



**ADOPTED MINUTES OF 5TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL
ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE
(30-31/03/2004)**

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PARTICIPANTS

Harry J. Blokhuis, Donald M. Broom, , Stefano Cinotti, Michael Gunn, Joerg Hartung, Per Have, David B. Morton, Michel Pépin, Dirk U. Pfeiffer, Ronald J. Roberts, James Michael Sharpe, Alejandro Schudel, Georgios Theodoropoulos, Philippe Vannier , Marina Verga, Martin Wierup.

EFSA: Brigitte Arbelot, Jordi Ferrés and Jordi Serratos, (Scientific co-ordination AHAW panel) and Pia Mäkelä (31 March from 14.30-15.30 pm) .

European Commission: Sabine Osaer (30 and 31st March until 13.00-SANCO D5), Rex Horgan (DG SANCO E2), Alf Füssel (30 March from 14.00 to 15.00 pm) (DG SANCO E2).

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed the participants. Apologies were announced for Ilaria Capua, Xavier Manteca Vilanova and José M. Sánchez-Vizcaino. No member declared a conflict of interest in any of the items on the agenda of this specific meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 4th Plenary Meeting were unanimously adopted on the 2nd March 2004 following the written procedure as agreed at the last Plenary Meeting. The minutes were published at the following web site:

http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/ahaw_panel/ahaw_meetings/198_en.html

4. DISCUSSION ON THE PENDING MANDATES

4.1. Proposal for possible adoption on Transport opinion based on the scientific report

After a short introduction on the procedure made by EFSA scientific coordinator, Prof D. Broom presented the scientific opinion and the amendments for discussion. Some of the conclusions and recommendations of the scientific opinion were amended and reworded. The scientific opinion on transport was unanimously adopted. The document will be placed on the EFSA website after all editorial changes have been introduced.

4.2. Proposal for possible adoption on Stunning opinion based on the scientific report

EFSA introduced all documents distributed for the discussion of the scientific opinion on stunning. The chairman of the working group presented all the amendments and contributions. All amendments were discussed and reworded with the agreement of the Panel, except the 3rd chapter of the scientific opinion on "future research" which will be agreed by a written procedure. After agreement on that 3rd chapter, the scientific opinion will be rearranged in order to group conclusions/recommendations/future research by species, this will be the last draft presented for adoption at the next plenary.

A representative of the European Commission pointed out that the Commission had not requested EFSA to consider the specific issue of religious slaughter in this scientific opinion. The Commission representative also highlighted that the Commission has no competence to legislate on this particular issue.

It was stated by the Panel that their scientific opinion does not review ethical, socio-economical, cultural or religious aspects of this topic as already mentioned in the Summary of the Opinion. It was agreed by a majority that the issue of killing without stunning is a scientifically relevant issue to take into account in the Panel's response to the Commission's mandate irrespectively of any religious significance. However due to the sensitivity of the issue it was considered that the chapter on killing without stunning drafted in the report should be reviewed by a working group on 19 April. This WG will be composed by 5 members of the AHAW Panel.

4.3. Microclimate-Transport.

The chairman of the working group will send the final draft to EFSA at the end of April. EFSA will send the final version in May to members of the Panel for possible adoption at the next plenary meeting.

4.4. Piglet castration.

The chairman distributed the index of the draft of the scientific opinion for comment. Panel members were required to check the index to see if there are missing chapters or to add some information on existing ones. Comments should be addressed to EFSA secretariat by e mail by the end of April. The next meeting is to be held in Brussels on the 4th May.

4.5. Laying hens.

The working group expected to finalize the scientific report at the last meeting to be held on 24th June 2004.

4.6. Risk of transmission of Map in bovine semen.

The working group have held two meetings and the next meeting will take place on the 19th April. A draft is in preparation.

4.7. Vaccination against Salmonella in poultry.

It was agreed that the secretariat will circulate a first draft in April to all members of the Panel in order to receive any major modifications. Comments will then be collated by EFSA in time for the meeting on the 6th of May.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE NEW MANDATES

5.1. Rift Valley Fever

The Commission official presented the background and the terms of reference of the mandate. The deadline for EFSA to reply is September 2004. The mandate was accepted, but the chairman pointed out that point 2.2 in the terms of reference refers to the risk by handling or consumption of products derived from infected animals. Because this particular aspects is out with the scope of the AHAW Panel, a co-ordination was requested with the Biohazards Panel in order to decide the best way to handle the mandate.

It was decided that a working group of experts should be established, and a chairman and two members were appointed to start the activities on this mandate.

The members of the Panel requested that due to the complexity of the issue and the need to include experts from outside the EU it was better to postpone the deadline from September to December 2004.

5.2. Welfare of farmed domestic rabbits.

The Commission representative presented the background and the terms of reference concerning the impact of the current housing and husbandry systems on the health and welfare of farmed domestic rabbits. The mandate was accepted by the panel and a chairman was appointed, supported by another member of the Panel. EFSA requested the Commission to provide all the available scientific data used by the Council of Europe on this issue. The deadline proposed for this mandate by the Commission was December 2004.

6. PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED ON AHAW BY THE PANEL: SELF MANDATES

Following the statement made at the last plenary meeting on Avian Influenza and the proposal for Task 1 which included Avian Influenza, EFSA would like to establish a working group covering the terms of reference as follows.

Question 1: Risk assessment on the different currently available tools to the containment and control of a possible virus AI outbreak in the EU. (Available tools should include all new and updated technologies like sub-unit vaccines, real-time PCR, multiplex PCR, epidemiological statistic modelling and newer disinfection methods).

Question 2: Risk assessment related to the potential introduction of AI virus and possible secondary spread of the infection in the EU.

The chairman of the working group proposed to hold the first meeting on 27th April 2004. A member of the Panel, expert on animal welfare, will join the working group to cover the animal welfare aspects of AI. The Plenary agreed to start this mandate.

Due to lack of available time the discussion on the remaining self-mandates Tasks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 were postponed until the next plenary meeting.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

Several documents were distributed for future discussion concerning the proposal of the Code of conduct, OIE Global conference on Animal Welfare and a possible new self task on Welfare of Genetically Modified Animals.

7.1. Presentation: “EFSA and zoonoses data collection”

Pia Mäkelä, (EFSA senior scientific administrator) presented the role of EFSA according to a new directive on the Monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents (2003/99/EC). After an exchange of views the AHAW Panel was prepared to support and participate in EFSA’s activities including the task force and working groups to be established for the review of the reporting system. One of the main issues was to improve, in regard to the present system, the methodology of data

collection, sampling and the reliability of data in order to make a meaningful interpretation of data and results. Two members of the Panel were proposed as candidates to participate in the task force on zoonoses.

7.2. 6th plenary in Hannover

The next meeting (6th) of the panel will be held in Hannover, Germany (15-16 June). The local organizer will send all the necessary information ASAP (location, maps, accommodation, etc...).

7.3. Invitation to the panel to celebrate the 7th plenary in Parma (Italy)

Prof. Marina Verga and Stefano Cinotti invited the Panel to hold the next plenary meeting on 12-13 July (Monday-Tuesday) in Parma (Italy). The proposal was unanimously accepted. Further details will be provided at the next plenary meeting in order to appropriate arrangements.

Brussels, 6th April 2004