

**MINUTES OF THE XXXVII PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON  
ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE  
22-23 OCTOBER 2008**

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## PARTICIPANTS

Harry Blokhuis, Donald Broom, Mariano Domingo, Matthias Greiner, Daniel Guemene, Joerg Hartung, Frank Koenen (22<sup>nd</sup> October), David Morton (23 October), Christine Müller-Graf, Ronald Roberts, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa (22<sup>nd</sup> October), Mike Sharp, Philippe Vannier, Martin Wierup. Anette Bøtner and Mohan Raj

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION:** Xavier Pavard (DG SANCO)

**OIE OBSERVER:** Caroline Planté

**EFSA:** Elda Franchi, Katharina Plattner (administrative staff AHAW Unit), Ana Afonso, Franck Berthe, Sandra Correia Rodeia, Milen Georgiev, Fabrizio De Massis, Tomasz Grudnik, Per Have, Oriol Ribó (23 October), Ingfrid Slaatto Naess and Jordi Serratosa (Scientific Coordination AHAW Unit).

### 1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chairman of the Panel welcomed two new Panel members Anette Bøtner and Mohan Raj after being appointed by the Management Board. No member declared any conflict of interest with regard to the items on the agenda. Apologies were received from the following panel members: Bo Algers, Patrizia Costa, Albert Osterhaus, Dirk Pfeiffer and Stéphane de la Rocque, (FAO observer).

### 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

### 3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the previous 36<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting held in Barcelona on the 11-12 September 2008 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by Panel members on 20 October 2008 and published on the web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

### 4. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES

#### 4.1. New mandates

The Commission official explained that no new mandates were ready to be submitted. EFSA will contact officially Animal health and Animal welfare Units in SANCO, with the support of SANCO Interface Unit, to verify the work programme for 2009/2010. During the discussions of several opinions on animal diseases (BT and CSF), it was noted that the mandates could be interpreted several ways and it was agreed with the Commission official and Panel members that EFSA and panel experts should be involved at an earlier stage in drafting the ToR.

### 5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE

#### 5.1. Fish welfare: Sea bass and gilthead sea bream:

The Opinion had been discussed at the 36<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting but some of the issues raised required clarifications from the WG and teleconferences took place on 6 and 17 October between WG and panel members. A new draft opinion including a table with all comments and changes was submitted on the 10 October. The Opinion was adopted on the 22 October with a minority opinion from Prof. Broom and the abstention of A. Bøtner (new Panel member). Prof. Broom stated that he had no objection to the Scientific Report and the Opinion except that he considered that it was incomplete without a common chapter on fish welfare concepts and so did not answer the mandate. The Report will be published separately from the Opinion.

### **5.2. Scientific Report: Fish welfare-Carp:**

As agreed in the last plenary meeting in September, a new draft was submitted on the 9 October and comments requested by the 19 October. A teleconference was organized on the 20 October with panel members. The submitted opinion contained all amendments and changes proposed by Panel members. The Opinion was discussed and adopted on the 22 October with a minority opinion of Prof. Broom (see 5.1 for reason) and with the abstention of Anette Bøtner (new panel member). The Report will be published separately from the Opinion.

### **5.3. Scientific Report and Opinion on the “Risk of bluetongue transmission during transit”:**

The Opinion was adopted by unanimity at the last plenary meeting in September 11-12. After adoption, EFSA received written comments from the Commission that the chapter risk pathway 3 was not intended to be part of the ToR. The risk pathway 3 was considered to be part of the assessment by the panel and therefore should be retained as an extension of risk pathway 2. This was now clearly described in the Opinion (“Risk of BT transmission during transport”). After considering some rewording and changes, in particular avoiding referring to Annex III of Reg. 1266/2007 (which was considered outside the ToR) the Opinion was accepted and submitted for publication.

### **5.4. Classical Swine Fever (CSF)**

The draft Report concerning the CSF mandate was circulated to the Panel for comments. The approaches taken to reply to the ToR of the mandate were explained by the chairman to the Panel. Some proposed conclusions and recommendations were already included at the end of each chapter. Meanwhile, the WG is improving some parts of the Report and adding further details and clarifications concerning the models developed and used. A transversal meeting is planned for the two groups on the 13 and 14 November. The Opinion will be presented for possible adoption at the next plenary in December.

#### **5.4.1. *CSF control/eradication in wild boar (ToR1)* -**

The reply to this ToR will probably be structured according to the different parts of the question: efficacy of available surveillance, hunting, and vaccination measures (to control and eradicate CSF in feral pig populations); possible use of new diagnostic tests; and vaccines. The model and its results developed for a DG Research (EU 6th FPP) will be introduced to support evaluation of the different control strategies. Another model has been developed for the “detection of the presence of CSF” in wild boar and this data (collected through the questionnaire and extracted from the EU CSF of wild boar database) will be included in the report as soon it is verified. The last meeting was held on the 9 October.

#### **5.4.2. *Safety of fresh meat from CSF vaccinated pigs (ToR2)* -**

A model has been developed to assess the risk of infected vaccinated pigs being slaughtered and the appropriate diagnostic procedures to avoid this risk. Conclusions and recommendations have been already drafted. The efficiency of the monitoring systems has been also simulated. The last meeting was held on the 8 October.

