Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 124th Plenary meeting

Held on 24-25 June 2020

EFSA, Parma, WEBMEETING[1]

(Agreed on 10 July 2020)[2]

Participants

- **Panel Members:**

  ALVAREZ Julio, BICOUT Dominique, CALISTRI Paolo, 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:** LOGAR Barbara (point 6.4 and 6.5), SANDER-VORNHAGEN Kirsten & GAVINELLI Andrea (point 5.1, 6.1 and 7), ILEVICIUS Zilvinas (Point 6.8), FORCELLA Simona (point 6.2, 6.3, 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8), COHEN Iulia (point 6.10), KUSTER Laszlo (Point 6.5).

- **EFSA:**

  ALPHA UNIT: Antoniou Sotiria-Eleni, Aznar Inmaculada, Baldinelli Francesca, Broglia Alessandro, Candiani Denise, Carfagnini Roberta, Donohue Claire, Dhollander Sofie, Dorbek-Kolin Elisabeth, Ivanciu Corina, Križ Nik (HoU), Omodeo Sara Gisella, Rapagna Cristina, Van der Stede Yves, Zancanaro Gabriele

  AMU UNIT: CORTIÑAS ABRAHANTES José

  SCER UNIT: GERVELMEYER Andrea, GARCIA MATAS Raquel

  GMO UNIT: ARDIZZONE Michele

- **Hearing experts[3]:** not applicable.

- **Observers:** not applicable

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[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.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

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 Independence[4] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management[5,] 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 123rd Plenary meeting held on 6 & 7 May 2020, Parma, (Italy)

The minutes of the 123rd Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 20 May 2020.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption or endorsement

5.1. Art. 29 - Scientific opinion concerning the killing of pigs for other purposes than slaughter (EFSA-Q-2018-00718)

This draft opinion was thoroughly discussed with the Panel members. Comments from three panel members were addressed. One comment in the section 'Interpretation of TORs' was related to the use of toxins and substances in feed to kill pigs (e.g. feral pigs) and that are not harmful or painful. No comments were provided for the general conclusions. The use of nose snares was eventually not considered as a serious welfare concern as this method is under certain circumstances indispensable for restraining pigs and widely used in the EU. It was agreed that the restraining by this method should be kept as short as possible. The recommendation mentioning a 'two-step killing method' was left out in the recommendation section. The AHAW Panel adopted the Opinion unanimously.

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion (pre-adoption)

6.1. Art. 29 - Scientific opinion concerning the killing of cattle (EFSA-Q-2018-00719)

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. Referring to an ongoing court case

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[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

in BE, the EC had no comments on slaughter without stunning, but the Panel agreed that slaughter without stunning could not be considered separately. No comments on conclusions and recommendations were received and the draft opinion was considered in good shape for fluent adoption by the AHAW panel (planned for adoption in September 2020).

6.2. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on African swine fever: Outdoor farming (EFSA-Q-2020-00425)

The draft protocol for addressing the mandate on outdoor farming of pigs was presented. It describes for each assessment question the data needed, the data collection methods and the assessment methods. Information/data on pig farming classification systems and outdoor farming categories existing in MS, on biosecurity measures applied in MS's outdoor pig farms and on epidemiological evidence linking outdoor pig farms to ASF introduction or spread will be collected through a questionnaire survey to MS, a review of ADNS data and a literature review. Based on the evidence collected, an expert knowledge elicitation will be carried out to group the outdoor pig farming systems according to their risk of ASFV introduction and spread, to rank the biosecurity measures regarding their impact on reducing the risk of for introduction of ASFV and spread of ASFV, and to propose improvements of biosecurity for outdoor pig farming categories and the control measures that should flank these. The review of risk factors for outbreaks that occurred on outdoor farms will list any risk factors identified during the outbreak investigations. The proposed protocol was agreed by the Panel and the EC and will be executed as agreed. K. Ståhl and L. Sihvonen were appointed as deep reviewers, D. Bicout offered to review the uncertainty assessment of the draft scientific opinion.

6.3. Art. 29 - TOR2: African Swine Fever Risk ranking matrices (EFSA-Q-2019-00618)

An update on the progress made in the expert knowledge elicitations (EKE) was provided. Due to the COVID-19-related restrictions, instead of three physical workshops of 2.5-3-day duration, 26 tele meetings are being carried out with the EKE experts to elicit their knowledge. The process will be completed in mid-July, by the end of July the EKE report will be circulated to the WG members.

