

## **ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE UNIT**

# **MINUTES OF THE 47<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE**

**28-29 January 2010, Parma**

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Anette Bøtner, Don Broom, Marcus G. Doherr, Mariano Domingo, Jörg Hartung, Linda Keeling, Frank Koenen, Simon More, David Morton, Pascal Oltenacu, Albert Osterhaus (only 29/01), Fulvio Salati, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa, , Jan Arend Stegeman, Endre Szücs, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Philippe Vannier, John Webster, Martin Wierup.

### **OBSERVERS**

Caroline Planté, OIE

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Laurence Bonafos (DG SANCO, only 28 January),

### **EFSA AHAW UNIT**

E. Franchi, (administrative staff), A. Afonso, S. Correia, S. Dhollander, M. Georgiev, P. Have, O. Ribó, J. Tarres, F. Berthe, D. Quilquini (scientific coordination).

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

The Chairman welcomed the Panel Members and wished the Panel a successful New Year.

Apologies were received from M. Sharp (Panel) and X. Pavard (SANCO).

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests (DoI), EFSA screened the Annual and Specific Declaration of Interest (SDoI) provided by the Panel Members for the present meeting.

In the SDoI filled for the present meeting, Dr. P. Vannier declared the following interest: oyster mortality. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on declarations of interests and implementing documents thereof, the interest was deemed to represent a potential conflict of interest. Pursuant to EFSA's Procedure on Identifying and Handling Declarations of Interest point C.III.b, the said expert should not chair discussions related to the mandate on oyster mortality.

In the SDoI filled for the present meeting, Prof. A. Osterhaus declared the following interest: pandemic influenza virus. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on declarations of interests and implementing documents thereof, the interest was deemed to represent a potential conflict of interest. Pursuant to EFSA's Procedure on Identifying and Handling Declarations of Interest point C.III.b, the said expert should not chair discussions related to pandemic influenza virus.

In an ADoI submitted before the present meeting, Prof. D. Broom declared the following interest: consultancy for animal transport. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on declarations of interests and implementing documents thereof, the interest was deemed to represent a potential conflict of interest. Pursuant to EFSA's Procedure on Identifying and Handling Declarations of Interest point C.III.b, the said expert should not chair discussions related to the mandate on animal transport.

In an ADoI submitted before the present meeting, Prof. J. Hartung declared the following interest: consultancy for animal transport. In accordance with EFSA's Policy on declarations of interests and implementing documents thereof, the interest was deemed to represent a potential conflict of interest. Pursuant to EFSA's Procedure on Identifying and Handling Declarations of Interest point C.III.b, the said expert should not chair discussions related to the mandate on animal transport.

A short discussion followed on the policy and rules for declaration of interests.

## **2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted. A Panel Member asked whether the Panel should engage in scientific considerations on slaughter without stunning and a short discussion followed. It was concluded that it was mainly a management issue with ethical elements and therefore outside the AHAW remit. COM commented on the work on new regulations for slaughter of animals and underlined the importance (based on the Treaty) of religious and cultural rights. Some MS have achieved consensus to prohibit religious slaughter and MS are free to take stricter measures. The technical problems associated with turning pens were reminded. The 1992 SVC report provides good evidence that there is a period when animals may suffer after having their throat cut.

## **3. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE**

The minutes of the 46<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting held in Parma on 1-2 December, 2009 were unanimously adopted by written procedure by Panel Members on 8 January, 2010 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 Commission requests for scientific opinions on harvesting of feathers, mortality in Pacific oysters, Q fever and welfare of transport have been sent to EFSA since the last plenary meeting.

The following questions are currently being considered by DG SANCO for 2010:

- *Histomonas meleagridis*
- Broiler genetic resistance to stress and disease
- West Nile fever
- Development of scientific indicators for Dairy Cow welfare

- Transport of fish

#### **4.1.1. Increased mortality events in oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) (EFSA-Q-2010-11)**

The mandate was requested by DG-SANCO. The terms of reference (ToRs) are to assess the role and importance of: i) infectious agents with special focus on the role of the new biotype of Ostreid herpesvirus-1 (OsHV-1) named OsHV-1  $\mu$ var as possible aetiological agents; ii) climatic, seasonal or other environmental factors in their occurrence; and iii) other mollusc species which could be involved. EFSA is also requested to assess the scientific background that may justify the authorization to transfer adult Pacific oysters, older than 18 months, when they are sourced from an area affected by the increased mortality event. The AHAW Unit has started consultations to establish an ad hoc Working Group (WG). The mandate, ToRs and the proposals for a methodological approach to deal with it will be presented and discussed during the 48<sup>th</sup> AHAW Plenary. The Panel designated the chair of the WG and a proposed composition was discussed.

