

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

30-31 JANUARY 2008

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PARTICIPANTS

Bo Algers, Harry Blokhuis; Donald Broom, Patrizia Costa, Mariano Domingo, Matthias Greiner, Daniel Guemene, Joerg Hartung, Frank Koenen, David Morton, Christine Müller-Graf, , Dirk Pfeiffer, Ronald Roberts, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa M. Sharp, Albert Osterhaus (31st January), Philippe Vannier, Martin Wierup,.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: S. Osaer (DG SANCO),

INVITED OBSERVERS: Lea Knopf (OIE)

EFSA: E. Franchi and H. Figoluszka (administrative staff AHAW Unit); Milen Georgiev (Veterinary trainee in AHAW), S. Correia, O. Ribó, A. Afonso, F. Berthe, F. De Massis, D. Candiani, E. Aiassa, T. Grudnik, 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 M. Wooldridge and A. Osterhaus (30th January) 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 31st Plenary meeting held in Parma on the 4-6 December 2007 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by Panel members 7 January 2008 and published on the web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

4. ROLE OF EFSA IN THE ANIMAL HEALTH STRATEGY

Riitta Maijala, Director of the Risk Assessment department, presented the document on the role of EFSA in the Animal Health Strategy for discussion to the members of the Panel. Panel members gave comments, proposals and possible improvements which will be considered by EFSA together with the comments received by the BIOHAZ. This document will be adopted by EFSA in order to set the priorities in the field of Animal Health in line with the Commission document on Animal health Strategy.

5. FEEDBACK ON THE AHAW PRESENTATION TO THE MANAGEMENT BOARD ON THE 23.01.08

The Chairman of the AHAW Panel explained the main issues discussed at the last Management Board meeting held in Parma 23 January 2008 concerning the AHAW activities between 2003 and 2007.

6. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES

6.1. State of play of new mandates

The Commission official explained that no new mandates were ready. However the Commission is preparing drafts that will be sent as soon as available to EFSA in line with the work programme 2009. It was agreed to invite SANCO officials responsible for animal diseases and welfare to the next plenary meeting in March in order to give feed-back to the Panel on the opinions requested by SANCO and to exchange of points of view between risk assessors and risk managers.

7. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE

7.1. Tuberculosis testing in Deer

In December's plenary the Commission official stated that an assessment for the testing of animals moving between non-TB-free herds was seen as essential for the scientific opinion. The Panel agreed to address this additional issue and to provide recommendations concerning requirements to reduce the risk of transmission of tuberculosis to deer farms as well as to wildlife and to domestic animals. An official letter has been sent to the Commission confirming the new deadline (29 February) and an extra meeting was held on the 18 January and a new chapter has been added into the report, and new conclusions and recommendations have been included in the opinion. The draft scientific report and opinion were presented to the Panel for possible adoption. After several comments and amendments the opinion was adopted unanimously. EFSA scientific staff with the support of the Chairman will revise the Opinion before sending it to the web.

7.2. Fish Welfare - Atlantic Salmon report

The Salmon report was discussed during the previous December plenary and was submitted for comments by panel members, working group members, EC and EMEA. For the general fish welfare-part it was decided that it should be completed progressively by the different WGs /species and could be adapted by species and mandate. Conclusions and Recommendations were discussed. A stakeholders/advisory forum meeting on fish welfare is scheduled for the 4 March 2008. The Salmon Welfare opinion as modified during the plenary, will be submitted at this meeting for consultation. The results of the consultation will be discussed at the March Plenary and the Panel will consider those scientific inputs from the stakeholders concerned and the final opinion will be submitted for possible adoption. The food safety chapters will be one section common to all 5 reports and submitted at the end of June for possible adoption by the BIOHAZ panel.

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

8.1. Fish Welfare-Trout:

The last meeting was held on 17-18 December. Final meeting is scheduled for the 27-28/2/08. The report /opinion will be submitted for possible adoption during the March plenary meeting.

8.2. Fish welfare-Carp:

The Carp welfare WG was set up in the autumn of 2007. The first two WG meetings were held on October 10 and December 11/12) and a third meeting took place on January 28/29 2008. The scientific report Draft3.Rev0 has been circulated for contributions from the WG to be received by March 4th. The last WG meeting for carp welfare is scheduled for March 11/12 2008.

8.3. Fish welfare-Sea bass and gilthead sea bream:

A list of experts to be contacted has been established and submitted to the Chairman of the WG to be. Experts are expected to be contacted in early February. A first meeting is expected soon after.

8.4. Fish welfare-European eel:

Experts have been contacted after consultation with the Chairman of the WG and a first meeting is scheduled soon after the stakeholders' consultation, on March 10 2008. Second and third meetings are planned for mid-April and late May. The scientific report should be completed early June for possible adoption.

8.5. Welfare of Dairy Cows

The last WG meeting was held on 3 December 2007, together with a Consultation Meeting with EU Member States representatives (4 December 2007, Palazzo Ducale, Parma). Next WG meeting will be held next 5-6 February 2008, where all reported suggestions for improving the report, from the Consultation Meeting with MS, will be merged in a document and discussed.

