Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 128th Plenary meeting

**Held on 18 December 2020**

EFSA, Parma, WEBMEETING[[1]](#footnote-1)

(Agreed on 6 January 2020)[[2]](#footnote-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:** MASSOT-BERNACristina (Point 5.1, 6.1)*,* FORCELLA Simona (Points 6.2,6.3 and 6.4)*.*
* **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, Gervelmeyer Andrea, Križ Nik (HoU), Omodeo Sara Gisella, Rapagna Cristina, Van der Stede Yves, Zancanaro Gabriele

* **Hearing experts**[[3]](#footnote-3)**:** not applicable.
* **Observers:** not applicable

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the meeting participants. No apologies were received.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

1. Declarations of Interest Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA’s Policy on Independence[[4]](#footnote-4) and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management[[5]](#footnote-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.

1. Agreement of the minutes of the 127th Plenary meeting held on 26 November 2020, Parma, (Italy)

The minutes of the 127th Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 4 December 2020.

1. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption
   1. Art. 29 - Disease control measures category A diseases AHL ([EFSA-Q-2020-00193-00198](http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00193)) – African Swine fever

This draft opinion was thoroughly discussed with the Panel members. The abstract and summary were presented to the AHAW Panel. The summary was agreed and approved by the AHAW Panel.

Minor comments were provided on in TOR1 (scenario 2) on testing of samples for non-clinical animals. A clear distinction should be made for sampling of suspicious animals and animals with clear clinical signs. The EC had minor comments on this Scientific Opinion. The AHAW Panel adopted the Opinion unanimously.

* 1. Art. 29 - Disease control measures category A diseases AHL - Written adoption – African Horse Sickness

As agreed during the 127th AHAW Panel meeting the Scientific Opinion on African Horse sickness was presented for comments by the EC. Comments were received of the EC by 7 December 2020. Conclusions and recommendations were revised and placed in a Table. Subsequently, the Scientific opinion on African horse Sickness was presented for written adoption by the AHAW panel

by 16 December 2020. A majority of the votes (n=17) was obtained for adoption. Therefore, the AHAW Panel adopted the Scientific Opinion by written procedure on 16 December 2020.

1. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion (pre-adoption)
   1. Art. 29 - Disease control measures category A diseases AHL ([EFSA-Q-2020-00193-00198](http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00193)) – Lumpy Skin Disease

The scientific opinion was discussed thoroughly within the AHAW panel. Whether vaccination should have been considered (or not) during the assessment of the different scenario’s in TOR1, was one of the topics discussed. Currently, vaccination was not considered. During the discussion it was agreed that the EC should decide whether vaccination should be considered. This decision may then affect not only the LSD opinion, but also any of the other Cat. A diseases. EC agreed to provide a rapid feed-back to EFSA in this issue. . If vaccination needs to be considered in detail, a new timeline for adoption of the mandates may be needed. This should then be discussed with the AHAW panel and Working group.

Other specific topics that were discussed were:

* the assessment of the monitoring period was not included as the contractor delivered the results of Extensive Literature Review the afternoon before the Panel Meeting
* the overwintering as a possible risk for the scenarios of the repopulation should be considered.
* to include vector control in 1 or 2 scenarios as well. Is not considered as managerial topic and in fact included in other opinions as well.
* in relation to vector proof establishments, to mention as a possibility to keep the animals in these types of establishments: e.g. lab animals during experiments.
* the tables, the calculations and the examples provided were agreed and no comments were received for these parts.
  1. Art 29 - TOR2: African Swine Fever Risk ranking matrices ([EFSA-Q-2019-00618](http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00618))

An update was given on the mandate related to the narrative section summarising the literature on matrices that may be contaminated with ASF. A minor issue on ‘matrix effect’ was discussed and it was agreed to have a better explanation of what matrix effect means in the context of testing for the presence of ASF (validation studies with different matrices). The web EKE meetings have been finished and the further steps to be taken for this mandate were explained (outcome of model will be discussed in next AHAW panel meeting). A new deadline for adoption (March 2021) was requested and agreed with the EC.

