

**MINUTES OF THE XXIX PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL
HEALTH AND WELFARE**
5 AND 6 SEPTEMBER 2007

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PARTICIPANTS

Bo Algers, Harry Blokhuis, Donald Broom Patrizia Costa, Mariano Domingo, Matthias Greiner, Joerg Hartung, Frank Koenen, Christine Müller-Graf, Albert Osterhaus, Dirk Pfeiffer, Ronald Roberts, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa, Mike Sharp, Philippe Vannier, Martin Wierup, Marion Wooldridge (6 September).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (DG SANCO): Sabine Osaer, Maria Ferrara and on 6 September, Pierangelo Bernorio.

INVITED OBSERVERS: Rossella Lelli (OIE)

EFSA: E. Franchi and H. Figoluszka (administrative staff AHAW Unit); S. Correia, O. Ribó, A. Afonso, F. Berthe, F. De Massis, D. Candiani, E. Aiassa, T. Grudnik, S. Dhollander, S. Barbieri, P. Have, J. Serratosa (Scientific Coordination AHAW Unit).

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES

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

Apologies were received from D. Morton, D. Guemene.

Welcome was given to Ms Sofie Dhollander, Franck Berthe, Tomasz Grudnik, Scientific Officers joining recently the AHAW Unit.

2. INTERVENTION OF THE EFSA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Due to other appointments the intervention from the executive Director has been postponed to the next plenary meeting in October.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The new DoI accepted by EFSA were presented and a short explanation and discussion was established. All members of the Panel were requested to fulfil the year DoI declaration in order to be publicly available (EFSA web) in the shortest delay.

4. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the previous 28th Plenary Meeting held in Parma on 26-27 June 2007 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by the Panel members on 25 July 2007 and published on the web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

6. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES

6.1. Assess the AH risks involved with the import of rodent meat and invertebrates into the EU:

At the request of the Commission, this mandate was put on hold.

6.2. Self-mandate on Guidelines for animal welfare risk assessment:

EFSA secretariat explained that a self-mandate has been proposed to EFSA hierarchy in order to deliver general guidelines and working methodology for the Risk Assessment on Animal Welfare, in agreement with recommendations from the AHAW Panel and the conclusions from EFSA Colloquium held in Parma on 2005 "Principles of Risk Assessment of Food Producing Animals". Copy of the draft self-mandate was delivered to the Panel members during the last Plenary Meeting.

6.3. AHAW Work programme draft for 2008:

The documents related to the Work programme for 2008 related to the expected mandates and activities for the AHAW panel were given to the Panel members. The list of possible future scientific requests from the EC is only a provisional list and could be modified according to new identified needs or priorities.

6.3.1. Public AHAW calls for proposals under Art. 36:

EFSA/AHAW launched on the 5th of September afternoon two calls for proposals under the framework of Art. 36 grant awarding, referring to Animal welfare issues (risk assessment guidelines on stunning and killing) and on Animal diseases (scientific reviews on AHS, ASF, CSF and an evaluation of the distribution of arthropod vectors and their potential for transmitting exotic or emerging vector-borne animal diseases and zoonoses). Both calls were briefly presented on the 6th September. Deadline for presenting the proposals has been set on the 26th October which shall be evaluated in November in order to start the projects before the end of the year. The documents available in the web¹ were distributed to the Panel Members for their information.

H. Blokhuis noted that, regarding the Article 36 list of competent organisations, it is stated by EFSA that this is a living list, subject to additions and alterations as required. It will therefore be regularly updated. He repeated the question he asked in earlier meetings of the Panel about the procedure EFSA applies to update the list of competent organisations. It was pointed out by EFSA that the permanent representation of each member state in the EU is responsible to send to EFSA a new proposal to be submitted for final approval to the EFSA management board. A list of contacts of all member states was given from EFSA secretariat to H. Blokhuis

7. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE

7.1. Welfare and health of fattening pigs

The final Draft Report and Scientific Opinion were submitted to the Panel and discussed during the Plenary for possible adoption. The Scientific Report was accepted and the scientific opinion was unanimously adopted. All changes and amendments agreed during the meeting will be compiled by the AHAW secretariat.

