

## Network on Risk Assessment in Plant Health

### Minutes of the 11th meeting

Held on 14-15 December 2016, Parma  
(Agreed on 07 December 2017)

#### Participants

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

Country	Name
Austria	Sylvia BLUEMEL
Belgium	Kristien BRAEKEN
Bulgaria	Irena BOGOEVA
Cyprus	Anthemis MELIFRONIDOU
Croatia	Dario IVIC
Czech Republic	Vaclav STESJSKAL
Denmark	Anne Christine HELMS
Finland	Salla HANNUNEN
France	Nathalie FRANQUET
Germany	Jens-Georg UNGER
Greece	Athanassios LANGKOURANIS
Hungary	Géza GABRIEL
Ireland	Oliver MCEVOY
Latvia	Līga GRIŠĀNE
Lithuania	Silvija PUPELIENE
Malta	Andre SCIBERRAS
Netherlands	Dirk-Jan VAN DER GAAG
Poland	Tomasz KALUSKI
Portugal	Ana Paula CRUZ DE CARVALHO
Slovakia	Martin PASTIRCAK
Slovenia	Anita BENKO BELOGLAVEC
Spain	Gerardo SÁNCHEZ PEÑA
Sweden	Kristof CAPIEAU
United Kingdom	Richard MCINTOSH
Norway	Micael WENDELL

- **Observers**

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

- Martin WARD

- **European Commission (DG SANTE):**

- Panagiota MYLONA, Stephan LANGRELL

- **Uppsala University Sweden**

- Niklas BJORKLUND and Johanna BOBERG

- **EFSA:**

- **ALPHA Unit:** Filippo BERGERETTI, Ciro GARDI, Gabor HOLLO, Ioannis KOUFAKIS, Maria Rosaria MANNINO, Marco PAUTASSO, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Sybren VOS (Chair), Gabrielle ZANCANARO

- **AMU Unit:** José CORTINAS ABRAHANTES

- **DATA Unit:** Jane RICHARDSON

## **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed the participants.

Apologies were received from Mart Kinkar (Estonia) Jón GUÐMUNDSSON (Iceland), Bruno Caio FARAGLIA (Italy), Monique FABER-DECKER (Luxembourg), and Aura DOROFTEI Romania, as well as from Alfred KLAY Switzerland (observer) and from Stephen PARNELL (hearing expert).

## **2. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## **3. Declarations on 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 Declaration of Interest filled in by the Network members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest 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.

## **4. Agreement of the minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Network were adopted on the 07<sup>th</sup> of December 2017.

## Topics for discussion

### 5. Surveillance

#### 5.1 Surveillance in plant health

EFSA delivered a presentation on the surveillance in Plant Health. First the relevant International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) were listed with regards to the definitions and general guidance they provide on surveillance and related topics such as sampling, diagnostics and pest reporting. Then the minimum data and information requirements for performing surveillance were described. The need to harmonise the surveys and related reporting across the EU was stressed as in the context of the new Plant Health Regulation in relation to the quarantine organism, the Member states should perform yearly surveillance and should prepare contingency plans for the priority pests.

In other fields within the remit of EFSA, such as Animal Health and Welfare and Zoonosis, European wide frameworks for surveillance have been developed and could be observed when developing the EU surveillance capacity in Plant Health.

#### 5.2. EFSA's role in *Echinococcus multilocularis* MS surveys (EFSA ALPHA)

The EFSA experience in an example related to animal health was presented. Since 2012, EFSA works at assisting Member States to demonstrate absence of the parasite *Echinococcus multilocularis* from their territory, while providing scientific advice to the European Commission to ensure continuous protection of Finland, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom which claim to be free from the disease.

The general surveillance framework developed by EFSA for *E. multilocularis* was presented showing the tools for calculating the sample sizes for demonstrating pest freedom, the use of the EFSA Data Collection Framework for ensuring that the survey data are collected stored in a harmonised manner, the reporting tools "micro strategy reports" available for the MSs, and if needed the analyses of the MSs survey results on specific request of the European Commission.

