

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE UNIT

**MINUTES OF THE 50th PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON
ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE**

23-24 June, 2010, Parma

1. PARTICIPANTS

AHAW PANEL MEMBERS

Anette Bøtner, Don Broom, Mariano Domingo, Marcus G. Doherr, Jörg Hartung, Linda Keeling, Frank Koenen, David Morton, Pascal Oltenacu, Albert Osterhaus (June 24), Fulvio Salati, Mo Salman, Moez Sanaa, James Michael Sharp, Jan Arend Stegeman, Endre Szücs, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Philippe Vannier, John Webster, Martin Wierup.

EFSA AHAW UNIT

Scientific officers: Ana Afonso, Franck Berthe, Sandra Correia Rodeia, Milen Georgiev, Tomasz Grudnik, Per Have, Oriol Ribó, Jordi Tarres, Diana Quiliquini.

Administrative assistant: E. Franchi.

EFSA SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Scientific officer: Daniela Maurici.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (DG SANCO)

Marina Marini (Unit 03, Science and Stakeholders), Francisco Reviriego Gordejo (Unit D1, Animal Health), Laurence Bonafos (Unit D5, Animal Welfare).

2. OPENING AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed the Panel members and other attendants, more particularly Marina Marini, representative of the interface Unit, Science and Stakeholders, for the AHAW Panel.

Apologies were received from Simon More.

The Panel agreed to change the dates of 2011 September and December plenary meetings. Consequently, the Panel will meet on September 15-16 and December 13-14.

Marcus Doherr and Mo Salman informed that EFSA will be invited to participate to the International Conference on Animal Health Surveillance that will be held in Lyon (France) from 17 to 20 May 2011; they suggested to have the May plenary meeting in conjunction with the event. The suggestion was seconded by the Panel and EFSA will further explore this possibility.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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. No new interests were declared in the SDoIs submitted in relation to the current agenda. The previously declared interests were still considered valid for this plenary¹². The Panel Members confirmed that no further declarations of interests were to be made in the context of the adopted agenda.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The minutes of the 49th plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel held by tele-meeting on April 2010 were unanimously adopted by a written procedure and published on the EFSA web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

6. NEW MANDATES

6.1. Request for a scientific opinion concerning the use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of dairy cows

Laurence Bonafos presented the Commission's mandate requesting a scientific opinion concerning the use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of dairy cows. Linda Keeling gave a presentation on the Welfare Quality® project and the development of the Protocols.

The EU legislation on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes (Council Directive 98/58/EC), the Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010, the Welfare Quality® project, and the EFSA Scientific Report and Scientific Opinions on the effects of farming systems on dairy cow welfare and disease constitute the background of this request.

The overall objective for the Commission is to move from a prescriptive legislation based on resource and management inputs towards a flexible legislation based on welfare parameters to be measured directly on the animals. The dairy cow mandate constitutes a first request and similar requests should follow for pigs and poultry.

The request is to 1) identify how the assessment protocols suggested by the Welfare Quality® project cover the main hazards identified in EFSA scientific opinions (and vice-versa); 2) identify how animal-based measures could be used to ensure the fulfilment of the

¹ In the SDoI filled for the January plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel, 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.

² In the SDoI filled for the January plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel, 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.

recommendations of EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare of dairy cows; 3) identify which relevant animal welfare issues cannot be assessed using animal-based measures for dairy cows and what kind of alternative solutions are available to improve the situation; and 4) list main factors in the various husbandry systems which have been scientifically proven to have negative effects on the welfare of dairy cows.

The Panel exchanged views on the mandate. It was agreed that Linda Keeling will chair the working group, assisted by Don Broom as vice-chair.

6.2. Request for a scientific opinion and technical assistance on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat

Francisco Reviriego Gordejo presented the Commission's request for a scientific opinion and technical assistance on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat. His presentation highlighted that meat inspection have three main different purposes. It is not only for food safety but also for purposes of animal health and animal welfare.

The Chief Veterinary Officers of the EU Member states have recognised the need to apply a risk-based approach toward effective implementation of a modernised meat inspection in slaughterhouses. The Commission has sent a mandate requesting EFSA to deliver a Scientific Opinion and Technical Assistance on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat. The scope of this mandate is to evaluate meat inspection in a public health context; however it is specifically requested that any change suggested to current inspection methods should not jeopardize the capacity to detect certain animal diseases nor compliance with regulation on animal welfare. The animal species or groups of species to be covered are: domestic swine; poultry; bovine animals (over and under 6 weeks old); domestic sheep and goats; farmed game and domestic solipeds.

