norway, which has the target to test 15,000 cervids from hunted animals, road kills, and animals found dead, during the current hunting season. He reported the main conclusions of a recent risk assessment by the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety (VKM), which considered the zoonotic risk of CWD to be very low.

4.4. CWD surveillance plan in Sweden

Dr. Maria Nöremark, representative of Sweden, informed the Network on the actions taken in Sweden following to the first European cases of CWD detected in Norway. She indicated that passive surveillance has started in Sweden, and outlined the challenges linked to monitoring, detection and control of the disease, due to the conditions under which domesticated, semi-domesticated and wild cervids live in Sweden, and to the socio-economic impact of the possible measures taken. Proposals for enhanced passive and active CWD surveillance are currently being discussed among involved stakeholders in the country.

4.5. CWD in North America: epidemiological situation and control strategy

Dr. Gordon Mitchell, hearing expert, Head of the OIE reference laboratory for CWD and scrapie at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, updated the Network on the epidemiological situation of CWD in the USA and Canada. He described the distribution of the disease and its clustering in specific areas, and the high prevalence within the affected areas. He outlined the strategies taken to control CWD in the last 15 years, based on mandatory reporting, testing, movement control, quarantine, depopulation, increase of farmers' and hunters' awareness, etc. He highlighted the challenges in controlling this

disease, including the characteristics of the disease and of its hosts, and its transmissibility. Dr. Mitchell also summarised the current CWD-related fields of scientific research on CWD in Canada, including preclinical tests, environmental monitoring, improved by-products treatment methods, development of vaccines, improved strain typing, wildlife management and control strategies, and factors controlling the species barrier between cervids and other species.

4.6. Feedback on an FSA Workshop on future TSE research priorities

Dr. Mark Bond, representative of the United Kingdom (UK), reported to the Network the main points discussed during a workshop on TSE research priorities, held by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on 16 September 2016. At the workshop, presentations were provided by representatives of the Animal and Plant Health Agency, EFSA and The National Prion Clinic. During the workshop different points of view were presented, and led to the definition of five main research priorities: i) the role of feed and analyses on feed; ii) Atypical BSE infectivity in bovine tissues; iii) the zoonotic potential of scrapie and modelling of TSE infectivity in small ruminant tissues; iv) characteristics and control of CWD; and v) improved understanding of human TSE.

6 October 2015

5. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants for the second day of the meeting.

6. Topics for discussion

6.1. BSE BARB cases: survey results and discussion

The EFSA BIOCONTAM Secretariat presented in detail the mandate recently received from the EC for a Scientific Opinion on BSE BARB cases. The EC asked EFSA to assess what is the most likely origin of EU BARB cases and indicated whether contaminated feedingstuff can be excluded as origin of these cases. Following to the request from the EC to contact the concerned MS, EFSA circulated a questionnaire to all MS reporting detection of BARB cases, aimed at collecting information on investigations made by the national competent authorities on the possible origin of those cases. The results of the questionnaire were summarised to the Network, and will be used to inform the current risk assessment being performed by EFSA.

6.2. EU TSE annual report 2015: preliminary results

In 2016, for the first time, EFSA, as per recent amendments in Regulation (EC) No 999/2001, is producing the EU annual report on data of the surveillance of ruminants for the presence of TSE, in relation to year 2015. The EFSA BIOCONTAM Secretariat presented the preliminary results of the analyses performed on the data collected through the testing of cattle, sheep, goats, cervids and species other than ruminants in the EU in 2015. The report is going to be published before the end of 2016.

6.3. EU TSE data reporting: future changes

The EFSA BIOCONTAM Secretariat explained to the Network the process that will lead to the transfer of the collection of MS data on TSE surveillance from the EC to EFSA as of 1 January 2018. In preparation of this, and in order to improve the data collection, EFSA considered it appropriate to modify the existing system. An EFSA Working Group has been set up to define new data requirements, based on the problems reported for the current system and on the subsequent limitations in the analysis of the data. A meeting and specific training with all MS contact points responsible for TSE data collection at national level and submission to the EC database will be organised by EFSA in 2017.

6.4. Results of a survey on scrapie control measures and surveillance in small ruminants in EU MSs

Ankica Labrović, representative of the European Commission (DG SANTE - F), presented to the Network the results of a questionnaire circulated in April 2016 to all MS to collect information on scrapie surveillance and control measures in small ruminants. Twenty-six MS participated in the survey, which was aimed at assessing and prioritising the need for future follow-up missions of the EC to MS to verify the implementation of TSE-related legislation on these measures.

6.5. Update on the activities of the OIE in the TSE field

Dr. Morgane Dominguez, representative of OIE, updated the Network on the recent TSE-related activities carried out at the OIE, and future ones. In 2016 the OIE Terrestrial Manual was updated in relation to the tests suitable to differentiate atypical *vs* classical BSE. Further revision of the BSE chapter of the OIE Terrestrial Code is being considered, and relate to the definition of classical and atypical BSE and to the consequences of the occurrence of a case of classical BSE in a country and the impact on its BSE risk status. The OIE scoring system of BSE surveillance is also being revised. Dr. Dominguez also updated the Network on the OIE BSE risk status of countries worldwide, and on the cases of TSE disease in ruminants reported to the OIE. Finally, she indicated that the possible future inclusion of CWD among OIE listed diseases is under consideration, together with a possible revision of the scrapie chapter of the OIE Code.

6.6. Update on the activities of the European Commission in the TSE field

Dr. Lucie Carrouée, representative of the European Commission (DG SANTE – G), updated the Network on the recent TSE-related risk management activities in the European Commission, in relation to: i) feed ban (i.e. revision of the feed-ban for non-ruminants, export of processed animal proteins from the EU, use of insect processed proteins and of starfish meal); ii) specified risk material (SRM) (i.e. adaptation of SRM list in small ruminants and rules concerning the implementation of SRM removal); iii) scrapie-related movement measures; iv) CWD–related measures (i.e. adoption of safeguard measures on live cervids); v) BSE risk status classification (i.e. adaptation of the risk status for Romania and France); and vi) BSE surveillance (i.e. modified surveillance programme for Croatia). The European Commission is planning to send EFSA new mandates in relation to an update of the EFSA

2011 opinion on a quantitative risk assessment of the BSE risk in processed animal proteins, and in relation to the TSE risk of ruminant gelatine in feed.

6.7. Round-the-table discussion on the EFSA Scientific Network on BSE-TSE

Network members were invited to provide suggestions for improvement of the functioning of the Network and for possible topics for future discussion in the Network. The United Kingdom expressed satisfaction with this year's meeting, and indicated to provide a written update on the recent risk assessments and research results originated in the United Kingdom following the meeting. The EFSA BIOCONTAM Secretariat invited all MS to share such type of information with EFSA and the other Network members anytime during the year. Sweden also appreciated the opportunity to meet and discuss topics of current relevance, and supported the future changes for data reporting and maintenance of the Network. This was confirmed by other participants. Comments were also requested in follow-up to the meeting.

7. Any Other Business

No additional topics were discussed.

8. Closure of the meeting

The discussions held during the meeting are going to be summarised in meeting minutes and in an annual report, which would be circulated by EFSA Secretariat in due course to all participants for comments and agreement.

The next meeting of the EFSA Network on BSE-TSE will be organised during the third quarter of 2016.

The Chair thanked all speakers for their presentations, and all participants for attending the meeting and for their active participation in the discussions, and closed the meeting.