#### 5.3. Tools available at EFSA for sampling (EFSA-AMU):

The different EFSA sampling tools developed at EFSA were presented and demonstrated through the online applications:

##### 5.3.1. Surveys for demonstrating pest freedom (RIBESS+)

##### eg. *Echinococcus multilocularis*

To support the MSs in this activity, a model (RiBESS+ tool) was developed with the purpose of calculating the sensitivity of a surveillance system, i.e. the probability that qualifies a statement on the presence/absence of a given disease (Cameron and Baldock, 1998). The same model allowed the estimation of the sample size needed to achieve the required sensitivity.

### **5.3.2. Surveys for measuring pest prevalence (SAMPELATOR)**

#### **eg. Norovirus in oysters**

This first tool was further developed and enhanced and at present 2 web applications are available to the public: the RiBESS+ and the SAMPELATOR. The latter was developed for measuring pest prevalence in areas where the organisms under scrutiny have been already found.

Both the applications are able to calculate sample size for different designs and paradigms including targeted and not targeted type of surveys, as well as to provide the user with statistical information on how to manage and implement different types of survey designs.

### **5.3.3. Data collection framework (EFSA-DATA)**

The amount of information needed for the implementation of this surveillance system is significantly higher if compared to a simple random sampling. Therefore, in order to further support the MSs and to enhance harmonisation of their data, the EFSA Standard Sample Description (SSD) guideline has been applied for reporting the data originating from the surveys on *Echinococcus multilocularis*. The data reported according to the SSD can be centralised via the EFSA Data Collection Framework (DCF), a secure portal accessible by most of the common web browsers through which data providers, can submit their files. By providing automatic feedback on errors in structure and content and confirmation of successful submissions, the system allows users to check the validation status of transmissions. The use of Standard Sample Description via DCF harmonises the reporting process ensuring that all fundamental data are provided in a comprehensive and standardised way.

The five MSs concerned by the disease successfully used the DCF, the RiBESS+ and the SAMPELATOR tools providing statistically sound information for proper surveillance and monitoring activities.

The surveillance dashboard was presented as a flexible reporting tool that is prepared for automated generation of reports and that enables a harmonised pest survey reporting across EU MSs.

Although originally designed for the collection of data related to the *E. multilocularis*, this Surveillance Data Collection Process can be tailored to any population and any pathogen, including plant pests.

### **5.3.4. General discussion**

In the general discussion the Croatian representative highlighted the need to have a guidance on sampling methods for each priority pest. He also raised the issue of lack of standardised detection methods and laboratory analyses. The MS recognises the need for receiving a periodical report at EU level of the pest monitoring carried out in the other EU MSs. The German representative agreed that considering the important economical efforts at the EU level for co-financing the MS surveys, in the EU more comprehensive systems are needed to make

monitoring results comparable from one MS to another. The European Commission indicated that in this context it is essential to rationalise the surveys in the EU and to be able to assess the freedom from certain pests based on statistically sound surveillance methods. In this context, the European Commission representative indicated that the tools presented for sample size calculation could be adapted to plant health.

## **6. Items suggested by Member States**

### **6.1. UK's approach to risk targeted surveillance**

The UK surveillance system was presented in terms of the compliance with legal obligations, the most effective use of limited resources, the targeting at highest risk areas/sites, the need for detecting new and emerging risks as well as the early detection of known threats and the collaboration with stakeholders.

The main features of the quarantine surveillance programme were presented stressing on the pathway driven approach and its responsiveness to changing risks. The UK organisation was presented describing how the overall targets are agreed between the Ministry (DEFRA) and delivery body (APHA).

### **6.2. Overview of the pest surveillance in plant health in Slovenia**

The Slovenia representative provided an overview of the pest surveillance in plant health in Slovenia. After presenting the role of the NPPO in the general surveillance activity, the different objectives of specific surveys were listed and the Slovenian national and regional institutions involved in the organisation of the pest surveillance were presented.

The tools used for planning the surveys and reporting the locations where samples were taken were described. A Grid approach is used to plan some surveys indicating for each grid the level of risk, the presence and acreage of host plants and the number of samples calculated. The database PHYTO SURVEY used in Slovenia to manage the survey data was presented and the list of pests of the national survey plan was shown.