* 1. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on African swine fever: Outdoor farming ([EFSA-Q-2020-00425](http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00425))

An update was given on the mandate by Andrea Gervelmeyer. A new deadline for adoption (May 2021) was requested and agreed with the EC. Information on structures, practices (including biosecurity measures) of outdoor farming of pigs in the EU has been summarised in a narrative part of the scientific opinion. An EKE will be organised in order to rank the biosecurity measures according their potential to limit risk of ASF introduction and/or spread from EU outdoor pig farms. The scenarios to consider during the EKE were discussed. The rating and ranking of biosecurity measures will be done based on three criteria: effectiveness, feasibility and sustainability. A facilitated brainstorming will be organised in order to have proposals for improvement of biosecurity measures.

* 1. Art. 29 - Request for scientific opinion on African swine fever: Exit Strategy [(EFSA-Q-2020-00423-424)](http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2020-00424)

The four sections in the draft scientific opinion were discussed in detail: Field data, Literature study, performance and caveats of model of exit strategy concepts and results and conclusions) were presented and discussed. It was requested by the EC to describe the role of PCR positive carcasses in decomposed carcasses in function of the infectivity of the virus in the carcasses. As carcasses are not necessarily infectious until it is decomposed, it was suggested to reflect on the option to include in the recommendations to perform VI after PCR positive test results during the exit strategy. For table 1 it was agreed to replace term ‘removed’ by ‘not infectious’.

If possible, the EC requested to further simplify the language and provide for the proposed exit strategy (page 44) some examples that may help the reader understand the proposed exit strategies.

* 1. 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](http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00760))

Francesca Baldinelli provided the AHAW panel with an update on the progress of this Scientific opinion. The first outcome/output expected from the contractor is an extended literature search for dogs and cats. This will be discussed int the next AHAW panel meeting.

* 1. Update on report on *Echinococcus multilocularis*

Gabriele Zancanaro updated on the last report on Echinococcus multilocularis, focussing on the methodology adopted for the automated drafting of the report (R code). The report has been endorsed by the sub-network, approved by the HoU and submitted for publication

* 1. Art. 31. Avian influenza: Update on the situation in the EU.

Francesca Baldinelli updated the Panel on the current avian influenza situation in Europe and presented the last scientific report published on 11 December 2020. <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/6379>

1. New Mandates
   1. New mandate: SARS CoV2 in Mink

A new mandate (Art. 31) on Covid-19 in mustelidae was received on 18/12/2020 and was discussed with the AHAW panel. In total three TORs were listed: 1) Review relevant scientific literature available globally related to SARS-CoV-2 infection in mink and other animals of the family Mustelidae.2) Assess the current situation in the EU and elsewhere as regards the risk for human and animal health posed by SARS-CoV-2 infection in mink and other animals of the family Mustelidae with a view to designing a suitable coordinated monitoring in the Member States and 3) Recommend options for monitoring strategies indicating possible objectives and suitable methodologies, in particular as regards sampling, frequencies and testing methods. The following comments were taken up:

* Compare situation with Finland (where there is large population in Finland of both wild farmed raccoon dogs) ; Raccoon dogs: can become infected.
* Trade in raw products versus processed or partially processed products: surveillance strategies are aimed at the pelts and factories as well; Part to be covered should only be live mink.
* In should be clearly stated what is relevant for the family Mustelidae; Mustilinae may be more relevant and they are a sub-family only, while Mustelidae is a very big family, but ultimately the opinion says Mustelidae; Ferrets are not only lab animals but also used for hunting purposes.

The composition of the Working group was discussed and agreed that mainly panel members will contribute to the report (proposed members: Paolo Pasquali, Soren Nielsen and Karl Stahl. Deep reviewers volunteered: Christian Gortazar and Helen Roberts. External experts /reviewers (Arjan Stegeman or Wim van der Poel (NL) and Anette Boklund (DK)) were considered. As this is an Article 31 mandate EFSA will take the chairing of the Working group (Alessandro Broglia). A first draft of the report will be produced by 23 December 2020 to have comments by the panel members by 4 January 2021.

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

Not applicable

1. Any other business & wrap up
   1. COVID-19 in animals & Rapid Risk Assessment

No new updates were provided beside those mentioned in the joint ECDC-EFSA Rapid risk assessment on SARS-CoV-2 variant in mink. The AHAW panel members were asked, if any new information from their countries would become available, to share this with EFSA for the new mandate (see point 7).

* 1. Wrap up and next meeting

A short wrap up was provided highlighting the agreed action points.

The next Plenary meeting will take place via WEB on 21 January 2021 (one full day).

1. All meetings were rescheduled to web meetings due to Covid-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Minutes should be published within 15 working days of the final day of the relevant meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)