

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 103rd Plenary meeting

Held on 7-8 March 2017, Parma, (Italy)

(Agreed on 17 March 2017)

Participants

■ Panel Members

Anette Bøtner, Dominique Bicot, Andy Butterworth, Paolo Calistri, Klaus Depner, Sandra Edwards, Bruno Garin-Bastuji, Margaret Good, Christian Gortazar Schmidt, Virginie Michel, Miguel Angel Miranda, Simon More, Mohan Raj, Søren Saxmose Nielsen, Liisa Sihvonen, Hans Spoolder, Jan Arend Stegeman, Antonio Velarde Calvo, Preben Willeberg, Christoph Winckler

■ EFSA

ALPHA UNIT: Beatriz Beltran-Beck, Alessandro Broglia, Denise Candiani, Ewelina Czwieneczek, Sofie Dhollander, Chiara Fabris, Andrey Gogin, Lisa Kohnle, Nikolaus Kriz, Joana Morgado, Frank Verdonck, Gabriele Zancanaro

BIOHAZ UNIT: Teresa Da Silva Felicio, Ernesto Liebana Criado

AMU UNIT: José Cortinas Abrahantes, Jane Richardson, Didier Verloo

■ EUROPEAN COMMISSION (via teleconference)

Maria Pittman, Stanislav Ralchev, Vasco Antunes (DG SANTE)

■ MS REPRESENTATIVES (Mandate on slaughter of pregnant animals)
(via teleconference)

Birte Broberg (DK), Simon Schreiber (DE), Richard Donker (NL), Lotta Nordensten (SW)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed the meeting participants. Apologies were received by Hans-Hermann Thulke.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests (DoI), EFSA screened the Annual (ADoI) and Specific Declaration of Interest (SDoI) provided by the Panel Members for the present meeting. The Panel members were asked to confirm that no further interests had to be declared in the context of the agenda of the meeting. No conflict of interest has been identified.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 102nd Plenary meeting held on 17 and 18 January 2017, Parma (Italy)

The minutes of the previous plenary meeting have been adopted by written procedure.

5. New Mandates

- **Request for scientific and technical assistance on avian influenza**

The request on scientific and technical assistance was presented. Data collection to perform an epidemiological analysis of the current outbreaks has to be done. In a few MSs, both HPAI and LPAI are circulating. Therefore, both virus types should be covered. The data collection should be targeted to the most relevant parameters since the priority of several MSs is still to manage ongoing outbreaks. Describing the effects of prevention and control measures applied in one or more MSs should aim at informing risk managers on lessons learnt and hence be better prepared for future outbreaks. Monitoring the AI evolution in other continents is another element to be prepared for viruses that might arrive in the EU. The recent mutation of LPAI H7N9 into a HPAI virus has to be followed up, in particular given the zoonotic potential of the virus. EFSA is requested to take the lead in generating four scientific reports, in close collaboration with the EURL, ECDC and affected Member States. Some ideas were discussed to facilitate involvement of MS representatives in writing case reports and/or epidemiological investigations and to recognise expert involvement by using the EFSA Journal authorship rules. The first scientific report should be provided in Sep 2017 and, together with the scientific opinion, provide a scientific basis for risk managers to prepare for the next wild bird migration season.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption

There were no scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption

7. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

- **Scientific opinion on animal welfare aspects in respect of the slaughter or killing of pregnant livestock animals (cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses) (EFSA-Q-2015-00477)**

The scientific opinion was discussed in depth with Panel members and representatives of the four MSs (SE, DE, NL, DK) who have requested the mandate to EFSA.

It was agreed to use the spelling “fetus” as the word stems from Latin, and not “foetus”.

For ToR1 the overall prevalence was presented and the Panel agreed the chapter is clear. The need to better specify that the “prevalence has been elicited by expert opinion” was highlighted. The use of the term “uncertainty interval” for the prevalence needs to be clarified. The WG is asked to propose whether it is a range or an interval and why this is uncertainty and not e.g. a probability interval. A glossary of uncertainty related terminology should be produced.

For ToR2, the Panel agreed the reasons for slaughtering pregnant animals are clearly presented. For the recommendations on how to reduce the number of slaughtered pregnant animals, it was agreed that it is to be made clearer to whom these recommendations are addressed. It was discussed whether the decision flow chart for determination of pregnancy status before sending the animals to slaughter was helpful or unnecessarily complicated. The consensus was to retain but to review the content of the diagram.