The last version of the chapter on risk characterisation common for the three reports on pig welfare was submitted for possible adoption which was considered in general terms acceptable. Due to the lack of time it will be submitted for possible adoption following the written procedure. Deadline will be 26 September. A paragraph on how to interpret the Tables and Charts from the Risk Assessment will be added. Once adopted the chapter will be included into the three reports on pig welfare and the adopted Fattening Scientific Report and Scientific Opinion will be sent to the EFSA web for publication.

Donald Broom stated his personal view that the title of the report should be, as proposed by the Working Group: "Scientific report on welfare and disease in fattening pigs in relation to housing and husbandry" instead of referring to "health and welfare", a terminology that is scientifically inaccurate. For the same reason, the title of the report on sows and boars should be: "Scientific report on welfare and disease in sows, boars and unweaned piglets in relation to housing and husbandry" as agreed by the sows and boars Working Group

¹ http://www.efsa.eu.int/EFSA/1178622332239/efsa_locale-1178620753812_call_for_proposals.htm

7.2. Welfare and health of Sows and Boars

The Scientific Opinion was amended according to the points agreed during the last AHAW Plenary meeting and then circulated to AHAW members (27 July) for voting by written procedure. The Report was not adopted because there were still some pending comments from the last Plenary.

A new version with all comments answered/solved was distributed to the Panel Members in order to discuss/agree only the pending points and adopt the document. After discussion, the scientific Report was accepted and the scientific opinion adoption was proposed to be submitted for written procedure by 26 September.

7.3. Welfare risks associated with pig tail biting;

The last Transversal meeting was held on June 29. The Final Draft Report including C&R was sent to the Panel on 24th August for discussion and possible adoption. Due to the lack of time and absence of written comments sent to EFSA secretariat, it was decided to launch a written procedure for possible adoption with deadline 26 September. If some disagreements or fundamental changes are requested the opinion will be discussed for possible adoption at the next plenary in October 10th.

7.4. Framework for EFSA AHAW Risk Assessments

The final document was circulated on 30 June for possible adoption following the written procedure. The majority of the Panel Members (18 votes) adopted the document by written procedure, but there were minor amendments suggested for addition in the text by some experts. Therefore, such comments were submitted to the Plenary meeting for discussion and final adoption. The remaining points were analysed and refined and a final proposal for amendments was agreed. The final document will be circulated between Panel Members and, given that the document had already the majority for adoption before the plenary, it will be considered adopted if he does not receive any further comment within 10 working days.

8. WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF THE SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS AND REPORTS

8.1. Fish Welfare; Atlantic Salmon

The transversal meeting was on 5-6/7/07. No other members apart from Don Broom and Ron Roberts could attend the meeting. Considerable progress was done on the discussion of the report. A last meeting for finalization of the report was held for the 3/9/07. It is foreseen to submit for possible acceptance in October the Salmon Welfare report excluding the common chapters on fish welfare concepts, pain, sentience, brain structure, etc.

8.2. Fish Welfare-Trout:

The last meeting was held on September 4. The next WG meeting is scheduled for October 8-9.

8.3. Fish welfare-Carp:

Experts for the carp were contacted in July and the WG was set up. The first meeting is planned for October, the 10th.

8.4. Sea bass and gilthead sea bream:

Experts will start being contacted in September to start in October.

8.5. European eel:

Experts will start being contacted in November to start in January.

8.6. Vector species and live stages of susceptible species as regards certain aquatic animal diseases: a) Fish; b) Molluscs; and c) Crustacea

The Fish diseases report should be submitted for adoption on the October Plenary meeting. The last meeting for completion of RA of molluscs and crustaceans is planned for 2-3 October. The

mollusc and crustacean reports will be submitted for possible adoption in December plenary Meeting (or written procedure). A letter was send to the Commission requesting a new deadline for the two opinions.

8.6.1. Fish.

The latest WG meeting for fish was held on the 3-4/7/07. On the 9-10 July a WG meeting concerning Risk assessment was held followed by a Web conference with the Risk Assessors on the 30/8/07. A WG meeting was held on the 6 September and a transversal meeting on 7 September. It is foreseen to submit for possible adoption in October.

8.6.2. Molluscs.

The next WG meeting for mollusc diseases will be held on the 10-11 of September.

8.6.3. Crustacea.

The next WG meeting for crustacean diseases will be held on the 13-14 of September.

