



Management Board Meeting

23 January 2007

PROGRESS REPORT DECEMBER 2006 – JANUARY 2007: HIGHLIGHTS

Science

Bluetongue

Bluetongue epidemiological evaluation

1. The mandate for the epidemiological analysis was received on the 5th of October 2006. The mandate is handled by the Assessment Methodology unit in the SCA department and consists of two components. The first pertains to a regular update on the evolution of the disease, the second to a global epidemiological analysis.

Regular update

- the updating is done through weekly posting on the EFSA website.
- weekly updates have continued through the 21st of December;
- given the continued reporting of new cases, it was decided that the weekly updates would be resumed in the week commencing January 8th;
- newly reported cases might not necessarily be new cases but could be cases that were previously infected and are now affected with BT-like clinical symptoms. However, they are at least indicative of continued presence of the virus in susceptible species.

Global epidemiological analysis

2. The conduct of a global epidemiological analysis requires a willingness to share data between the affected member states, a need to collect these data, and standardize them so as to be able to incorporate them in a single analysis dataset. This activity has required quite an effort and is in many ways novel. The timeline for completion of the data acquisition and exchange is 15 January, 2007.

3. In order to make sure financial support was adequate, EFSA launched a tender through the negotiated procedure with the experts in the institutes that have the *de facto* monopoly on the outbreak data. The tender procedure with 4 national research institutes (one in Belgium, one in France, one in Germany and one in the Netherlands) was completed successfully by the end of December.

MB 23.01.2007 – 7 Progress Report

Scientific Committee

4. Under the auspices of the Scientific Committee a meeting was held on January 2007 with a network of food consumption database managers from all Member States in order to complete the EFSA concise food consumption database. Members of this network also discussed possibilities for further harmonisation of strategies and approaches of collection and collation of food consumption data in Europe.

5. On request from EFSA for scientific advice, the Scientific Committee started two new ad-hoc working groups. The first one will provide advice on an effective system for the internal and external review of the quality of EFSA's scientific work. The second working group will address ways to enhance EFSA's responsiveness to urgent issues (ad hoc questions).

6. In an earlier opinion, the Scientific Committee concluded that the Qualified Presumption of Safety (QPS) concept could provide a generic approval system for use within EFSA for the safety assessment of micro-organisms deliberately introduced into the food chain. As a follow-up a working group was created to examine for relevant groups of microorganisms the available data on safety and propose whether QPS status would be appropriate. This document is now for public consultation in order to receive general comments on the approach, and more detailed ones on the scientific justifications and levels of documentation for inclusion in or exclusion of species from the QPS list. As a next step an opinion on whether QPS represents a practical and robust method of safety assessment for micro-organisms will be prepared.

Risk assessment unit of the Science Department

AHAW Panel

7. The AHAW Plenary Meeting held last 11-12 December was very fruitful with 2 Scientific Opinions adopted (Rabies and Brucellosis). In addition, the addendum of the Migratory Birds Scientific Opinion was also adopted. In addition to the Plenary Meeting a total of 16 WG Meetings were held in December and January dealing with 9 different opinions. As requested by DG SANCO, the migratory birds opinion was presented during a joint SCOFCAH DG SANCO/DG ENV meeting in Brussels. A conference on the presentation of the DG Research FP6 project results was also attended by AHAW staff.

The AHAW Unit presented its activities in-house during an all-staff conference on December 18.

CONTAM Panel

9. The CONTAM Panel did not meet in plenary in the above mentioned period. However, some 8 working group meetings were held in the area of aflatoxins in food, PFOS, marine biotoxins, carry-over of coccidiostats in non-target animal feed and undesirables substances in animal feed subsections natural plant products and persistent organic pollutants. The next CONTAM Panel meeting will take place on 23 to 25 January 2007 and several opinions will be presented for adoption.

MB 23.01.2007 – 7 Progress Report

FEEDAP Panel

10. The European Commission, invited FEEDAP to participate in the WG of the Standing Committee, held on 19th of December, aiming at establishing new guidelines for the assessment of additives for use in animal nutrition, in this opportunity the discussion focused on the efficacy and safety of the target animal.

In addition, during this period FEEDAP has been working on the preparation of the guidelines on the “Environmental risk assessment of feed additives” and on the guidelines for Flavourings. The WG had a meeting with the scientific secretariat of the FLAVIS project to better understand their approach and identify ways to integrate this information into the guidelines for feed additives.

NDA Panel

11. The NDA Panel continued its work on population reference intakes for macronutrients, food allergy and claims. During this period two working group meetings were held, one of the working group on population reference intakes and another one of the working group on claims. The NDA Panel received four new requests for scientific opinion, three of them concerning novel food applications and one on food allergy.

PPR Panel

12. The PPR Panel held its last plenary meeting on 13-14th December when an opinion was adopted on the FOCUS landscape and mitigation document.

