



European Food Safety Authority AHAW Panel

MINUTES OF THE XIITH PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

(25TH and 26TH MAY 2005)

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	2
2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	2
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE XI PLENARY MEETING.....	2
4. NEW MANDATES.....	2
4.1. CAPTIVE BIRDS	2
4.2. BRUCELLOSIS.	3
4.3. MANDATES UNDER PREPARATION	3
5. SHORT DECISIONS.....	3
5.1. LETTER ON TRANSPORT OF RABBITS	3
6. MANDATES FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION.....	3
6.1. RIFT VALLEY FEVER	3
6.2. PRRS	3
6.3. SPACE ALLOWANCES AND FLOOR TYPES FOR WEANERS AND REARING PIGS.....	3
7. STATE OF PLAY OF THE SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS AND REPORTS.	4
7.1. AVIAN INFLUENZA.	4
7.2. WELFARE OF FARMED DOMESTIC RABBITS	4
7.3. FMD.....	4
7.4. LABORATORY ANIMALS.....	4
7.5. STUNNING	4
7.6. IBR.....	4
7.7. DAIRY BY-PRODUCTS.....	4
7.8. WELFARE OF CALVES.....	5
7.9. TRICHINELLA. AHAW PARTICIPATION	5
7.10. SALMONELLA IN PIGS. AHAW PARTICIPATION	5
8. MISCELLANEOUS	5
8.1. PIGLET CASTRATION LETTER.	5
8.2. VETERINARY STATEMENT	5
8.3. RISK ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT.....	5
8.4. NEXT PLENARY MEETINGS.....	5

PARTICIPANTS

Harry Blokhuis, Donald M. Broom, Michael Gunn, Joerg Hartung, Per Have, David B. Morton, Dirk U. Pfeiffer, Ronald J. Roberts, José M. Sánchez-Vizcaino, James Michael Sharp, Georgios Theodoropoulos, Philippe Vannier, Marina Verga, Martin Wierup and Bo Algiers.

EFSA: M. Pittman S. Correia, J. Ferrés, J. Serratosa (Scientific co-ordination AHAW panel), and S. Mateljan (EFSA Administrative support).

European Commission (DG SANCO): W. M. Maier (26th), Rex Horgan (26th), G. Simone (26th), A. Laddomada (26th) and S. Osaer.

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed the participants and no member declared a conflict of interest in any of the items on the agenda of this meeting.

Apologies were announced for Ilaria Capua, Stefano Cinotti, Xavier Manteca, A. Schudel, Michel Pépin and Marion Wooldridge. The 26th apologies for José M. Sánchez-Vizcaino and Marina Verga on the 26th afternoon.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted after changing the order of discussion items according to the availability of the Commission officials.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE XI PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 11th Plenary Meeting held in Brussels on 15th and 16th March, were unanimously adopted by written procedure on 8th April and published on Internet¹.

4. NEW MANDATES

New mandates received by EFSA were discussed following their introduction by a SANCO's Commission official.

4.1. Captive birds

SANCO officials presented the mandate and explained the background. The report should concern animal health and also animal welfare. On welfare it was stressed the need to take into account the pre and post-transport conditions. The previous EFSA report on transport could be used and extended if new information is available. Also the zoonotic aspects of avian diseases should be considered. The proposed deadline was accepted by the Panel. The chairman of this working group was elected.

¹ http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/ahaw/ahaw_meetings/836_en.html

4.2. Brucellosis.

The Commission officials explained the background of the question. Additional data on a study regarding diagnostic tests for brucellosis in small ruminants will be provided by the Commission to EFSA at that meeting day. The proposed deadline was accepted and the chairman was elected.

4.3. Mandates under preparation

No new mandates were expected in a short time, unless an emerging problem arises.

5. SHORT DECISIONS

5.1. Letter on transport of rabbits

D. Broom presented a letter to reply to the Commission questions about the recommendations of the transport opinion on rabbits section. After a brief discussion and some amendments over balance, the reply was adopted. Recommendations 8.2.1 and 8.2.4 were amended and therefore a “*corrigendum*” as the annex of the scientific opinion will be published on internet.

