

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 122nd Plenary meeting

Held on 18-19 March 2020

EFSA, Parma, WEBMEETING¹

(Agreed on 31 March 2020)²

Participants

■ Panel Members:

ALVAREZ Julio, BICOUT Dominique, CALISTRI Paolo (for 23 January via Skype for Business (SFB)), DEPNER Klaus, DREWE Julian, GARIN-BASTUJI Bruno, GONZALES ROJAS Jose Luis, GORTAZAR SCHMIDT Christian, MICHEL Virginie, MIRANDA Miguel Angel, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose (Chair), ROBERTS Helen, SIHVONEN Liisa, SPOOLDER Hans, STAHL Karl, VELARDE Antonio, VILTROP Arvo, WINCKLER Christoph.

■ European Commission: FORCELLA Simona (point 6.4 and 7.2), MARINI Marina (point 8 and 9.2)

■ EFSA:

ALPHA UNIT: Aznar Inmaculada, Francesca Baldinelli, Alessandro Broglio, Denise Candiani, Sofie Dhollander, Yves Van der Stede, Gabriele Zancanaro, Corina Ivanciu, Sara Gisella Omodeo, Claire Donohue, Cristina Rapagna, Nik Križž (HoU), Yves Van der Stede

SCER UNIT : GERVELMEYER Andrea

AMU UNIT : MOSBACH-SCHULZ Olaf

■ Hearing experts³: not applicable.

■ Observers: not applicable.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

¹ All meetings were rescheduled to web meetings due to Covid-19

² Minutes should be published within 15 working days of the final day of the relevant meeting.

³ As defined in Article 17 of the Decision of the Executive Director concerning the selection of members of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Panels, and the selection of external experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work:
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/expertselection.pdf>.



The Chair welcomed the meeting participants and provided instructions to the Panel members for the Web meeting. No apologies were received from Panel members.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence⁴ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management⁵, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled in by the Scientific Panel Members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting had been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 121st Plenary meeting held on 22 & 23 January 2020, Parma, (Italy)

The minutes of the 121st Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 7 February 2020.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption or endorsement

5.1. Art 29 –Assessment of the impact of rift valley fever (RVF) and relevant control measures in Mayotte ([EFSA-Q-2019-00421](#))-

This opinion assesses the probability of overwintering of RVF in the department of Mayotte as well as the risk of RVF spreading from Mayotte to other areas including other French departments in the Indian Ocean or Metropolitan France (TOR 2.1). In addition, an assessment of the impact of the disease with emphasis on animal health and farm production in Mayotte is included (TOR 2.2). The opinion was presented to the Panel and thoroughly discussed. All comments provided by the Panel members were discussed and addressed. Additional information from a recent study was integrated in the conclusion on reintroduction and persistence of RVF in Mayotte (the virus that was reintroduced in 2018-2019 epidemic was genetically a different from the one isolated from the epidemic in 2007). Minor modifications in summary, conclusions and recommendations were implemented. The AHAW Panel adopted the Opinion unanimously.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

6.1. Art.29- Scientific opinion concerning the slaughter of pigs _-([EFSA-Q-2018-00717](#))-

⁴ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

⁵ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf



This draft opinion was thoroughly discussed with the Panel members. All the comments made by the Panel members on the document were discussed and addressed. Related to the methodology and structure of the opinion it was agreed with the Panel that the part on uncertainty should not be repeated all the time in the conclusions but to leave it as a preamble in the conclusions. In addition, it was agreed to make it more clear in the scientific opinion which parts/phases belong to 'before slaughter' and 'pre-stunning'.

It was agreed among the Panel members that the WG should provide different options for the formulation of 'Unacceptable practices, procedures, methods' based on welfare grounds. The WG should agree upon one formulation and provide this via written procedure to the Panel members.

6.2. Art.29--Scientific opinion for the listing and categorisation of -transmissible animal diseases caused by bacteria resistant to -antimicrobials, in the framework of the Animal Health Law -(EFSA-Q-2019-00760)

The general approach and the timeline of this mandate were presented. It is foreseen that between March 2020 and December 2020 data on bacteria – impactful for animal health and for which problems on AMR are detected - will be collected via a framework contract (outsourcing). By January – March 2021 an assessment of TOR2 by WG/Panel is foreseen and the Scientific opinion (TOR2) should be adopted by June 2021. The work on TOR3 will start with output of TOR2. The WG composition should be finalised in April 2020. The Chair of the WG is Julio Alvares. A BIOHAZ Panel member was assigned (Friederike Hilbert).

