

MINUTES OF THE XXXIX PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON
ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

28-29 JANUARY 2009

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	2
2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	2
3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE	2
4. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES.....	2
4.1. NEW MANDATES.....	2
5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ ACCEPTANCE... 	2
5.1. GENERAL APPROACH TO FISH WELFARE AND TO THE CONCEPT OF SENTIENCE IN FISH.....	2
5.1. WELFARE OF DAIRY COWS	2
6. WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF THE SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS AND REPORTS	3
6.1. STUNNING AND KILLING OF FISH SPECIES.....	3
6.2. FISH RESEARCH PRIORITIES	4
6.3. BRUCELLA suis	4
6.4. DOCUMENT ON MODELLING IN ANIMAL HEALTH	4
6.5. PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE OF METICILLIN RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA) 5	5
6.6. SELF-MANDATE ANIMAL WELFARE	5
7. MISCELLANEOUS	5
7.1. OTHER ISSUES	5
7.2. LETTER RECEIVED BY EFSA ON A PREVIOUS OPINION.....	5
7.3. PANEL RENEWALS UPDATE.....	5
7.4. PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED OPINIONS	5
7.5. NEXT PLENARY MEETING	5

PARTICIPANTS

Anette Bøtner, Donald Broom, Mariano Domingo, Matthias Greiner, Joerg Hartung, Frank Koenen, David Morton (28th), Christine Müller-Graf, Albert Osterhaus (28th); Mohan Raj, Ronald Roberts, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa, Martin Wierup.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Xavier Pavard (DG SANCO)

EFSA AHAW Unit: E. Franchi, K. Plattner (administrative staff), M. Vilar, A. Afonso, S. Correia (28th) D. Candiani, F. De Massis (28th), S. Dhollander (28th), M. Georgiev (28th), T. Grudnik; P. Have (28th), O. Ribó, J. Tarres (28th) and J. Serratosa (Scientific Coordination).

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chairman of the Panel was unable to attend and the vice-chairman Prof J. Hartung chaired the meeting. The Vice-Chairman welcomed a new scientific staff member of AHAW Unit M. Vilar. No member declared any conflict of interest with regard to the items on the agenda. Apologies were received from the following panel members: Philippe Vannier, Bo Algiers, Harry Blokhuis, Patrizia Costa, Dirk Pfeiffer, Mike Sharp, Isabel Minguez (DG RTD) Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel (OIE) and Stephane de La Rocque (FAO)

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the previous 38th Plenary meeting held in Parma on the 11-12 December 2008 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by Panel members on 19 January 2009 and published on the web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

4. COMMISSION SERVICES (CS) NEW MANDATES

4.1. New mandates

The Commission official presented a draft version of a future mandate on the potential impact of genetic selection on broiler welfare. It was perceived very positive to have this exchange of views prior to receiving formally the mandate. No new mandates from the Commission have been submitted. Furthermore EFSA has launched a self-mandate on Modelling in Animal Health and the activities will start as soon as possible.

5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE

5.1. General approach to fish welfare and to the concept of sentience in fish

The draft with all comments received was distributed to AHAW panel members on the 12/12/08. A web-conference was organized for discussion of comments and review of conclusions and recommendations on the 15/1/09. A revised draft was distributed on the 16/1/09 and comments requested with a deadline of 23/1/09. The version of 26/01/09 compiling all comments was discussed. Last minute comments from a member (not present) were also considered. The scientific opinion was discussed and adopted with 2 abstentions (Ron Roberts and Mo Salman).

5.1. Welfare of Dairy Cows

The Scientific Report was accepted by the Panel except Chapter 17 on disease. This chapter is being completed and will be submitted to the Panel for acceptance as soon as possible. Following

indications from the Commission in March, to give priority to the opinions on “Welfare of stunning and killing of fish”, a letter asking for an extension of the dairy cow deadline until June was sent on 15 January.

5.1.1. *Scientific Opinions based on the four risk assessments*

Following agreement at December Plenary, the four scientific opinions based on the Risk Assessments (RAs) - Leg and Locomotion disorders; Udder disorders/problems; Reproductive and Metabolic disorders; and Behavioural disorders- will integrate Conclusions and Recommendations from the Scientific Report and the draft conclusions from the RA. The RA approach for these opinions was discussed and accepted as a valid. The Scientific Opinion on “Leg and locomotion disorders” was discussed and accepted, however it was agreed that final adoption will be in June at the latest when the other three opinions and the final assessment will be discussed for possible adoption. Considering that the deadline for the welfare of dairy cows opinions is June 2009 and priority should be given for the 5 scientific opinions on Stunning and killing of fish in March, the remaining dairy cow opinions will be discussed as soon as the fish opinions are adopted.

5.1.2. *Scientific Opinion on overall dairy cow welfare assessment*

A document containing conclusions and recommendations from the Scientific Report, including the ones related to the RAs, was distributed at the end of the first day of the Plenary. The document was discussed and preliminary amendments made according to Panel members’ comments. The Conclusions from the 4 SOs will be integrated with the conclusions and recommendations from the Scientific Report into the fifth SO on the “Overall assessment of dairy cow welfare”. The overall assessment will be submitted for possible adoption in June 09 at the latest.

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

6.1. *Stunning and Killing of fish species*

The stakeholder consultation was launched on 23 January, requesting all available/relevant data to be submitted by 15 February so that the information can be included in the draft Scientific Reports to be ready by early March for possible adoption during the March Plenary. The state of play of the 7 scientific opinions was presented and it was agreed which Panel Members will attend the Transversal WG Meetings and review the SOs.