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

### 6.1. Discussion on the general approach to fish welfare

In line with the previous discussion at the last plenary meeting and in accordance with the correspondence exchange between EFSA and COM the Panel decided by 11 votes to 1, with 6 abstentions to draw up a new opinion on the general approach to fish welfare. The panel elected the chairman and discussed the approach proposed by EFSA's secretariat. The opinion will be submitted for possible adoption at the next plenary meeting in December

### 6.2. Welfare of Dairy Cows

The WG Chairman presented the current status of the scientific Report and the 4 separate Risk assessments on: Leg and Locomotion problems, Udder problems, Reproductive and Metabolic disorders, and Behavioural problems. In agreement with the Commission, six documents will be produced in order to answer the mandate: the Scientific Report, the four scientific Opinions corresponding with each Risk Assessment (see below), and a fifth scientific Opinion which will integrate the conclusion and recommendations from the Report and from the 4 Risk Assessments (see below).

The next meeting 26-27 November will be a transversal meeting and Panel members will be asked for their attendance.

#### 6.2.1. *Scientific Opinion based on the four RAs*

Meetings to discuss the RA Tables in order to get "consensus Tables" were held between the 13 and 17 October 2008. The RA tables were revised and WG agreement was reached. RA results and draft Conclusions and Recommendations will be discussed during the next WG Meeting 26-27 November.

#### 6.2.2. *Scientific Opinion on overall dairy cow welfare assessment*

The last WG meeting was held 7-8 October 2008 and the Report incorporated the latest contributions and is now 90% finalized. Draft Conclusions and Recommendations were discussed but in order to finalise the Cs & Rs an extra WG Meeting will be held 3-4 November (1.5 days).

### 6.3. Stunning and Killing of 8 species of Farmed Fish

A meeting to discuss the common RA approach and to prepare the kick-off meeting of the Salmon, Eel and Tuna WGs was held on the 7 October. The kick-off meeting of these 3 WGs was held on the 17 October where tasks were assigned to each WG expert and next meeting dates (3 meetings/WG) were fixed.

### 6.4. *Brucella suis*

A preparatory meeting was organised with officials of DG Health and Consumer Protection, Unit D4, on 16 September in Brussels. It was explained that the basic request for this mandate is an assessment of the risk of *Brucella suis* spreading within and between EU MS through the movement of trade in porcine animals and their germplasm, and possibly the marketing of animal products. This question should be put in the context of the evolution in the structure of pig farming in Europe possibly introducing changes in the epidemiology of the disease. The Opinion should also evaluate the performance of available tests for porcine brucellosis in terms of sensitivity and specificity, to provide a basis to justify their possible inclusion in the EU

legislation on intra-Community trade in pigs and their germplasm. A preliminary meeting has been organised on 20 October with WG member, Mirzet Sabirovic (DEFRA, UK), to identify possible data needs and to organise the chapters dealing with *B. suis* epidemiology. The first meeting with all the WG members is scheduled for the 4/5 of November.

## **6.5. 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. The final report of the project related to the stunning and killing aspects is expected by the end of 2008. The kick-off meeting of the project for the development of the transport part of the guidelines was held last 9 October in Parma. The final Report is scheduled for June 2009. The call of proposals for the development of the Housing and Management RA Guidelines should be published by January 2009.

**6.6. Public Health significance of meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)**  
EFSA (BIOHAZ) and EMEA have been exchanging the table of contents of their respective related mandates in order to identify any eventual problematic area.

The third WG meeting was held on the 8 October and the next will be on the 3 December. The first reading of the opinion will be done at the BIOHAZ Plenary meeting on 10 -11 December 2008, with adoption at the plenary meeting on 21-22 January 2009.

## **7. MISCELLANEOUS**

### **7.1. Previous adopted opinions**

The adopted opinions in September on Fish susceptible species, Trout welfare and European Eel Welfare have been published on the EFSA web.

### **7.2. Document on modelling**

A draft mandate is being prepared by M. Greiner and will be presented to the Panel in December's plenary for discussion and acceptance. As soon the draft is ready it will be circulated to the Panel for comments.

### **7.3. Workshop on Animal Health, Disease and Welfare definitions.**

A workshop on AHAW definitions for Risk Assessment purposes will be postponed to 2009.

### **7.4. Panel renewals**

The EFSA secretariat explained the procedure for the new selection of Panels in 2009.

### **7.5. Discussion on the information provided on the EFSA web**

It was stated that searching the EFSA web for EFSA's opinions and reports in languages different from English was not good. The search function does not work properly in German and French. It was stated as example that using the EFSA Journal reference given in some documents - rather than the title - it is impossible to find an opinion/ report. AHAW secretariat will forward those comments to the Communication directorate. It was highlighted that the DoIs for Panel members were not available, and should be accessible from the database. Experts also fail to update their DoIs.

### **7.6. Next Plenary Meeting**

Next plenary meeting will take place in Parma on the **11-12 December** (1<sup>st</sup> day from 09.00 to 18.00h and 2<sup>nd</sup> day from 8.30-15.00).