For ToR3, the final outcomes were agreed. The requestors of the mandate made some suggestions for clarification: i) to summarise the main message or key finding at the end of the section (SE), ii) to make the resulting conclusions more explicit i.e. to state clearly that the possibility that fetuses can't feel pain has a likelihood of 66-99% and that the possibility that they can feel pain has a likelihood of 1-33% (NL), iii) to clarify and consistently use the same terminology for “perception”, “cortical perception”, “conscious perception”, “capacity for sentience” (DE); iv) as above, to clarify the outcomes of ToR3 in terms of probability and uncertainty. The Panel agreed with the suggestions from the requestors.

For ToR4, a discussion was held whether the second set of scenarios – that would operate under the assumption that fetuses might feel pain – should be included or not in the opinion. It was agreed to keep it but to stress that the situation underlying the first set of scenarios is much more likely (and to stress this also in the abstract). It was agreed to avoid using the word “precautionary principle”. The representative from DE suggested that some more discussion on the currently used methods e.g. non-penetrative captive bolts and recommendations on more research for methods of stunning and killing of neonates should be included.

For ToR5, the gestational stages categorised based on physical/morphological features of the fetus were agreed but it was suggested to add information on the level of uncertainty when using them. It appears that uncertainty is high because the literature used is old, did not take modern breeds/selection lines into account and mostly lacks sensitivity/specificity testing.

Finally, conclusions and recommendations were screened and some suggestions made regarding e.g. the addressees of the recommendations (ToR2), the types of additional research needed for ToR3 (fetal learning etc.), to stress again that likelihood for the first set of scenarios is higher (ToR4), to make sure in the second part of the recommendations for ToR4 the associated food safety risks are presented.

The abstract and summary were not discussed in detail, but two general recommendations for these were i) they should report on the possibility that fetuses do feel pain and that they do not (ToR3) and ii) they should refer to two set of scenarios (ToR 4) but emphasise the likelihood of the first set is higher.

Finally, the Panel and the Requestors of the mandate were informed that the opinion will be tabled for potential adoption during the next Plenary meeting (4th and 5th April 2017). After the adoption the Requestors can have a confidential draft version of the opinion, though the final edited version will be available in the second half of May after the formal proof reading process with the EFSA online journal editor (Wiley). The opinion will be published on the EFSA website by the end of May 17, together with a web-story produced by the EFSA Communication department.

- **Scientific Opinion on the methodology regarding the listing and categorisation of animal diseases in the framework of the new Animal Health Law (EFSA-Q-2015-00713; EFSA-Q-2016-00156)**

The draft scientific opinion on the methodology used for the assessment on the AHL mandate was presented and discussed. No major comments were addressed to the body text, the discussion mainly focused on the conclusions. The major agreement was to skip the conclusion bullets stating that the methodology used entails a level of subjectivity deriving from the expert judgement and that the results may change when a different expert panel would be used. The AHAW Panel considers there is no need to add such a 'disclaimer' in the conclusions: this methodology was chosen since as it is the best fit for purpose answering to this complex mandate: requesting the judgement on legislative text as such, and all possible elements to guarantee the robustness and transparency of the process were applied (selection of disease scientists, reviewers, reasoning, etc.).

Due to the nature of this scientific opinion, a description of the assessment methodology to be used across all 'disease-specific scientific opinions', it was agreed not to include any recommendation.

- **Scientific opinion on entry routes into the EU of vector borne diseases (EFSA-Q-2014-00187)**

The draft scientific opinion was presented for thorough discussion with the Panel. Solutions to comments on the draft opinion from the Panel were discussed and agreed upon. For the pathways leading to the potential entry of WNV, it was agreed to include only imported birds as horses are dead-end hosts, and it had been previously already agreed that wildlife would be excluded, as it is impossible to be quantified. Also for the imported birds, it was agreed to exclude the anatidae because the level of viraemia is considered to be too low for the vectors to become infected through bites and further transmit the virus.

It was agreed that the section 'Prevention and Control' in the map journals would further be split up in smaller sections: 'Diagnosis', 'Vaccination', 'Vector control', 'Treatments' and 'Legislation'. It was also agreed that the accompanying text to the geographic distribution maps should remain generic, and only list the continents in which the virus has been detected.