6.1.1. *Stunning and Killing of Salmon*

A WG Meeting was held on 13-14 January. The last WG Meeting will be held next 23-24 February in Parma. The Transversal WG Meeting will be held the 24 February (second day). Panel Members who will attend the transversal WG Meeting and reviewers were nominated.

6.1.2. *Stunning and Killing of Carp*

A WG Meeting was held on 19-20 January. The last WG Meeting will be held next 19-20 February in Barcelona. The Transversal WG Meeting will be held the 20 February (second day). Panel Members who will attend the transversal WG Meeting and reviewers were nominated.

6.1.3. *Stunning and Killing of trout*

A WG Meeting was held on 22-23 January. Next WG Meetings will be held next 19-20 February and 2-3 March. The Transversal WG Meeting will be held next 6 March by teleconference. Panel Members who will attend the transversal WG Meeting and reviewers were nominated.

6.1.4. *Stunning and Killing of Sea Bass*

A WG Meeting was held on 22-23 January. The last WG Meeting will be held next 18-19 February. The Transversal WG Meeting will be held next 3 March by teleconference. Panel Members who will attend the transversal WG Meeting and reviewers were nominated

6.1.5. *Stunning and Killing of Eel*

A WG Meeting was held on 26-27 January and two more meeting have been plan in March and April. The Transversal WG Meeting will be held next 25 February by teleconference. Panel Members who will attend the transversal WG Meeting and reviewers were nominated

6.1.6. *Fish stunning and Killing Turbot*

A WG Meeting was held on 27 January. Next WG Meeting will be held next 10-11 March (London) and 2-3 April (Copenhagen). The Transversal WG Meeting will be held in April by teleconference. Panel Members who will attend the transversal WG Meeting and reviewers were nominated.

6.1.7. *Fish Stunning and Killing Tuna Fish*

Last WG Meeting was held on 26-27 January during which technical hearing was conducted and the Risk Assessment was finalised. The transversal WG Meetings will be held next 17 February by teleconference. Panel Members who will attend the transversal WG Meeting and reviewers were nominated.

6.2. Fish research priorities

In December 2008, a meeting in Brussels was organized by DG MARE to identify and discuss research priorities in the field of fish welfare for the next EU research programme. EFSA attended this meeting and reported on AHAW previous opinions. EFSA prepared a working document including all the most relevant recommendations of the previous scientific opinions on fish. This document will be circulated in January for discussion as an AHAW statement. In addition, the published/adopted recommendations of the Panel should identify and include in this document other areas not identified in the previous opinions. It was agreed to circulate a final version for possible adoption following the written procedure.

6.3. *Brucella suis*

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. 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. The first meeting with all the WG members was held on the 4-5 November and a meeting on risk profiling was held on the 9 December. A meeting on diagnostic tests was held on 17 December, to discuss the literature review for assessing the suitability of diagnostic tests for porcine brucellosis. Another meeting has already been scheduled for the 30 January 2009. The chairman of the WG presented the current framework of the opinion, challenges and approach. The panel agreed on the current methodology.

6.4. Document on modelling in Animal health

The agreed background and terms of reference have been drafted as a self-mandate and forwarded to the EFSA hierarchy for acceptance and the activities will start as soon as possible.

6.5. Public Health significance of meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

EFSA (BIOHAZ) and EMEA have been exchanging draft reports of their respective mandates in order to identify any future problem areas. The 5th WG meeting was held on the 8 January. The first reading of the opinion was done at the BIOHAZ Plenary meeting on 10 -11 December 2008, and the opinion should be also discussed at the plenary meeting on 21-22 January 2009

6.6. 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; and housing and management. The final report of the project related to the stunning and killing aspects was submitted last 19 December 2008. The final Report of the project for the development of the transport part of the guidelines is to be finished by June 2009. The call of proposals for the development of the Housing and Management RA Guidelines is under preparation and should be published by February 2009.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

7.1. Other issues

One member of the Panel suggested the possible interest to invite experts from World Bank at an AHAW plenary meeting for a possible general presentation of the activities of WB related to AHAW and food safety activities and with special reference the recent International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). The panel agreed that this activity would be very welcome and supported that the AHAW secretariat takes the necessary steps in EFSA, including the attendance of other EFSA's interested Units.

7.2. Letter received by EFSA on a previous opinion

EFSA has received a letter from VLA Weybridge, submitting further data on the specificity on VLA cELISA and requesting an update of the opinion on Brucellosis diagnostic tests for cattle and small ruminants. Additional clarifications about the methodology used in the generation of these data are needed before the relevance of the new study data can be assessed by the AHAW Panel. Depending on the outcome of this assessment, a possible update of the Opinion may be issued. A draft reply letter was presented to the Panel for comments.

7.3. Panel renewals update

The first plenary meeting for the new Panel will take place in Parma the 2-3 July 2009 in Parma. .

7.4. Previously adopted opinions

The two opinions on Classical Swine Fever adopted in December were published on the web.

7.5. Next Plenary Meeting

Next plenary meeting will take place in Parma on **18-19-20 March** (1st and second day from 09.00 to 18.00h and 3rd day from 8.30-15.30) in EFSA (DUS D 00/02). A discussion took place to agree on a possible extension of 1 day for the next plenary meeting.