### **7.1. Update on the crisis preparedness exercise (EFSA ALPHA)**

Since 2012, EFSA provided five modules of training on crisis preparedness in the food chain with the objective of improving the interactions between EFSA, Member states, European Commission and sister agencies to address urgent issues in the field of food and feed. This activity has been enlarged to plant health issues with the objective of exchanging experiences, promoting scientific cooperation and developing capacity on methodology for data collection and reporting during outbreak investigations. The Plant Health Crisis Exercise, scheduled on the beginning of 2017, will gather participants from Member states of the same region

(southern Europe), representatives of the European Commission, EPPO and other stakeholders. The Member States fully supported this initiative.

## **7.2. Presentation and discussions on recently published EFSA PLH opinions**

### **7.2.1. Risk assessments using the quantitative methodology**

In the context of the development at EFSA of a new methodology for quantitative risk assessment, EFSA presented the ongoing risk assessments using the quantitative methodology (i.e. Flavescence Dorée Phytoplasma; *Ditylenchus destructor*; *Ceratocystis platani*; *Cryphonectria parasitica*).

Overall, the MSs supported the approach and indicated that it is essential to provide fit for purpose assessments and that it might not be needed to perform a full quantitative assessment for all pests but only for the critical ones. During the discussions many MSs highlighted the importance of developing a method for assessing the high risk commodities.

### **7.2.2. EFSA activities on *Xylella fastidiosa***

EFSA provided an overview of its current activities related to *Xylella fastidiosa*.

After a rapid update on the European situation, the three recent outputs were presented in response to a series of statements to which the European Commission has been recently confronted:

- in particular for the output 1 regarding the factors affecting symptom expression and spread of *X. fastidiosa*; the aetiology of the CoDiRO disease; the host plant removal as an option for containment or eradication; and the secondary effects of pesticides;
- for output 2, regarding possible treatment to cure *X. fastidiosa* diseased plants;
- for output 3, regarding the genetic diversity of *X. fastidiosa* subsp. *pauca* in Apulia.

The joint workshop on *Xylella fastidiosa* co-organised by EFSA/EUPHRESKO/PONTE/XF-ACTORS to be held in November 2017 was announced.

## **7.3. Update on EFSA PLH activities**

EFSA provided an update on the EFSA Plant Health activities since the last Network meeting. In particular regarding the ongoing and expected mandates in the near future: EFSA is requested to deliver 133 pest categorisations to assist and support the risk managers in the update of the Annexes of the 2000/29/EC in view of the new plant health legislation; EFSA is requested to assist the EU risk managers providing a monthly report on the horizon scanning including both the media

monitoring and the screening of the scientific literature. An update was provided on the healthy bee opinion developed in collaboration between animal health and plant health in EFSA to contribute to a holistic multi-stressors assessment for bees in the EU. The Network members discussed the importance of the holistic approach also addressing the pesticides exposure of the bees.

## **8. Presentation and discussion on the Terms of Reference of the EFSA Network on risk assessment in Plant Health**

A brief overview of the EFSA PLH Network activities in the period 2013-2016 was provided.

The new terms of reference of the EFSA Scientific Network for risk assessment in plant health for the term 2017-2020 were discussed and proposed for agreement among the Network members. The specific objectives of the Network are to facilitate harmonisation of risk assessment practices and methodologies, to enhance exchange of information and data between EFSA and Member States, as well as to achieve synergies in pest risk assessment activities. In this revised mandate of the Network, more focus is given to the data sharing activity in view of the future quantitative risk assessments. The member states agreed on the revised mandate.

In a general discussion the Member States encouraged EFSA in the planning and organisation of the Network meetings. However, they indicated that too much information was provided during the meeting and this might also reflect how much the research in plant health has increased during the last years. The participants identified the development of a commodity risk assessment approach in particular for high risk plants for planting as an important topic for EFSA to work on in the near future.

## **9. Miscellaneous/ Any other business**

EFSA suggested scheduling the 12th PLH Network meeting in Parma around October 2017. The exact dates will be communicated later.

The forthcoming workshops and EFSA trainings open to Network Members were presented.

## **10. Closure of the meeting**

The Chair closed the meeting.