6.4. Art. 29 - Disease control measures category A diseases AHL (EFSA-Q-2019-00198)

It was agreed with the EC and AHAW Panel members that an extra scenario will be addressed in the TOR 1.4. The methodology to answer the TORs was presented and thoroughly discussed with the AHAW panel. In order to reply to the TORS an extensive literature will be conducted; apart from retrieving information on different parameters needed for setting up a compartmental model for each of the Category A diseases, information on the time between infection and suspicion for all these diseases will be outsource. Related to TOR3 it was discussed whether a standard design prevalence of 5% (95% Confidence interval) could be used for all diseases. It was agreed that the approach should be tailored for each disease (e.g. fast spreading diseases versus slow spreading diseases) and that a same design prevalence (5%) cannot work for all diseases. It was agreed that models could be used that rely on dynamics of disease. The number of infected establishments, as estimated by the models at a specific point in time (time where the disease is most likely suspected) will be an output of the model. Kernel approach should be used to assess the minimum radius of the protection and surveillance zones if data are available and these can be used to validate the model(s); if not the parameters will be obtained from EKE. The monitoring period (TOR2) was thoroughly discussed with the Panel

members in order to understand which time periods should be taken into account and how this could be formulated in technical specifications. It was agreed that AHAW panel members could provide feedback on the questions raised in the presentation or that these questions could be discussed after the AHAW panel meeting on a bilateral basis.

6.5. 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 WG defined a list of transmissible bacteria causing animal diseases for which there are AMR concerns (defined as bacterium causing diseases for which antimicrobial treatment is typically administered and for which reduced treatment efficacy and/or reduced susceptibility in-vitro has been described). The scope of the list are relevant pathogenic bacteria for certain food-producing and companion animal species excluding bacteria covered by Directive 2003/99/EC. The list of bacteria in the Excel file were discussed among the AHAW panel members for the criteria that were set in order to evaluate the impact by expert opinion (Yes/No/Unknown). These are the criteria formulated in the Excel file:
- ✓ "It rarely causes disease or production losses considering the global situation"
- ✓ "Its presence (alone or in combination with other pathogens) never or rarely leads to antimicrobial treatment"
- ✓ "It never or rarely causes antimicrobial treatment failure due to the existence of antimicrobial resistance".

Some of these assessments were already made and discussed for agreement. The formulation of the criteria was discussed and it was agreed that final comments could be provided by 13 July 2020 via written procedure. An updated Excel file will be sent to the AHAW panel members.

6.6. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on African swine fever: Exit Strategy (EFSA-Q-2020-00423)

The methodology was thoroughly discussed with the AHAW panel members. The opinion will be built on 3 pillars: exploration of field data, a narrative review and a spatial explicit stochastic model. A literature review will be carried out to identify all parameters that could prolong the duration of virus circulation in wild boar populations. This may include parameters such as the survival of ASFV in environment, in arthropods, wild boar density, duration of protective immunity, possible carriers, or spill over with domestic pig populations. Currently it is not yet clear that we do observe persistence in wild boar populations. The evidence in the studies will be appraised. It was discussed whether persistent infected animal exist. Persistence is considered on population level. Pigs and wild boar will not be considered as carriers with low role in persistence; rather persistence at population level. All factors will be considered and could be used as input (scenario) for the model. The model will simulate how the seroprevalence would look like when such scenarios are included and compare with ongoing surveillance results. In addition, it will identify if, for instance the current surveillance would be able to capture a potential hidden virus circulation due to the relevant parameters that could prolong the virus circulation. The EC requested if existing information could be reviewed of the Czech Republic were restrictions were lifted in March 2019 in after first detection of ASF in wild boar in June 2017 . It was agreed to include narratively (depending on the sero-surveillance results). S. Nielsen and J. Gonzales Rojas have been appointed deep reviewers. The Panel aims to deliver the opinion in January 2021.

6.7. Art. 31 - Technical and scientific assistance on African swine fever: EPI-5 report (EFSA-Q-2020-00426)

The methodology for the EPI-5 report was discussed. It was agreed for TOR1 to apply the Nearest infectious neighbour method as described in Barongo et al. (2015, https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0125842&type=printable). It was agreed by the AHAW panel to apply the method but not call the output R0. It is rather a descriptive way to identify by means of a network analysis to identify a proxy for secondary cases caused by an infected herd from the beginning of the epidemic and at the end of the epidemic. This allows within a country an evaluation of possible interventions. The assumptions taken for this method (60 days infectious period and a band of 1 km to select the herds/outbreaks) were thoroughly discussed. The inclusion of stochasticity for the selection of the network was not considered. For TOR2 there are no changes in the method agreed in previous AHAW panel meeting. For TOR3, the definition of white zone was explained (= free area adjacent to affected area where measures are applied to stop the spread of ASF from affected areas). The first step is to collect information on all subzones (shp.file and description of barriers; duration and intensity); the second step will be to model the effectiveness of the measures using quantitative information provided. D. Bicout and K. Depner were appointed deep reviewers. The Panel aims to deliver the output in March 2021.