Four Working Groups meetings took place mid December and six in January in Ecotoxicology, Residues, Fate and Toxicology, two more adoptions are foreseen at the end of January on the revision of Annexes II and III of the Directive 91/414, sections Toxicology and Fate.

AFC Panel

13. Between 8 January and 23 January the AFC Panel held 3 working group meetings.

External Relations Department

14. EFSA received a delegation from the Japanese Food Safety Commission in early January. The visitors, among them the Director General Dr Noburo Saito and the Director for Risk Communication, Dr Akira Nagata discussed future informal exchange of information with Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle and Herman Koëter and visited the EFSA BSE unit to learn about the Authority's work in this area and in particular about geographical classification of BSE risk (GBR).

Communication Department

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

15. Few weeks passed since the last Board meeting and EFSA has been actively pursuing its communications activities as follows:

MB 23.01.2007 – 7 Progress Report

1. Media Relations

With the aim of communicating to the media EFSA's scientific activities and corporate issues, four press releases were issued:

- a. food colours and a call for data to support re-evaluation (7 Dec 2006);
- b. campylobacteriosis overtaking salmonellosis as the most reported animal infection transmitted to humans in the EU (14 Dec 2006);
- c. the launch of a public consultation on GMO feeding trials (15 Dec 2006);
- d. the adoption by the Management Board of the strategy on cooperation with Member States and the 2007 Budget (19 Dec 2006).

16. The first two triggered significant media interest which resulted in specific requests for the Press Office and notable coverage in European and International media. The EFSA Press Office also sent a news alert to the media related to the visit of the delegation of the Japanese Food Safety Commission to EFSA (8-9 January 2007) and an announcement to specialised media on the Public consultation on QPS approach for selected microorganisms (11 Jan 2007).

2. Publications

Since the last Board meeting in December, the following activities were carried out:

- The 14th edition of EFSAnews was published in 4 languages, on- and off-line.
- The second Community Summary Report on Zoonoses (2005) was published on the EFSA website. The printed version will be ready in the course of the first quarter of 2007.
- A summary brochure of the zoonoses report 2005 was published on- and off-line.
- CD-ROMS of all EFSA scientific publications (e.g. opinions, guidance documents, reports, etc.) of 2006 were produced.

17. In close collaboration with the Science Directorate, 2 posters were also produced, in October and December:

- 'TSE risk assessment supporting the European Commission. Past and Future';
- 'EFSA's web database for the reporting of EU zoonoses monitoring data'.

Both posters represent appropriate tools for further dissemination of EFSA scientific advice: they are used by the relevant units/services to better explain EFSA activities in these specific fields at international scientific conferences, seminars, etc. As an example, the TSE/BSE Team (BIOHAZ Unit) participated to the international conference "Prion 2006" (held in Turin, Italy in October 2006) and through different means (e.g. the poster on TSE) presented how EFSA has been supporting the European Commission in the field of TSE risk assessment. This conference is one of the most important in this field. It provided a great opportunity for scientists from all over the world to share their findings and progress in the field of prevention, control, treatment, management and risk analysis of prion diseases. Moreover, this event was attended by Stanley Prusiner, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

MB 23.01.2007 – 7 Progress Report

18. A supplier for the update of the EFSA logo has been selected. The project is due to start in this month and aims at providing EFSA with a more up-to-date corporate identity, communicating EFSA key values and mandate. The corporate identity will be subsequently applied to all EFSA documents and communications materials. It will also be taken into account in the redesign of the EFSA corporate website.

3. Web

19. Since the board meeting December 19, the web redesign has continued according to schedule. Following interviews with 60 EFSA staff in Parma in December to gather content requirements and information on how EFSA works, a report of findings and recommendations was submitted by CIMEX. This report will inform the development of the Information Architecture and graphic design. On January 22 and 23 workshops are to be held in London with external website users who have been selected according to user profiles provided by EFSA. Members of the Advisory Forum Working Group on Communications will also be attending.

Human Resources/Recruitment

20. Temporary / Officials / Auxiliary / Contract Agents / END's

Quarter 2

	Recruitment	Departures/ Resignations*	"Net" Result	Total staff number end Q1, 2006
AT + Officials	11	2	9	154
AUX	2	1	1	23
CA	12	0	12	12
END	0	1	-1	9
Total	25	4	21	198

Quarter 3

	Recruitment	Departures/ Resignations*	"Net" Result	Total staff number end Q2, 2006
AT + Officials	12	5	7	161
AUX	3	3	0	23
CA	9	0	9	21
END	1	2	-1	8
Total	25	10	15	213

Quarter 4

MB 23.01.2007 – 7 Progress Report

	Recruitment	Departures/ Resignations*	"Net" Result	Total staff number end Q4, 2006
AT + Officials	14	0	14	175
AUX	4	2	2	25
CA	7	4	3	24
END	2	2	0	8
Total	27	8	19	232

* Includes internal staff members changing contract type/category