

## MINUTES OF THE XXXI PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

**5, 6 AND 7 DECEMBER 2007**

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION:** M. Ferrara, Francisco Reviriego (5<sup>th</sup>), P. Rosado Martin (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>) (**DG SANCO**), H Schally, D. Convens-Billerbeck (5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>)

**INVITED OBSERVERS:** T. Ishibashi (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. Serratos (Scientific Coordination AHAW Unit)

### **1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman welcomed the participants and no member declared any conflict of interest on the items on the agenda. Apologies were received from the panel members Harry Blokhuis and Mariano Domingo, from SANCO Sabine Osaer and from FAO S. De la Roque .

### **2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted.

### **3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE**

The minutes of the previous 30<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held in Parma on the 10-11 October 2007 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by the Panel members last 12 November 2007 and published on the web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

### **4. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES**

#### **4.1. State of play of the new mandates**

The Commission official presented new mandates on Bluetongue and Classical Swine Fever to the Panel as already indicated in the Commission input to the EFSA management plan for AHAW in 2008. The background was explained for both mandates. The chairmen were elected and two working groups will be launched following an initial meeting with COM to clarify the precise scope of the mandates.

### **5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ ACCEPTANCE**

#### **5.1. Welfare risks associated with pig tail biting**

At the last plenary the Scientific Report was accepted, but there were some outstanding conclusions and recommendations to be solved with panel members and a teleconference was held last 22 October to discuss them. The final version for possible adoption was circulated to the Panel members for Written Procedure last 23<sup>rd</sup> October with a deadline for comments of November 7<sup>th</sup>. The comments raised were discussed and agreed during the plenary meeting and the Scientific Opinion was adopted unanimously.

## **5.2. Tuberculosis testing in Deer**

The final transversal meeting was held on the 23/24<sup>th</sup> October and an extra meeting was organised (13 and 14<sup>th</sup> of November) to finalise the scientific report and to draft the conclusions from the meta-analysis process and from the disease-freedom model. The draft Scientific Report and Opinion were presented to the Panel. The Opinion was finished and ready for possible adoption after presentation and discussion, however the Commission identified an area that has not been covered by the Report and that should be addressed in order to complete the Opinion. This new area needs to be discussed and considered by the working group and therefore, it was agreed with the Commission to postpone the deadline for this opinion to the 28 February 2008.

## **5.3. Animal welfare aspects of the killing and skinning of seals**

Working Group meetings were held since last plenary on 18-20 October and 8-9 November. The Scientific Report was circulated last 16 November to the WG members for final contributions and to the AHAW Panel Members for first comments with a deadline on 25 November. The Final Draft was sent to the Panel on 28 November for discussion and possible adoption during the Plenary Meeting. The Scientific Opinion was discussed during the Plenary and adopted by unanimity after several changes and editorial amendments.

## **5.4. Vector species and live stages of susceptible species as regards certain aquatic animal diseases: Crustacea**

The Final Draft was sent to the Panel on 22<sup>nd</sup> of November for discussion and possible adoption during the Plenary Meeting. The Scientific Opinion was discussed during the Plenary and adopted by unanimity.

Some changes were introduced in this Opinion particularly in the wording of the conclusions and recommendations to make it more in line with the previously adopted opinion on fish vectors. EFSA will present a new wording for the adopted Opinion on fish vectors for possible amendment and possible adoption at the next plenary meeting in January.

## **5.5. Vector species and live stages of susceptible species as regards certain aquatic animal diseases - Molluscs**

The last meeting for completion of this Risk Assessment of molluscs was held on 2-3 October. This meeting was followed by a web conferencing with the Risk Assessors. The Final Draft of the Scientific Opinion was sent to the Panel on 22<sup>nd</sup> of November for discussion and possible adoption during the Plenary Meeting. The Scientific Opinion was discussed and adopted by unanimity.

## **5.6. Zoonoses**

The draft Opinion had been circulated among the Panel members (including the working group members) (from BIOHAZ and AHAW Panels). The final draft Opinion was circulated and discussed by both Panels for possible adoption. BIOHAZ adopted the issues related with food safety and AHAW the ones related with Animal Health. The draft Opinion was discussed and some amendments made. The adoption will be completed by written procedure.