6.3. Art.29 - -Scientific opinion on the evaluation of public and animal health risks in case of a delayed post-mortem inspection in ungulates (EFSA-Q-2019-00124)-

A questionnaire for obtaining information on the sensitivity of post-mortem inspection to detect a range of lesions and changes if performed 24 or 72 hours compared to immediately after slaughter has been sent to meat inspectors from different Member States. The questionnaire was explained to the Panel, it contains a matrix for different organs and lesions (haemorrhage, oedema, necrosis, fibrin) and another question (Yes/No) phrased for chronic lesions (n=8) where it was assumed that there is no change. to the intention is to check the assumption with the meat inspectors. In total, 17 replies were received from BE, DK, FR, SE and ES and will be analysed. The way how uncertainty should be expressed in the analysis was discussed thoroughly: a semi-formal EKE within the WG will be executed given the results from the questionnaire. Another questionnaire about Se decrease in TB testing was sent to reference labs. The number of participants (n=14) is small compared to the number of possibilities provided as answers. In particular, the distribution of histopathology was discussed and should be carefully interpreted. It was proposed to have experts on uncertainty (cross-cutting WG) to propose methods on how this could be tackled.

6.4. Art 29 - TOR2: African Swine Fever Risk ranking matrices ([EFSA-Q-2019-00618](#))

The outcome of the public consultation of the data section of the scientific opinion was discussed with the Panel members. The public consultation was finished on 28 February 2020. Questions were asked on i) on ASFV survival in different categories of matrices identified in the literature



review complete ii) Other studies on the survival of ASFV in these matrix categories iii) Production/ processing parameters that might affect ASFV survival of those matrix categories for which ASFV survival has not been studied and iv) additional categories of matrices that need to be considered regarding the risk of transmitting ASFV to domestic pigs. In total, 51 comments, 17 documents, 21 contributors from 4 different stakeholder groups and 10 suggestions of additional matrices in which ASFV could potentially survive were received. The comments received are analysed and taken up the report of public consultation based on the WG discussions.

The methodology and the assessment model to be used for risk of spread of ASF in each of the different matrices was discussed. The presented model was agreed within the Panel. The planned Expert Elicitations meetings – planned in April, May and June will organised differently (via web) due to COVID-19.

6.5. Surveillance and control measures for rift valley fever (RVF) in EU (EFSA-Q-2019-00420)

A short update is given on the methodology to be used for the 3rd RVF mandate. A model will be used to model the spread of RVF (if introduced in Europe) and evaluate the intervention measures. The model used for the spread BLTV in Europe will be adopted for this study. For Mayotte, there are some data available to parametrise the model for Europe some scenario's will be defined as there is lack of real (field) data. For the scenario's in the model it is agreed in the Panel that only those regions at highest risk in the EU should be prioritised for the exercise.

6.6. Art.29 -_-Scientific opinion as regards specific maximum levels of cross-contamination for 24 antimicrobial active substances in non-target feed (EFSA-Q-2019-00221)

Soren gives a short update on the mandate that is collaboration and under coordination of BIOHAZ Panel. It was highlighted that clarifications were asked by the EC in relation to the used methodology as there is lack in data and/or poor quality of data and various important assumptions are made in order to perform the calculations based on (mainly) *in vitro* data.

6.7. Art.31 -_-Report X monitoring -AI- situation inside -and outside the EU for the (16 November 2019 to 15 February 2020)

Francesca Baldinelli presented the results of the last report on monitoring of AI which covers the period between November 2019 and February 2020.