8.6. 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 first Working groups will be organised in the afternoon of the 31 January in Parma, and observers from the Commission, OIE and EMEA were invited to attend. A teleconference will be organised to include those experts that were not able to attend the meeting. Two more working groups will be organised (26 February and 27 March 2008), and the transversal meeting will be held on 17 April 2008. All the meetings will have web conferences for those experts that cannot travel to the meeting.

8.7. Classical Swine Fever

A meeting has been organised with the Commission and an EMEA expert in order to clarify the terms of reference of the mandate (19 December). Two sentences were added in order to clarify the 2nd term of reference: *a) What is the risk that wild type virus is present in fresh meat obtained from pigs vaccinated in an emergency situation during an outbreak?; b) What are the sampling schemes and testing procedures needed to be applied to detect field virus in fresh meat derived from pigs vaccinated following an emergency vaccination during an outbreak?* The deadline will be postponed to January 2009. Experts have been contacted and the first WG meeting was held on the 29 January. An expert was nominated by EMEA to join the group.

8.8. Bluetongue

A new Mandate on bluetongue has been received by the AHAW Panel on 14 December 2007. To clarify the ToRs, a kick-off meeting was held with the Commission on December 17 2007. The Commission is asking to review and to update previous opinions as regards vectors ecology (models for distribution/density; in order to have more accurate and applicable criteria for the determination of the seasonally free period), and in regard to over-wintering mechanisms and the length of viraemia of BT virus. Moreover, the COM is asking EFSA to provide a scientific assessment of the appropriateness of insecticides and repellents for *Culicoides*. Finally, an assessment of the risk of transit as defined in Regulation (EC) N°1266/2007, in particular taking into account the treatment with insecticides/repellents of animals and/or the means of transport was requested. The deadline proposed (June 2008) has been accepted and a draft work plan has been prepared by the EFSA Secretariat. Next WG meetings are scheduled for 18-19 February and 8-9 April 2008. A Transversal meeting has been scheduled for 20-21 May. The Opinion is expected to be finalised for May 30 in order to be presented for possible adoption during the 17-18 June Plenary.

8.9. Self-mandate Animal Welfare

The EFSA self-mandate on the development of the RA Guidelines for AW will be partly carried out through grants under Article 36. The AW issues to be considered in the Guidelines have been divided in three main categories: stunning and killing, transport, housing and management. Following these categories, a grant under Article 36 was awarded last December 2007 in order to develop the AW RA Guidelines for stunning and killing. A second call for the development of the Transport part of the Guidelines is to be launched early 2008 (see point 9.5) with the final objective to finish the AW RA Guidelines by 2009.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

9.1. Adopted opinions

Adopted Scientific Reports and Scientific Opinions have included: Welfare risks associated with pig tail biting; Animal welfare aspects of the killing and skinning of seals; Vector species and live

stages of susceptible species as regards certain aquatic animal diseases: Crustacea and Molluscs; and Zoonoses. They have all been published on the EFSA Web.

9.2. EXTRANET development in AHAW.

AHAW workspace has recently expanded. Panel members have been granted access to the community of projects. Panel members can directly download documents in their latest version. This mean of communication will be used to prepare Plenary Meetings and document consultation. More recently a new functionality has been added to monitor current mandates and progress of WGs. The table in the main page also provides a tool for comments on line. This new tool has been presented to the panel and will be further tested prior to full exploitation by AHAW.

9.3. Consultation on EMEA-CVMP draft on Guideline for approval authorization of Veterinary Medicines for Aquaculture.

The AHAW panel was invited to provide comments for the CVMP concept paper for the revision of the "Guideline for the efficacy of veterinary medicinal products for use in farmed aquatic species". The final AHAW comments were distributed at plenary and the preliminary comments will be submitted to EMEA by the 31st January 2008.

9.4. Discussion of the draft document on aquatic disease definitions

Following the mandate EFSA-Q-2007-044, the AHAW Panel noted that the definitions provided in the context of the applicable EU-legislation, and part of the Mandate by the Commission, for "disease", "susceptible species" and "vector" are not the same as those commonly used in the peer-reviewed papers of the scientific literature. A working document was presented to the members of the Panel for possible discussion, however due to the lack of time this point was postponed until the next plenary.

9.5. Information about calls under Article 36 2007/2008

Animal disease: a grant under Article 36 was awarded last December on the "Scientific reviews on 3 specific animal diseases and an evaluation of the distribution of arthropod vectors and their potential for transmitting exotic or emerging vector-borne animal diseases and zoonoses." A consortium was chosen and the Project Report is expected to be delivered by September 2008.

Animal welfare: a grant under Article 36 was awarded last December 2007 in order to develop the Animal Welfare RA Guidelines for stunning and killing. The Project Report is expected to be delivered by September 2008.

For 2008, three calls will be launched, two on tools for animal disease control on the main AH diseases (including aquatic animals) identified by AHAW and Commission; and one on animal welfare.

9.6. Next Plenary Meeting

The next plenary meeting will take place in Parma on the 13-March (from 09.00 to 18.00h) and on the 14 March (from **08.30 to 15.30h**).