The Panel has further worked on the map journals and provided comments which will be taken into account for the next draft version which will be presented for adoption. It was agreed that the draft opinion and the text for the map journals will be sent for language reviewing. The editorial improvements of the map journals will still continue after the adoption until its publication.

8. Feedback from the ad-hoc Working Groups of the AHAW Panel

- **Scientific Opinions on the listing and categorisation of animal diseases in the framework of the new Animal Health Law (EFSA-Q-2015-00713; EFSA-Q-2016-00156)**

An overview of the project was provided to the Panel, indicating the current status and further planning for each disease that has to be assessed. At the April Plenary, the collective judgement is foreseen for Borna disease and bovine TB, and finalisation of the collective judgement for Salmonella and Mycoplasma. In May, the collective judgement is foreseen for bluetongue, but the timing will depend on the progress made by the BTW WG on grouping of the viruses.

- **Scientific opinion on Bluetongue (EFSA-Q-2016-00160)**

The next steps for the ToR 4 and 5 of the mandate on bluetongue were illustrated. The major assessment steps are: review and update previous EFSA opinions with a short description of existing serotypes in the EU and elsewhere, identifying the criteria for grouping BT serotypes, grouping the serotypes, revision/compilation of the draft factsheet, according to each of the identified groups of serotypes.

- **Scientific opinion on avian influenza (EFSA-Q-2015-00214; EFSA-Q-2016-00348)**

The Panel was updated on the progress made on the scientific opinion. In particular, the approach to assess avian influenza virus entry into the EU and poultry holdings via non-wild bird pathways was presented and agreed upon.

- **Scientific opinion concerning the use of low atmosphere pressure system (LAPS) for stunning poultry (EFSA-Q-2016-00327)**

An update was provided on the teleconference with the applicant where the details of the data submission were discussed. The AMU unit will review the submitted data and the performed analysis. The next action of the WG is to define the approach that will be used for step 2 of the risk assessment, as this is not specified by the Guidance document.

9. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

- **Request for scientific and technical assistance on Lumpy Skin Disease (EFSA-Q-2016-00542)**

Information received so far by the affected countries (plus Croatia) included data on

- Cattle population received from GR, BG, HR, AL, ME, RS, TR)
- Outbreak received from GR, BG, AL, FYROM, RS, ME
- Vaccination received from GR, BG, HR, AL, FYROM, RS, ME, TR
- Adverse effects of vaccination from HR

The first report on LSD is almost ready, and include

- Spatio-temporal analysis of LSD outbreaks vs. animal density, vaccination & temperatures
- Estimation of speed of propagation in TR
- Estimation of vaccination effectiveness in AL
- Adverse effects of vaccination
- Opportunity maps for vector survival
- Indications for survey on vector collection

Some comments have been provided by the EC and taken into account where scientifically relevant. The collaboration with international organisations will be continued through the GF-TADs platform (managed by EC/OIE) as the best and only tool to address the LSD cooperation and to avoid duplication.

Finally, it was requested by the EC about the possibility for EFSA to coordinate the production of a special issue on LSD to be published in Preventive Veterinary Medicine that could host scientific articles /contributions from LSD-affected countries along with expert contributions. This because there was an interest expressed by national experts since it could help the publication of relevant observations. A possible plan will be formulated and discussed with EC and national authorities.

- **Request for a scientific and technical assistance and a scientific opinion concerning the risk of survival, establishment and spread of *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal) in the EU (EFSA-Q-2016-00541)**

The Panel was informed about the approval and publication on EFSA's website of the EFSA scientific report "Scientific and technical assistance concerning the survival, establishment and spread of *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal) in the EU", that addresses the EC request for scientific and technical assistance (Art. 31). The Scientific report was presented to the Panel with special emphasis to the main outcomes of the project.

The Panel was informed that, on the basis of the outcome that the available scientific evidence allows to conclude that Bsal is associated with disease/mortality in individuals of some salamander species, EFSA will initiate its activities on part II of the mandate and generate the requested scientific opinion (Art. 29). The ToRs for the scientific opinion concerning the risk of survival, establishment and spread of *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal) in the EU will be discussed at the April AHAW Plenary meeting.

- **Request for a scientific and technical assistance on ASF (Article 31) (EFSA-Q- 2016-00152)**

Conclusions and recommendations stated in the first report have been presented to the Panel. The report will be published in March on the EFSA website. The Panel has also been informed on the timeline and activities in the context of on African swine fever, including activities foreseen on the analysis of collected data with participation of the Member States affected by ASF for the preparation of the second report.