#### **4.1.2. Q fever (EFSA-Q-2010-10)**

The mandate has been requested by DG-SANCO. EFSA has accepted the mandate and its deadline – 30 April, 2010. The mandate has been assigned to the AHAW panel with support from Assessment Methodology Unit and Zoonoses Unit. The BIOHAZ panel will develop and adopt a chapter related to food safety aspects which will be included in the opinion. ECDC will collaborate in relation to public health aspects. The AHAW Panel chairman has nominated a chairman for the Working Group and relevant experts have been contacted. A plan of meetings and activities has been established. The zoonoses and animal health networks will be contacted for additional information regarding data and surveys on Q fevers in MS.

The chairman of the WG presented the approach, conceptual model and proposed a table of contents of the opinion for discussion.

### **4.2. Questions to Commission about ongoing and new mandates on animal welfare**

#### **4.2.1. Welfare of Animals during transport**

The mandate was received from DG SANCO on 18 January, 2010. The draft contents of the mandate were informally explained by the Commission during the last Plenary Meeting in December and D. Broom was suggested to chair this WG. However, D. Broom submitted an update of his ADoI on 15 January, 2010 in which a potential conflict of interest was identified. Therefore, J. Webster was nominated the Chairman of the Animal Welfare Transport WG.

The kick-off meeting with the Commission to discuss the ToRs of the Mandate was held on 28 January, 2010. The first WG Meeting will be held on 10 March, 2010 in Parma after the WG will be set up.

COM explained the background of the mandate. The Regulation is based on a SCAHAW report from 2002 and needs to be reassessed, taking into consideration new technology in current use. The existing Regulation has been in force since January 2007, therefore it is

considered appropriate to update the opinion now. The mandate asks for specific assessments in relation to Reg1/2005, including possible indicators.

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

### **5.1. Statement on Besnoitiosis (EFSA-Q-2009-879)**

The statement on besnoitiosis was presented to the Panel by the Chairman of the WG. After discussing the statement, it was unanimously adopted by the Panel.

## **6. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT MANDATES**

### **6.1. African swine fever (EFSA-Q-2009-506)**

The 7<sup>th</sup> working group meeting was held on 12-13 January, 2010 in Brussels, and a meeting was organised to review the risk assessment on 26 January, 2010 in Parma. The outcomes of this meeting were discussed with the WG during a web-conference on 27 January, 2010. Transversal meeting will be held on 3 February, 2010 in Brussels. The risk assessment methodology, the pathways and the main conclusions were presented to the Panel and comments were noted. The opinion will be presented to the Panel for adoption during the plenary meeting on 10-11 March, 2010.

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

The current state of the opinion on tick vectors was presented by the Chairman. The 4th WG meeting was held on 25 January, 2010. Additional WG member was welcomed. The WG revised the last version of the 5th chapter of the draft report on 'Risk of introduction of ASF in the EU from eastern European countries, especially from the Caucasus'. EFSA presented the structure of a blueprint database to collect all data from a systematic literature review. The WG members discussed how to coordinate the systematic literature review and the creation of maps of geographical distribution of ticks and pathological agents. EFSA will launch a procurement for the data extraction from the systematic literature review. Tasks were assigned. Next WG meeting will be a web teleconference on 23 February, 2010.

### **6.3. Self-mandate on "Development of Animal Welfare Risk Assessment Guidelines" (EFSA-Q-2007-168)**

A WG meeting was held on 3 December, 2009 in Parma to discuss and agree on the contents of the guidelines and to assign the first contributions. The amended ToRs were submitted to the EFSA Executive Director 15 December, 2009 and accepted on 18 January, 2010. Next WG meeting will be held on 15-16 February, 2010 in Brussels.

### **6.4. 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 Working Groups have been established and held 5 meetings (June, September, November, and December 2009, and January 2010). In November 2009, three experts from the industry participated to the WG meeting for a technical hearing. A public call for data was used to collect relevant information; the outcomes of this call were published in December 2009 on EFSA website. An Art.36 grant (TOGA project) is currently preparing a systematic review for the working groups. TOGA also assists in the development of a broiler welfare ontology. Deadline for the delivery of grant outcomes is February 2010. Next WG meetings are planned on 10-12 February 2010. The public consultation undertaken in September 2009 (Technical Meeting with stakeholders) will have its second phase in March 2010 (Web-consultation).