6.8. Art. 29 - Scientific opinion on African swine fever: research gap analysis (EFSA-Q-2020-00430)

An overview was given on the different steps to identify, prioritise and develop protocols for relevant research objectives in the 4 research domains given in the TORs of the mandate. For step 4 (development of research protocol), some research protocols will be developed by working group and some by contractors. Input asked from the panel was related to a final list of research objectives and their ranking. Input will be required by 10 July to agree on priority scoring and the numbers of protocols to be developed. Dominique Bicout and Julio Alvarez were appointed deep reviewers. Input will be required by 10 July to agree on priority scoring and the numbers of protocols to be developed. The Panel aims to deliver the opinion in June 2021.

6.9. 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)

The results of the disease matrix as well as the lesion/organ disease map and its related uncertainty were presented to the Panel. Discussion followed and Panel members provided comments and input for the WG. The AHAW panel will endorse this part of the scientific opinion in September 2020. Adoption of the scientific opinion will be done by BIOHAZ Panel in December 2020.

6.10. Art. 29 - Surveillance and control measures for rift valley fever (RVF) in Mayotte and EU (EFSA-Q-2019-00420)

The model in order to tackle the TORs was presented and explained. It was agreed that a section on uncertainty should be added. The model was applied to two MSs (the Netherlands and Greece) that were considered at highest risk for introduction with RVF in the EU. The results of

the Netherlands, using the fat tail distribution, seems to produce plausible results. It was asked to have a close look on the maps that show the natural spread of RVF once it would be introduced and whether the assumptions in the model can be shared within the AHAW panel. This opinion is planned for adoption in September 2020.

6.11. Art. 31 - Scientific and technical assistance on Avian Influenza monitoring (EFSA-Q-2020-00272)

Francesca Baldinelli presented to the Panel members the report on monitoring of Avian Influenza within and outside Europe for the reporting period February – May 2020 that is published on 30 June 2020 https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/6194.

7. New Mandates

Andrea Gavinelli (DG-SANTE) presented Farm2fork (F2F) strategy to present background on which the new mandates on welfare were submitted to EFSA. EFSA and SANTE agreed to meet on regular basis to better monitor the fast evolving situation. Denise Candiani presented the overall approach and organisation for the F2F mandates. The specific risk scenario's for which quantitative or qualitative criteria should be defined (for animal based measures, welfare consequences and preventive and corrective actions) were highlighted.

7.1. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on welfare: transport of animals

The TORs were presented and discussed by the AHAW panel members. D. Bicout and M. Miranda were appointed deep reviewers. H. Spoolder highlighted how cross linking activities are important and different issues should be aligned in different mandates.

7.2. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on welfare: protection of laying hens

The TORs were presented and discussed by the AHAW panel members. Deep reviewers should be appointed during summer 2020.

7.3. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on welfare: protection of calves

The TORs were presented and discussed by the AHAW panel members. Soren Saxmosen Nielsen volunteered for deep reviewer. Other deep reviewers should be appointed during summer 2020.

7.4. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on welfare: protection of broilers

The TORs were presented and discussed by the AHAW panel members. Deep reviewers should be appointed during summer 2020.

7.5. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on welfare: protection of pigs

The TORs were presented and discussed by the AHAW panel members. Deep reviewers should be appointed during summer 2020.

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

8.1. Feedback from the EC

See point 7. Andrea Gavinelli is appointed as the new HoU for Animal Welfare at the EC (SANTE.DDG2.G.2.003).

9. Any other business & wrap up

9.1. Covid-19 in animals

A short round table was organised to collect information on ongoing risk assessments of COVID-19 in animals (including pets). Helen Roberts informed the AHAW panel about ongoing risk assessments for fish (Salmon) and the use of a prioritisation tool (ECDC) for impact assessment of COVID-19 in animal health.

9.2. Feedback '2020'

Yves Van der Stede presented the results of the expert mutual assessment survey to the AHAW panel and requested the panel members to provide a timeslot to organise the bilateral interviews.

9.3. DICO Digital collaboration

An overview on SharePoint/teams functionality was provided by EFSA IT staff (Marco Conterbia).

9.4. Wrap up and next meeting

A short wrap up was provided and tasks were distributed.

Next Plenary meeting will be via WEB next 23-24 September 2020.