

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 126th Plenary meeting

Held on 28 October 2020

EFSA, Parma, WEBMEETING¹

(Agreed on 12 November 2020)²

Participants

■ Panel Members:

ALVAREZ Julio, BICOUT Dominique, CALISTRI Paolo, DREWE Julian, GARIN-BASTUJI Bruno, GONZALES ROJAS Jose Luis, GORTAZAR SCHMIDT Christian, HERSKIN Mette, MICHEL Virginie, MIRANDA Miguel Angel, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose (Chair), PASQUALI Paolo, ROBERTS Helen, SIHVONEN Liisa, SPOOLDER Hans, STAHL Karl, VELARDE Antonio, VILTROP Arvo, WINCKLER Christoph

■ European Commission: LOGAR Barbara (point 6.1), MASSOT-BERNA Cristina (Point 6.1), SANDER-VORNHAGEN Kirsten (point 5.1, 6.1-6.6, 9-1) SIMONIN Denis (point 5.1), KUSTER Laszlo (point 6.2, 9.1), FORCELLA Simona (6.7-6.11), GAVINELLI Andrea (point 8.1).

■ EFSA:

ALPHA UNIT: Antoniou Sotiria-Eleni, Ashe Sean, Aznar Inma, Baldinelli Francesca, Broglia Alessandro, Candiani Denise, Carfagnini Roberta, Dhollander Sofie, Dorbek-Kolin Elisabeth, Fabris Chiara, Ivanciu Corina, Gervelmeyer Andrea, Križ Nik (HoU), Omodeo Sara Gisella, Rapagna Cristina, Van der Stede Yves, Veggeland Maria Vaeret, Zancanaro Gabriele

■ Hearing experts³: not applicable.

■ Observers: not applicable

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 two new AHAW panel members were Apologies were received from Christoph Winckler (from 13h onwards) and Hans Spoolder (from 13h onwards).

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 125th Plenary meeting held on 23-24 September 2020, Parma, (Italy)

The minutes of the 125th Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 9 October 2020.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption

5.1. Art. 29 - Scientific opinion concerning the killing (on-farm) of cattle (EFSA-Q-2018-00720)

This draft opinion was thoroughly discussed with the Panel members. Comments from panel members received between 15 and 24 October 2020 were addressed. Specific questions were raised: the weight - given to scientific evidence in case of available literature and expert opinion, in case no literature is available - is equally weighted and treated in the Scientific Opinion. The term 'skilled staff' was considered and discussed since 'skilled' should not only refer to the technical skills but also understanding the why (behavioural pattern and understanding why certain procedures should be followed).

The use of rifles, in order to kill the animals on farm, should be put more in the context of the European Union. The use of these devices is allowed according to Council Regulation 1099/2009. It was argued that EU references instead of references from USA would be more appropriate. In addition, clarity was added to the section on the use of rifles to clarify that national legislation is in place on the use of rifles in general. In the section for killing and stunning of buffaloes details (the position and the length of captive bolt and charge to be used) were added. The AHAW Panel adopted the Opinion unanimously.

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



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

6.1. Art. 29 – Disease control measures category A diseases AHL (EFSA-Q-2020-00193-00198)

Four outputs were presented to AHAW panel for thorough discussion: the methodology report to tackle TOR1, TOR2 and TOR3 for all category A diseases of AHL, the African Horse sickness Scientific Opinion, the Highly Pathogen Avian Influenza Opinion and the African Swine Fever Opinion. The comments and feedback were incorporated in the documents. For the methodology report it was recommended to remove meta-analysis as this is not covered in the report. The section describing methodology for ToR 1 should clearly differentiate between the methodology applied when specific samples are mentioned in the legislation (e.g. HPAI), and the methodology used when guidelines in the legislation refer to achieving a specific confidence for a surveillance system (ASF, 95% confidence scenarios). For the uncertainty assessment, it was agreed that the sources of uncertainty will be listed and most of these will be qualitatively assessed. For AHS Opinion: it was recommended to evaluate whether the output of contractors aligns with the methodology report, and with all the other disease opinions. It was discussed whether vaccination in AHS should be considered as a (future) option in this opinion and whether this influences the potential diagnostic assays to be used in protection and surveillance zones. The EC will get back to EFSA in relation to whether vaccination should be considered when assessing the ToRs.