## **6.5. Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus in animals**

The Commission has agreed to split the mandate in two and to respond to the ToRs by preparing two different opinions: one opinion dealing with the impact of the current pandemic on animal health (mandate 1) and one dealing with monitoring for emergence of new viruses with pandemic potential (mandate 2).

During this plenary, A. Osterhaus gave a summary of where we are today with the ‘Mexican’ flu. He outlined two possible mechanisms of host adaptation: sequential mutation or genome re-assortment and that several transmissions of avian strains to humans had been recorded since 1996. He also mentioned the 4 large pandemics seen so far. It is still not known where the Mexican flu originated. This pandemic strain displays high human transmissibility with limited virulence marker indication. Although it is antigenically similar, only little cross-protection from season flu vaccines is conferred.

### **6.5.1. Potential implications of the current H1N1 pandemic influenza for animal health (EFSA-Q-2009-00935)**

The kick-off meeting for clarification of the mandate was held on 13 January, 2010. The Commission presented and explained the background of this mandate, as well the purpose for each of the ToRs. The reasons to split the mandate in two were further explained by EFSA. The Commission asked to keep a continuous feed back between the two WG and to consider the worst possible scenario in terms of evolution of the current situation within the report. Any other issues found to be relevant and not covered by any of these ToRs should be included in the opinion. The selection of ad hoc experts is ongoing. A preparatory meeting was held on 27 January, 2010 with some of the Panel Members and a representative from EMEA. The work plan is being developed by the current WG. The CRL will also collaborate by sending an expert to be part of the WG.

During the plenary, the Chairman of the WG presented the mandate and the outcome of discussions with COM on the scope and interpretation of the ToRs. She also presented an outline of the table of contents; it was suggested to consider also the role of cats in this epidemic. It was suggested to include US experts in the WG. C. Plante from OIE proposed to include expertise from the OFFLU network.

#### **6.5.2. Monitoring for emergence of possible new pandemic influenza strains (EFSA-Q-2009-00983)**

The work on this mandate has been postponed by 2 months due to the allocation of extra resources to the Q fever mandate.

#### **6.6. Practice of harvesting feathers from live geese for down production (EFSA-Q-2009-00966)**

The kick-off meeting with the Commission to discuss the ToRs of the Mandate was held on 28 January, 2010. The Chairman of the WG explained the composition of the WG. The ToRs have been further clarified during the kick off meeting with COM. The first WG meeting will be held on 17 March, 2010 in Parma after the WG is set up.

### **7. OTHER ISSUES**

#### **7.1. 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 (GM) animals has been received from the GMO Unit for comments on any relevant animal health and welfare specific elements. Following a preliminary response from the AHAW Panel to this guidance, SANCO has decided to amend the mandate in order to include animal health and welfare aspects.

#### **7.2. Rules of procedure for Panels, INEX and Management Plan 2010**

Key features and objectives of the Management Plan 2010 were described by Riitta Maijala, director of Risk Assessment. These include similar work load compared to 2009 and some new institutional challenges for EFSA (New Council of Commissioners, external evaluation of agencies and consideration of fees for application evaluations). The key objectives will be to boost risk assessment capacity, strengthen the communication and consolidate EFSA's attractiveness to experts and staff.

Planned changes in travel rules, expert remuneration, and the introduction of the EFSA Journal were of particular interest to the Panel Members and gave rise to several questions. The EFSA Journal was still seen as too much of a compromise that will neither fulfil the need for visibility nor the scientific merit of experts.

The plans for AHAW in 2010 were briefly presented. In response to questions related to the proposed Art. 36 projects, the Panel was informed about the intention to further develop risk assessment methodology. The planned project will be on the agenda for the next Plenary for general comment in order not to preclude Panel Members from submitting proposals to the call.

Riitta Maijala also informed the Panel about the external review of EFSA's opinions, including 3 opinions from the AHAW Panel, completed in December 2009. The Panel has received a written summary of the evaluation and the specific comments addressed to the AHAW opinions. The Panel was asked to provide comments back to EFSA by the March



plenary in order to finalise an action plan. The external evaluation will be conducted annually and for 2010, opinions adopted from January to September will be eligible for review.

The rules of procedure of Panels and WGs have been updated and adopted by the Management Board in December 2009. Some major changes relate to election of chairs, establishing the role of the Mandate Review Committee in the formal acceptance of mandates and clearer rules for including minority opinions. A separate section has been written for WGs; the main points being the possibility to have vice-chairs, appointing the number of rapporteurs based on needs, and clarification of the process from WG to Panel.