8.7. Welfare of Dairy Cows

The latest meeting with the WG members was held on July 3-4. Next WG meeting is planned for September, the 7th.

A meeting with members of EFSA's Advisory Forum and WG members will be organized next 4th December in Parma, following the request from the Danish Dairy Board to collaborate during the development of the Scientific Opinion. The objective of this meeting will be to get information from the different national research results and consider comments and suggestions given by the Members of the Advisory Forum for the completion of this Scientific Opinion.

8.8. Tuberculosis in Deer

A first transversal meeting is planned for the 6th and 7th of September in Parma. Taking into account the complexity of the mandate two extra meetings are planned. The systematic literature review is on the way to be finalised, given that disagreements between experts have been settled during the last meeting held in Madrid on the 25th and 26th of July. The meta-analysis of the data collected through this evaluation will be started and will be presented in the next meeting. The disease freedom model will take into account the Se and Sp values estimated through the meta-analysis and the data collected through an expert opinion query.

8.9. Zoonoses

The first draft opinion has been already presented and discussed on a first meeting held on the 18th of July, together with the experts assigned by BIOHAZ Panel. A second and last meeting is planned for the 3rd of October in Brussels.

8.10. Animal welfare aspects of the killing and skinning of seals

8.10.1. Scientific Report

The second working group meeting was held on 7/8 August in Brussels, when the Scientific Draft was revised and amendments were agreed. The available data were discussed and reviewed and the basis for the Risk Assessment process was laid down. The next meeting will take place on September 20/21, when the almost-final Draft will be discussed.

A Scientific Report on the "Animal welfare aspects of the killing and skinning of seals" from the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety-Animal Health and Welfare will be delivered to EFSA by September 12. The Report will be distributed to the WG Members and presented on 20 September before the WG Meeting starts.

8.10.2. Stakeholder consultation

A letter to the stakeholders calling for scientific data (deadline 3rd August) and proposing a consultation meeting next 4 October was sent last 12 of July. The list of stakeholders has been constantly updated taking also into account the suggestions from the invited parties and finally, 45 organisations have been invited.

The draft Agenda for the stakeholders meeting, which will take place in Parma, on October 4th, is under preparation. The almost-final scientific draft will be sent to the stakeholders before the consultation meeting, in order to allow them to provide written comments to be presented at the meeting.

8.11. Avian Influenza follow up:

A proposal will be presented at the next plenary meeting for the possible follow up. A meeting with the elected chairman, the AHAW secretariat and possibly additional experts will be organized to draft the terms of reference. The proposal will be submitted for discussion with the Commission services before starting any activity.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

9.1. Procedure for Cooperation between EFSA - EMEA/CVMP consultation in relation to the mandates of the AHAW Panel

A draft document concerning a procedure for the cooperation between EFSA and EMEA concerning the potential areas of mutual interest and future cooperation was circulated but not discussed due to lack of time.

9.2. DG RTD FP7 on AHAW issues

DG RTD is expected to attend at the next plenary meeting for a short presentation.

9.3. Letters on Transport, FEFAC and EMEA (Echinococcus)

The letters were adopted by all members of the Panel and no comments or substantial amendments were received. Therefore the Chairman of the Panel, Dr. Philippe Vannier, signed the letters and they will be sent to the interested parties and published at the EFSA's web site.

9.4. Report on the document on “Basic information for the development of the Animal Welfare Risk Assessment Guidelines”

A presentation about the project developed by the Italian Reference Centre for Animal Welfare and the submission of the Report titled “Basic information for the development of the Animal Welfare Risk Assessment Guidelines” was postponed to the next plenary due to the lack of time. The current situation of the Guidelines development including the publication of the EFSA self-mandate (see point 6.2) and the Call under Art. 36 (see point 6.3.1.) will be also included in the presentation.

9.5. Bilateral meeting with Council of Europe Working Group on Salmon and Trout Welfare

A meeting has been scheduled for the 27/9/07 with the WGM of CoE for exchange of views on the draft document prepared by the CoE and in order to discuss future collaboration.

9.6. Financial issues

This issue will be discussed at the next plenary once finance has provided the full information and details to the AHAW Unit concerning the expenses of the Panel activities.

9.7. Next Plenary Meeting

The next plenary meeting will take place in Parma on 10 October from 09.00 to 18.00h and 11 October from 08.30 to 15.30h.