7. New Mandates

7.1. Art. 29.-_-Request for a scientific opinion as regards disease control measures for category A diseases of terrestrial animals in the framework of the Animal Health Law_-

The action plan in order to tackle this mandate was presented to the Panel members. A framework contract has been prepared in order to launch in March. The contract aims to have three specific order forms: the first order form will provide the basis for all scientific opinions (one per disease; in total 14) and foresees 5 diseases (FMD, ASF, LSD, HPAI and ND). A second order



form will tackle the other nine diseases. For each disease three TORs will be answered (sampling procedures of animals and establishments, effectiveness of the length of the monitoring period and effectiveness of the radius and length of time of protection and surveillance zone). A separate order form will be launched in order to reply to TOR4 (prohibition in restriction zone and risk mitigation treatments for products of animal origin and other material).

The composition of the WG (Panel members are Arvo Viltrop, Karl Stahl, Julio Alvares) was proposed and Helen Roberts was assigned by the Chair of the Panel as the Chair of the WG. Paolo Calistri and Søren Saxmose Nielsen were listed as deep reviewers.

7.2. Art. 29 & Art 31 Mandates and Technical reports on ASF in EU (Epidemiological reports) -

New mandates were received from the EC and the TORs were discussed with the Panel members. Received mandates are:

- i) Art. 31: Request for scientific and technical assistance on African swine fever in order to analyse the epidemiological data on ASF from Member States and non-EU countries affected by ASF Genotype II (**Epi-5 & Epi-6 reports**) including analysis of the temporal and spatial patterns of ASF in wild boar to and to review the previously identified risk factors involved in the occurrence, spread and persistence of the ASF virus in the wild boar population and in the domestic/wildlife interface with a view to strengthen biosecurity and other risk mitigation measures. In addition an analysis of ASF in Romania of the temporal and spatial patterns of ASF in domestic pigs should be done. A fourth TOR was added in relation to data and information on the geographical areas called white zones (zones blanches) applied by free Member States (in particular France and Luxembourg at the border with Belgium) for preventing the spread of the disease in wild boar
- ii) Art. 29 Scientific opinion on **exit strategy** for ASF in EU including TORs on the role of seropositive wild boar, ASF persistence in affected areas and pathways to ASF freedom in defined areas;
- iii) Art 29 Scientific opinion on outdoor farming in the EU including TORs on risk factors linked to the keeping of **outdoor farmed domestic and feral pigs** and to collect best practices on biosecurity measures in case of outdoor keeping of domestic and feral pigs. It was suggested to map the presence and types of outdoor farms in the EU and to build also on experience of endemic areas in Africa such as Botswana and South-Africa as input for this mandate;
- iv) Art 29 Scientific opinion on **research gaps** identified by stakeholders which cover mainly wild boar population management and wild boar behaviour in relation to the control of ASF; the role of arthropod vectors (biological and mechanical) in ASF transmission and ASFV survival; the transmission in the environment and factors that contribute patterns of seasonality. The mandate requires to design study protocols to investigate those gaps in knowledge and it was explained that some outsourcing activities could be envisioned for this mandate.

The concept of creating sub-groups of the Standing Working Group on African Swine fever was presented during the AHAW plenary and Karl Stahl, Helen Roberts, Christian Gortazar Schmidt, Arvo Viltrop and Miguel Angel Miranda agreed to be the vice-chairs for the Epi-5 & Epi-6 report, the matrices mandate, the outdoor pig farming, the exit strategy and the gap research respectively.



8. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission-Activities from other Panels

The EC provided some feedback on the upcoming mandates on ASF (see point 7.2) and welfare. The latter mandates will be sent in the framework of updating the welfare legislation on animal transport and the protection and welfare of specific species (pigs, broilers, laying hens, calves). These welfare mandates were not originally planned in the midterm planning, but are put high on the political agenda of the EC.

9. Any other business & wrap up

9.1. Wrap up and next meeting

A short wrap up was provided and tasks were distributed. Next Plenary meeting is 6-7 May 2020 (Open Plenary) and will be a web meeting due to COVID-19.

9.2. Covid-19 in animals

A short round table was organised to collect information on ongoing risk assessments of COVID-19 in animals (including pets). Currently ANSES (<https://www.anses.fr/en/content/covid-19-cannot-be-transmitted-either-farm-animals-or-domestic-animals-0>) and DEFRA are doing risk assessment. Experimental (challenge) studies with the new coronavirus SARS-Cov2 are planned in France, the Netherlands, Italy and UK in various species (pigs, poultry, pets).