

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE UNIT

**MINUTES OF THE 45th PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON
ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE**

28-29 October 2009

Monticelli Terme, Parma

PARTICIPANTS

Anette Bøtner, Don Broom, Marcus G. Doherr, Mariano Domingo, Jörg Hartung, Linda Keeling, Frank Koenen, Simon More, David Morton, Pascal Oltenacu, Fulvio Salati, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa, James Michael Sharp, Jan Arend Stegeman, Endre Szücs, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Philippe Vannier, John Webster, Martin Wierup.

OBSERVERS

Caroline Plante, OIE; Daniela Battaglia, FAO (29/10 only)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Xavier Pavard (DG SANCO)

EFSA AHAW UNIT

E. Franchi (administrative staff), A. Afonso (28/10 only), I. Alpigiani (28/10 only), S. Correia, D. Candiani (28/10 only), S. Dhollander, M. Georgiev, T. Grudnik, P. Have, O. Ribó, J. Tarres (scientific coordination).

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed the Panel Members to this meeting.

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA screened the Specific Declaration of interest (SDoI) filled in by the Panel Members for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the beginning of this meeting.

Apologies were received from Albert Osterhaus (Panel Member) and Laurence Bonafo (DG Sanco)

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the 44th Plenary meeting held in Parma on 10-11 September 2009 were unanimously adopted through a written procedure by Panel Members on 1 October, 2009 and published on the EFSA web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

4. NEW MANDATES

4.1. New mandates from the Commission

The Official from the Commission informed the Panel that no further news on the proposed mandate on genetic resistance to diseases of broilers were available at this stage. A mandate on pandemic influenza H1N1 is being drafted but its finalisation will await the outcome of discussions at the meeting organised by the Commission on influenza at the interface between humans and animals 30 October, 2009 in Brussels.

4.2. Approval of proposals for self-mandate on Tuberculosis in wildlife and African Horse Sickness

Based on the discussions during the last plenary, the draft proposals for possible self-mandates have been elaborated further and have been sent to DG SANCO for comments before being submitted by the Panel Chair to EFSA as self-mandates. One Panel Member commented on the lack of cooperation between Agencies in order to consider wildlife and conservation aspects. A sentence to include such aspect in the terms of reference was drafted and approved by the Panel.

In regard to the mandate on bovine TB in wildlife, the issues of incorporation of environmental conservation into the opinion as well as the possibility of involving other agencies were discussed. It was recognized that the environmental conservation is not within the mandate of EFSA but this issue can affect control measures either negatively or positively. The willingness to consider a broader range of strategies to control bovine TB, especially in wildlife, was expressed by several Panel members. The Chair asked the interested members to provide some improvement in the ToR. Some changes were proposed and a consensus was reached. The possibility of involving other agencies will be mentioned in the letter addressed to the RA director with the proposal of the mandate. Once the Commission will have given their points of view, the document will be ready for submission to EFSA.

4.3. Discussion of the self-mandate on a statement on Besnoitiosis

According to the Panel request the Chair proposed a self task to draft a statement on bovine besnoitiosis to EFSA. The request was accepted and the deadline is March 2010. The Panel has discussed the TOR and possible approach. The Chairman of the scientific statement was nominated.

5. OPINIONS AND REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR POSSIBLE ADOPTION/ACCEPTANCE

No opinions were submitted for adoption at this plenary meeting.

6. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT MANDATES

6.1. Self-mandate on “Good Practice in Conducting Scientific Assessments in animal health using modelling” (EFSA-Q-2009-408)

The 6th meeting was held on 27 October, 2009. The guidance is being finalised according to the different terms of reference: the procedure for developing and incorporating models in scientific assessments for animal health, the types of models, and the glossary. The WG Chairman explained the current work status. Comments from Panel Members will be considered by the working group (WG) at the transversal meeting (17 November, 2009) before submitting the draft guidance to the Panel for possible adoption at the December plenary. The deadline for this mandate is 31 December, 2009.

6.2. African swine fever (EFSA-Q-2009-506)

The risk assessment (RA) approach and updated information on the epidemiological situation were presented. The Panel agreed with the proposed RA, but asked for some clarifications. The reasons for the use of matrix 1 (decreasing risks) or matrix 2 (increasing risks) should be explained more clearly and the background information about how these matrices were developed should be provided. A sensitivity analysis should be carried out and worst-case scenarios to show the range of the overall outcomes should be developed.

Three uncertainty classifications are needed for transparency reasons. It should be explained more clearly in the methodology that only 2 classifications are used for the calculations (low versus medium and high uncertainty). The use of uncertainty when dealing with increasing risk should be explained.

There is a high uncertainty about the epidemiological links between the latest outbreaks in Russia. A spread of ASF over long distance was reported and outbreaks close to the Ukraine border occurred and this should be considered in the RA (as the risks may be higher now for the introduction into EU, knowing these facts happened).