For ASF Opinion: The section covering the quantitative assessment of the laboratory measures and the results and assessment of ToR 2 were not shared with experts previous the panel meeting. At the meeting, it was stressed that the AHAW panel members should still read the section on the quantitative assessment of the laboratory measures (sample size and probabilities of detection using specific sample sizes). This will be finalised in the week of 3 to 9 November 2020. The panel members will be reminded to check this part at that point in time as it will help to make the final decision on whether or not the opinion go for adoption in November. It was emphasised that the models used for CSF to infer to ASF should be motivated and explained.

A suggestion by the AHAW panel members to have for each SO a summary of key messages would be appreciated in the final output.

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 methodology to conduct the assessment of relevant bacteria in the EU was presented to the AHAW panel members. EFSA staff provided an overview of ToRs to the Panel. Currently the data collection is ongoing (via procurement and awarded tenderer University of Copenhagen) and aims - via an extensive literature review - to identify bacterial pathogens causing diseases in animals for which clinical resistance or reduced susceptibility to antimicrobial classes included in AMEG Categories B, C or D has been described. Inclusion criteria were identified by the WG experts and agreed with the AHAW panel members. In order to assess the actual and potential impact on animal health of the identified AMR bacteria in the EU (by bacterium and host), a two-step approach was proposed: Step 1: Identify the relevant bacteria. EU relevance is to be understood on the basis of practical considerations, such as actual presence in the EU or presence elsewhere but in animal species, age groups or production systems which are widely used in the EU, or similar elements. The WG will consider evidence of EU relevance (non-anecdotal) reports of AMR bacteria presence in the EU or present elsewhere in settings/ production systems highly similar to those in the EU. For the evaluation of the relevance the output from the contractor will be used



by WG members in order to provide their judgement of the probability (0-100%) that: The AMR pathogen is present in the EU and is prevalent (>XX%) in the EU or is prevalent (>XX%) in animal species, age groups or production systems which are widely used in the EU. Step 2: Describe the impact on animal health. The actual or potential impact on animal health will be assessed in relation to the presence of the AMR pathogen (not the pathogen itself). The contractor will be requested to provide information on antimicrobials listed as options for treatment of infection with the AMR pathogen (or disease due to the AMR pathogen), detailing if these are listed as first, second or last option treatments. With that information, the WG assesses the impact on animal health based on table presenting the importance of the antimicrobial substance/product and availability of alternatives for treatment to the antibiotic for which resistance exist. This method was thoroughly discussed with the Panel members and agreed. Comments and feedback were incorporated.

7. New Mandates

No new mandates.

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

8.1. Structure and activities of unit G2 (Animal Health) and G5 (Animal Welfare and AMR) at EC

Andrea Gavinelli (Head of unit SANTE/G5 (Animal welfare and AMR) explained and presented the activities of the unit in the remit of AHAW panel: European green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy and council conclusions of 19th October 2020. The main activities ahead are: External study, including targeted interviews with stakeholders and a public consultation, Fitness Check based on the external study and new scientific evidence, the results of the evaluation of the EU Animal Welfare Strategy (2012-2015), pilot projects, Commission audits in the Member States etc and the revision of the EU acquis on the welfare of farmed animals related to presented priorities and activities of the two units following the European Green Deal which contains the newly endorsed Farm to fork strategy by the Council last 19 October 2020. The targets related to AMR is to reduce sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50% in 2030. AMR reduction through various actions, such as improving animal welfare and increasing biosecurity, hygiene practices at farms, using feed additives to improve disease resistance, vaccination and the use of more robust breeds.

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). Sweden has set up surveillance system in mink and first cases were reported on October 15 2020. In Spain sampling smaller population of ferrets and couple of farms with ferrets were found positive. In UK no cases were reported. Two poultry and pigs farms (welfare issues); no cases in ferrets (not solitary pets). Soren Nielsen reported that in Denmark 166 mink farms were infected of which 32 farms were culled. The virus in mink seems



to mutate in the spike protein which is a target for vaccine development. The seroprevalence in infected mink farm is 100%

9.2. Public consultation AMR in non-target feed

Yves Van Der Stede informed the Panel of ongoing public consultation related to the SO regarding maximum levels of cross-contamination of 24 antimicrobial substances in non-target feed and share the link (<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultations/call/public-consultation-draft-scientific-opinion-regards-maximum>) to provide comments by the latest on 18 November 2020.

9.3. Wrap up and next meeting

A short wrap up was provided and tasks were distributed.

Next Plenary meeting will be via WEB 26 November 2020 (one full day).

In December a plenary meeting (WEB meeting) is planned for 18 December 2020 (one full day).