6. MANDATES FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION

6.1. Rift Valley fever

The chairman of the working group presented the last draft of the Rift Valley Fever opinion. The whole document was revised, amended and several contributions were made. Because of a number of questions that could not be completed at the meeting, it was agreed that a new amended version will be circulated by the 8th June in order to be discussed at the next plenary meeting on 14th and 15th June for possible adoption. Chapter 10 of the opinion, dealing with public health aspects, will be sent to the BIOHAZ for possible co-adoption.

6.2. PRRS

The Working Group’s chairman presented the latest draft of the PRRS opinion. After a detailed discussion the chairman was asked to revise and clarify some parts of the Opinion in order to present a final version at the next plenary for possible adoption.

6.3. Space allowances and floor types for weaners and rearing pigs.

The chairman of the Working Group presented the document for discussion to the members of the Panel. After a discussion it was agreed that some aspects of the opinion should be redrafted. Members of the Panel were requested to send precise contributions and amendments by the 8th June to EFSA secretariat in order to include all amendments in a new version to be discussed at the next plenary in June.

7. STATE OF PLAY OF THE SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS AND REPORTS.

7.1. Avian Influenza.

EFSA secretariat explained the state of play of the Avian Influenza scientific opinion. At the next plenary meeting in June it will be discussed the Scientific report for possible approval. The final draft of the Scientific Opinion including the risk assessment could be presented for possible adoption at the July's plenary.

7.2. Welfare of farmed domestic Rabbits

The chairman of the working group explained the situation of the scientific report. A final meeting with members of the Panel and the working group has been scheduled for the 21st and 22nd June in order to finalise the Scientific Opinion. The Scientific opinion and report should be ready at the Plenary on 11th and 12th July for possible adoption.

7.3. FMD.

The EFSA secretariat explained that different WG meetings took place on May 6th, and 23rd. The data collection is targeted for completion June 30th. Thereafter, the chair will start the risk assessment.

7.4. Laboratory Animals

Next meetings will take place on the 13th and 27th June for some Working subgroups. It is expected to present the first draft for discussion at the July's plenary meeting.

7.5. Stunning

The first meeting was held on the 2nd of May and the next meeting is 20th June. BIOHAZARD panel have been duly informed, because of possible implications on public health issues.

7.6. IBR

A meeting with SANCO's officials was held on the 20th of April and a reply letter was sent requesting a new deadline, December 2005. The working group members have been already chosen according to the areas of expertise needed and the first meeting of these experts was held on the 11th of May. The next meeting will take place on 23rd June.

7.7. Dairy By-products

A first kick off meeting with SANCO officials and a temporary risk assessor to clarify the mandate was held on 12th of April. The chairman of this WG participated in a corresponding meeting with the WG of the BIOHAZ Panel of 28th and 29th April. The first meeting of WG was held last 24th of May with selected experts. Tasks were distributed. Permanent risk assessor will join starting with a joint meeting with BIOHAZ Panel is scheduled by 16th June. A combined document from the WG's of both panels will be produced.

7.8. Welfare of calves

The selection of experts for the working group has been finalised and the first meeting is scheduled for 20th June.

7.9. Trichinella. AHAW Participation

The expert of the AHAW Panel explained the current state of play of the opinion after the first meeting held by the BIOHAZ Panel.

7.10. Salmonella in Pigs. AHAW Participation

A first meeting organised by BIOHAZ took place and a short update was presented.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

8.1. Piglet Castration letter.

The letter adopted at the previous plenary was sent to the Commission and published on Internet².

8.2. Veterinary Statement

Martin Wierup explained the background of the document presented. During 2004 the self-mandate about “**Core competencies required by the private veterinary practitioner, the official veterinarian and the state veterinarian**” was presented. It was agreed that instead of it being considered a self-mandate the panel should formulate a statement and when relevant to add it to the opinions of the panel.