## **5.7. Fish Welfare - Atlantic Salmon**

The last meeting for finalization of the Report was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September. It was agreed that the 5 scientific reports, including the common chapters (fish welfare concepts, assessment of welfare, pain, sentience, brain structure and needs) will be separately submitted to Panel members for acceptance. A meeting, for exchanging of views on the 'common' issues, was held on November 26 and 27 with the experts of the ongoing working groups (salmon, trout and carp). An updated version of the common chapter was circulated for comment among participants. The Salmon Report was circulated and submitted on November 23<sup>rd</sup> for

discussion. Panel members' comments were discussed and some issues require answers from WG. The Salmon Scientific Opinion will be submitted for possible adoption during the Plenary in January 30-31<sup>st</sup> 2008. The food safety chapters will be one chapter common to all 5 reports and submitted at the end of June for possible adoption by the BIOHAZ panel.

## **6. WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF THE SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS AND REPORTS**

### **6.1. Fish Welfare-Trout**

The last meeting was held on October 8-9 and the next one is scheduled for 17-18 December in Paris. Paragraphs on life history, feeding behaviour, space allowance, environmental conditions and fin damage will be drafted or amended.

### **6.2. Fish welfare-Carp**

Experts for the carp were contacted in July and the WG was set up. The first WG meeting was held on October 10<sup>th</sup>. The draft plan of content was agreed. Tasks were assigned to WG members according to their expertise. Contributions from the WG were received by November 26<sup>th</sup> and version 1 was distributed on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Next WG meeting is scheduled for December 11-12.

### **6.3. Fish welfare-Sea bass and gilthead sea bream**

Experts will start being contacted in December to start in February

### **6.4. Fish welfare-European eel**

Experts will start being contacted in December to start in February.

### **6.5. Welfare of Dairy Cows**

The last WG meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. The new contributions to the text were discussed and missing chapters identified. A meeting with EU Member State Representatives was held on 4<sup>th</sup> December at Palazzo Ducale in Parma. The Member State Representatives were asked to compile a questionnaire, requesting their suggestions for improving the report, and to fill in a table for assessing the exposure to the main hazards by the dairy cows. The completed tables will give an idea on how the hazards differ among the EU Countries and will be helpful to the WG Members for performing the Risk Assessment, taking into consideration such differences.

### **6.6. Avian Influenza - follow up**

EFSA received on October 16, 2007 a request for an opinion on avian influenza from DG SANCO. The terms of reference are divided in two questions: a) an update and consolidation of conclusions and recommendations of the 5 previous opinions on avian influenza in the light of new scientific information, and b) scientific advice and assessing risk factors for introducing and spread of AI in poultry holdings. The chairman has been appointed for the mandate and a deadline has been set to April 30, 2008. Work on the first question has already been initiated, whereas the scope of the 2<sup>nd</sup> question will be discussed at a meeting with DG SANCO and ENV on December 10, 2007.

## **7. MISCELLANEOUS**

### **7.1. Adopted opinions**

The adopted Scientific Report and Scientific Opinion on Welfare and health of Sows and Boars and the adopted Scientific Opinion on Vector species and live stages of susceptible species as regards certain aquatic animal diseases on Fish, have been sent to the Web for publication.

### **7.2. Conference on opportunities for European aquaculture.**

EFSA has participated on the conference “Opportunities for European Aquaculture” organised by DG Fish in collaboration with Industry representatives. Several issues were raised during the conference and in particular it was stressed the need for update on the opinions on transport and slaughter of fish – requesting a species specific approach. The need for AHAW-EFSA involvement on the activities of the aquaculture technological platform was also discussed, and the wish that EFSA takes the lead in the development of welfare indicators based on science as a follow up of the mandates on fish welfare. DG FISH expressed interest in attending as observer in the AHAW plenary meetings.

### **7.3. Consultation on EMEA-CVMP draft on Guideline for approval authorization of Veterinary Medicines for Aquaculture.**

The AHAW panel was invited to provide comments on the CVMP concept paper for the revision of the "Guideline for the efficacy of veterinary medicinal products for use in farmed aquatic species". The deadline for comment during this public consultation is 31 January 2008.

### **7.4. Next Plenary Meeting**

The next plenary meeting will take place in Parma on the 30<sup>th</sup> January (from 09.00 to 18.00h) and on the 31<sup>st</sup> (from **08.30 to 15.30h**) .