- **Request for a scientific and technical assistance on water reuse (EFSA-Q-2016-00819)**

The Panel was informed about the recent arrival in EFSA of a mandate from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) for technical assistance on "proposed EU minimum quality requirements for water reuse in agricultural irrigation and aquifer recharge" (In accordance with Article 31 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002). The BIOCONTAM unit in collaboration with the ALPHA Unit will be addressing this request. An EFSA ad hoc WG has been established to help with the preparation of the technical report. For discussions into AHAW areas the topic will be covered/addressed by the external expert identified by the AHAW team. The deadline for this request is end of May 2017. EC has also requested the Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) for scientific advice on this issue. The Panel will be informed at regular intervals on the progress made for this mandate.

10. Any other business

- **Animal welfare platform:** NK provided feedback to the Panel from his visit to DG SANTE on the current state of discussions surrounding animal welfare and the

direction of this important topic within the overall Commission policy. The Commission Decision of 24 January 2017 on establishing the Commission Expert Group 'Platform on Animal Welfare' aims to promote an enhanced dialogue on animal welfare issues that are relevant at EU level among competent authorities, businesses, civil society and scientists.

To achieve these priorities the Platform will assist the Commission with the development and exchange of coordinated actions on animal welfare with a particular focus on:

1. better application of EU rules on animal welfare, through exchanges of information and best practices and the direct involvement of stakeholders,
2. the development and use of voluntary commitments by businesses to further improve animal welfare,
3. the promotion of EU animal welfare standards to valorise the market value of the Union's products at the global level.

EFSA is a member of this platform and members were informed that the first meeting of the platform will take place on 6 June 2017 in Brussels with EFSA taking part. Further details including the agenda of this meeting are expected and decisions on attendance will be taken in due course. NK highlighted this as an opportunity to actively promote animal welfare issues which are deemed by the Panel to be feasible and fit to be addressed through this forum. The Panel welcomed the possibility to demonstrate its work done on risk assessments involving animal welfare and agreed to actively support the platform to maximise promotion of EU animal welfare standards.

There was also a question about the possibility to identify self-tasks in the field of animal welfare for the AHAW panel and while the secretariat is in general supportive it was pointed out that given this year's overall intensive workload and following the establishment of the platform any such proposals would have to undergo very careful scrutiny as to their feasibility within the work programme of the Agency.

Finally, it was agreed to keep the EU AW platform as a standing item on the Panel's agenda and to work pro-actively over the coming months to prepare a concise presentation highlighting the value of the AHAW Panels work in this field and to develop a strategy how best to support the platform.

- **Knowledge junction:** The Knowledge Junction ([link](#)) is a new EFSA community that brings together models, tools and data used in EFSA scientific outputs and supporting documents. The community is curated by EFSA but is open to everybody to consult and upload information. A DOI is created for all uploaded material, allowing to refer to it. A selection of tools is also available as web applications on the new EFSA Statistical Models Platform.

Extra session on AHL expert judgement

8th (11.30-19.00) - 9th (8.30-14.30) March 2017, Parma

Participants:

Panel members: BICOUT Dominique, GOOD Margaret, MIRANDA Miguel Angel, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose, SIHVONEN Liisa, Anette BOTTNER, Bruno GASTUJ, Christian GORTAZAR, Preben WILLEBERG, Simon MORE, Andrew BUTTERWORTH (only on 08/03), Virginie MICHEL, Paolo CALISTRI, Arjan STEGEMAN.

EFSA: Alessandro BROGLIA, Lisa KOHNLE, Joana MORGADO, Frank VERDONCK, Chiara Fabris (ALPHA);

The collective judgement was successfully performed on the following diseases: anthrax, equine encephalomyelitis (EEE-WEE), WNF, IBR, BVD, Japanese encephalitis, Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis and PRRS. Avian mycoplasmosis and Salmonella were assessed for the art 5 and two questions of art 9.

It was agreed with EC that for question D "*the risk posed by the disease in question can be effectively and proportionately mitigated by measures concerning movements of animals and products in order to prevent or limit its occurrence and spread*", the assessment of the effectiveness of movement of animals and products to mitigate the risk should include also the control of movements into the EU, for exotic diseases (import checks). Consequently, question D was re-considered for the exotic diseases previously assessed (Ebola, Trypanosoma).