The deadline for this mandate is 31 March, 2010.

6.3. Tick-Vectors of African swine fever and Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (M-2009-124)

The current state of the development of the opinion on tick vectors was presented by the Chairman. The WG composition, plan of activities and methodological approach were presented. The Panel approved the proposed WG members. The role of ticks as vectors of ASF overlaps in two different mandates. Regarding the ToR related to ticks as vectors of ASF, it was said that once the scientific opinion (SO) on “Risk of introduction of ASF into the EU especially from the Caucasus or Eastern Europe” is adopted, the WG members would consider what additional information is required on the corresponding section. One Panel Member considered that possible deficit in the ASF report regarding ticks should be addressed before the adoption of the ASF scientific opinion. Three experts of the ASF WG are also members of the Tick-Vectors of ASF and CCHF and they will take care of this task.

6.4. Epizootic Haemorrhagic disease (EFSA-Q-2009-503)

The Chairman gave a presentation on the status of the mandate and the risk assessor presented the proposed RA methodology of the risk of introduction and spread of EHD in Europe. The third WG meeting was on the 14-16 October, 2009. The WG has discussed the draft report, drafted proposals for conclusions and reviewed the RA. The Art. 36 grant CFP/EFSA/AHAW/2008/04 final report has been delivered to EFSA and it was submitted to the WG. The draft opinion was distributed to the Panel for comments by 20 October, 2009. The next meeting will be a transversal meeting followed by one more day of WG meeting to finalize the opinion to be submitted for possible adoption at the December plenary. The deadline for this mandate is 31 December, 2009.

6.5. Self-mandate on “Development of Animal Welfare Risk Assessment Guidelines (EFSA-Q-2007-168)”

As agreed during the September Plenary, a WG was set up to elaborate the Guidelines from the Final Reports of the Art.-36 Projects. The Chairman was appointed and further Panel Members assigned to the WG. The possibility to include external experts will be discussed in the next WG meeting.

The document with the scope, objectives and main contents of the guidelines was drafted and submitted to the Panel for comments and discussion. The Panel agreed that it is necessary to review the ToRs of the EFSA self-mandate (signed in 2007). A WG meeting will be held 16 November, 2009 in Brussels to agree on a proposal of the ToRs to be submitted to the Panel for approval during the Plenary Meeting 1-2 December, 2009. The following WG meeting will be held on 3 December, 2009 in Parma.

6.6. Mandate on the impact of the genetic selection of broilers (M-2009-0087)

The requested tasks for this mandate (M-2009-0087) are to: 1) collect, assess and collate all data available (published and unpublished) on genetics/welfare of broilers (deadline: February 2010); and 2) to produce two Scientific Opinions on i) the impact of the selection of broiler breeder birds, and ii) on housing and management of the grand-parent and parent stocks raised and kept for breeding purposes (deadline: June 2010). Two WGs have been created. In collaboration with DATEX, a public call for data was opened in July with a deadline for 15 October, 2009. A technical meeting with stakeholders was held on 23 September, 2009. An Art. 36 grant agreement was signed in October; the TOGA project will assess the data collected to prepare systematic review by the WGs. Deadline for the delivery of grant outcomes is end of January 2010. A draft ontology has been prepared for discussion during the next WG meeting (November 17/18). Three hearing experts from the industry will participate in next WG meeting to answer a list of questions prepared by the WG.

7. OTHER ISSUES

7.1. Emerging Risks

Andrea Gervelmeyer from EMRISK presented a strategy for monitoring emerging risks of the food chain.

EFSA aims to provide a scientific advice also for emerging but currently unrecognised risks of the food/feed chain. Through the identification of drivers of emerging risks, it is intended to anticipate future risks derived from changes in current food/feed production practices or changes in human exposure. A WG was established last year with participation from the AHAW Panel to determine approaches and potential indicators for these risk factors.

The aim is to establish a data monitoring capacity, data filtering methodology and networking structures to identify emerging risks and drivers of emerging risks in a timely fashion. To date, only the first step of this process (data monitoring) is partially in place. The filtering steps and communication need to be established rapidly. An emerging risks collaboration group (primary filter) with representatives from EFSA's scientific units, meeting once per month will be established. The Standing working group with representatives from EFSA's 10 scientific Panels, plus experts on emerging risks methodology are to be established and will meet once or twice in 2009, then 6 times per year. A stakeholders' support group with representatives from industry, proposed through EFSA's Stakeholders Advice Platform to meet once in 2009, then 4 times per year, will be established. In addition, there will be an Emerging Risks Information Exchange Network with representatives from Member States, European Commission, European and International Agencies to meet once in 2009, then up to 3 times per year.

7.2. Guidance on scientific requirements for the risk assessment of genetically modified animals and derived food and feed.

A draft guidance on scientific requirements for the risk assessment of genetically modified animals has been received from the GMO Unit for comments on any relevant animal health specific elements.

7.3. Any other business

None