A document including all comments and contributions from the panel members was presented. After some discussions and minor editorial changes the document was adopted as Annex to the Minutes.

8.3. Risk assessment document

The chairman of the AHW Panel explained that the discussion on the risk assessment was discussed at the Scientific Committee Plenary Meeting. The chairman requested the support and contribution from all members of the Panel in order to present the document for discussion at the next Scientific Committee plenary by the end of June.

8.4. Next Plenary Meetings.

The Panel members agreed to start the XIII plenary meeting in Brussels on 14th June at 9.00 am to 18.00 and on 15th June from 9.00 am to 16.00 pm.

² http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/ahaw/ahaw_opinions/512_en.html



**Annex of the minutes of the XIIth plenary meeting
of the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
on 25th and 26th May 2005 in Brussels**

Statement from the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) on the

“Core competencies required by the private veterinary practitioner, the official veterinarian and the state veterinarian.”

Keywords: Official veterinarian, licensed veterinarian, stock-keepers, animal health, animal welfare, diagnosis, prevention of disease spread, outbreaks and epizootics, veterinary education

The Panel of AHAW are asked to provide opinions on risk assessment in different areas of animal health and animal welfare. In the area of animal health, opinions on the control of infectious diseases are of particular importance. Special attention has been given to the use of efficient diagnostic tools, vaccines and other methods for the prevention, control and eradication of diseases such as Foot-and-Mouth, Classical Swine Fever, Avian Influenza and other important OIE Listed diseases. The Panel is also requested to give opinions on similar aspects of zoonotic diseases aiming at creating a basis for minimising risks for human health. In addition to the animal welfare problems associated with outbreaks of infectious disease, there are welfare concerns relating to the housing, husbandry, transport and slaughter of animals, and the Panel is asked for its opinions on these (e.g. stunning, transport of the major farm species).

In the risk assessment process veterinarians and stock-keepers, in particular, are often of crucial importance for this assessment, for example the skills to identify animals with signs of ill health and poor welfare. In the context of animal health, such skills potentially could stop an isolated outbreak of diseases such as avian influenza or foot and mouth disease, ending up as an epizootic. Or to put it another way, the failure of a veterinarian or (stock-keeper) to make an early and accurate

diagnosis could lead to considerable avoidable expenditure by the EU. The same holds true for animal welfare as it is crucially important that stock-keepers, veterinarians and others have the skills to identify animals showing signs of suffering. Again this may help prevent or even stop a larger animal welfare problem occurring in the future. In all cases we have to rely on the skills of the private veterinary practitioner, the “official veterinarian” and the state veterinarian.

In general, there is a lack of veterinarians in farm animal practice, as fewer veterinarians that qualify are going into farm and large animal practice, and so existing veterinarians are becoming stretched to meet demand. In addition even though stock-keepers recognise that there may be a problem, due to the small profit margins in farming, they may be reluctant to call out the veterinarian. As most of the major epizootic diseases have disappeared in EU, even if some outbreaks occur from time to time, the younger veterinarians have no practical experience of these highly contagious diseases, thus increasing the probability of missing the clinical signs when an outbreak first occurs.

There is an EU accreditation process for veterinary schools, and it is important that the core skills for the recognition of poor farm animal health and welfare, first clinical signs of epizootic and exotic disease, should be drawn up, and that steps should be taken to ensure that these core outputs are being effectively delivered to veterinarians licensed to practise on farms. Moreover, it will be important that these skills are maintained and developed through some form of continuing education.

In the light of the above and considering the absence of harmonised demands of qualifications needed for licensing a veterinarian for the authorisation of such work, the panel of AHAW would like to draw the attention of the EFSA and the Commission to the fact that any failure in the EU to ensure, in particular by postgraduate and continuing education, these relevant skills to veterinarians and stock-keepers as a risk factor that has to be identified and managed in some way.