EFSA internal action plan was presented. Six Panels/Units (BIOHAZ, CONTAM, AHAW, ZOONOZES, DATEX, and AMU) will collaborate to address the Commission's request. The need of preparatory work and outsourcing has been identified and the activities can be planned under the provisions of the article 36 of the founding Regulation. It is planned to deliver two outputs for each animal species (Scientific Opinion and Technical Assistance report). Each opinion will encompass: biological hazards of public health relevance, a-biotic hazards of public health relevance, and implications for animal health and welfare. It is intended to organise a public consultation including stakeholder meeting. The first scientific opinion (domestic swine) should be delivered by December 2011.

The Panel exchanged views on the mandate. Since AHAW will ensure that any change to current inspection does not jeopardize the capacity to detect animal diseases nor compliance with the animal welfare regulation, it is essential to determine the importance and integration of meat inspection in the EU animal health surveillance and monitoring. Working in close collaboration with other involved EFSA Units and Panels is of importance to deliver consistent and scientifically worth reply to the mandate.

It was agreed that Simon More will chair the working group.

7. OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR ADOPTION

7.1. Opinions on the impact of the genetic selection of broilers (M-2009-0087)

The mandate requested to: 1) collect, assess and collate all data available (published and unpublished) on genetics/welfare of broilers; 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.

The approach consisted in establishing two ad hoc Working Groups in May 2009 (one on broiler genetics, and one for broiler breeders); the 2 groups have worked together since then. In November 2009, three experts from the industry also participated to a technical hearing. A public call for data was used to collect relevant information. A systematic review of the data collection as well as of peer reviewed literature was performed via an Art.36 grant (TOGA project). A public consultation undertaken in September 2009 (Technical Meeting with stakeholders) had its second phase in March 2010 as a web-consultation on draft7 of a joint (broilers + broiler breeders) technical report. The risk assessment and the conclusions and recommendations were not subjected to public consultation. Over 100 comments were received and reviewed by the working groups. All relevant comments were considered in the Scientific Opinions. A report from the public consultation is prepared.

The two draft opinions were submitted to the Panel; and following discussions and suggestions made, the opinions were adopted on the 24th of June.

The outputs are: a report from the collection of data (published on the EFSA web in December 2009), a report on systematic review for welfare aspects of genetic selection in broilers (published on the EFSA web in May 2010), a report from the public consultation (to be published in July), the Scientific Opinion on the impact of the selection of broiler breeder birds (EFSA-Q-2009-00504), and the Scientific Opinion on housing and management of the grand-parent and parent stocks raised and kept for breeding purposes (EFSA-Q-2009-00505).

8. DRAFT OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION IN FIRST READING

8.1. Ticks as Vectors of African swine fever and Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (M-2009-124)

The current state of the opinion on tick vectors was presented to the Panel for discussion.

The mandate requested: 1) to provide a review of the geographic distribution of the relevant ticks and produce maps of Eurasia displaying their occurrences; 2) to review surveillance data to provide estimates of the relevant tick abundance and disease incidence in Eurasia; 3) to describe the factors that define the relevant tick population dynamics and identify possible high risk areas in the EU for introduction considering the biological and ecological characteristics of the ticks and their ability to adapt to new areas; 4) to provide an update of the role of the relevant vectors in the transmission and maintenance of ASF and CCHF in Eurasia; and 5) to review available methods for the control of the relevant ticks.

The approach consisted in establishing a WG on September 2009, which is producing two scientific reports: the present one, on ‘The role of ticks as vectors of ASF and CCHF’, and a second one on ‘The geographical distribution of ticks and tick-borne diseases in Europe and the Mediterranean basin’. Data on tick and tick-borne pathogens distribution was gathered

through a systematic literature review of the last 10 years; relevant scientific papers from private collections of the WG experts, regardless of the timeframe; and validated data from a previous European project 'Integrated Consortium on Ticks and Tick Borne Diseases'. All these data has been gathered in a database of more than 16000 entries, related to geographic distribution of ticks or tick-borne pathogens. The maps have been generated from the database. Furthermore, data obtained in the frame of the article 36 (scientific report on AHS, ASF and CSF, CFP/EFSA/AHAW/2007/02; scientific report on CCHF and EHD, CFP/EFS/AHAW/2008/04) were also used in these scientific reports.

9. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT MANDATES

9.1. Development of a Guidance on health and welfare aspects of GM-Animals (EFSA-Q-2010-698)

In March 2010, the European Commission sent a mandate requesting EFSA to develop guidance on animal health and welfare aspects of GM animals in addition to the guidance on safety assessment of GM animal-derived food and feed. This mandate had been presented by Sebastien Goux (DG SANCO) during the April plenary meeting (web-meeting). EFSA has accepted the mandate, proposing a deadline of December 31, 2011 which was agreed by the Commission. In accordance with its policy on transparency, EFSA will organise a public consultation on the draft guidance of animal health and animal welfare aspects of GM animals. The consultation is planned for the first quarter of 2011.

The guidance will be developed in close cooperation with the guidance on the safety assessment of genetically modified animal-derived food and feed being developed by the GMO Panel. The two guidance documents will form a comprehensive package to be published simultaneously.

The GMO working group has reviewed all the comments of the AHAW Panel on the document presented for adoption at the December's Plenary 2009 and discussed how they were taken into account in the latest version of the document. In the light of the new mandate, welfare issues will be specifically addressed in the new guidance document from AHAW and therefore the GMO guidance will be more focused on the safety issues. However, through close collaboration during the development of the two documents relevant aspects will be incorporated in each of the documents when necessary.

It was agreed that David Morton will chair the working group.

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

The current state of the opinion on potential implications of the current H1N1 pandemic influenza for animal health was presented to the Panel for discussion.

The mandate requested: 1) to assess the significance for the health of animals of different species (specially pigs and different poultry species) of the occurrence of pH1N1virus in the EU and elsewhere; 2) to assess the implications and consequences of the possible evolution of the pH1N1 virus on animal health; 3) to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of disease control options such as establishing animal movement restrictions in protection and surveillance zones, culling of infected pig herds and contact herds for pH1N1virus, as it is common practice for other notifiable diseases, e.g. CSF, AI, FMD; 4) to assess the risk that

animals from a herd/ flock which was infected with pH1N1 virus spread the virus after the last clinical signs of disease have been observed; 5) to assess the possibility, efficacy and efficiency of vaccination, using existing vaccines or newly developed vaccines against pH1N1 virus, in pig and poultry populations also in relation with possible evolution of variants of influenza viruses posing a serious risk to public and animal health; and 6) to assess the role of wildlife, in particular wild boar and wild birds in the epidemiology of pH1N1 virus, if any.

The approach consisted in establishing a WG on January 2010, which is producing a scientific report compiling all the data and information required to reply to the ToR. The WG is composed of several Panel Members, a representative from EMEA, from the EURL - AI, and two networks dealing with Influenza - ESNIP and OFFLU. WHO has been providing support on the aspects related to the human health part of the interface between humans and animals. IFAH was consulted for new vaccines intended for swine pH1N. EFSA received a request for commenting a reflection paper produced by EM/CVMP on the “the data requirements for swine influenza vaccines against pH1N1”. The official reply has been sent to EMA. During the plenary, the Chairman of the WG explained the state of art of the current work. No scientific assessment has been developed. The main draft conclusions and recommendations related to each ToR were shortly presented to the Panel.

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

A first tele-meeting has been held with the Chairmen of the two mandates to discuss the approach to the ToR. It was agreed that available data do not allow prediction of risk and emergence of a new pandemic influenza strains. The discussion was focused on the need for the assessment of the current surveillance system and identification of the gaps in surveillance.

A scoping document has been drafted by the secretariat and circulated to the Chairman for consideration as a basis for further discussions of a realistic approach.

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

The kick-off meeting with the Commission to discuss and further clarify the ToRs of the Mandate was held on 28 January, 2010. The WG has been set up and first WG meeting was held by teleconference on 17 March, 2010. Next WG meeting was held in May in Barcelona. A technical meeting with stakeholders and members of the AHAW Scientific Network was held on the 28th of May in Parma.

9.5. Increased mortality events in Pacific oysters (*C. gigas*) (EFSA-Q-2010-11)

The mandate; In view of the increased mortality events that occurred in 2008-2009 in France, Ireland and UK the EC requested to assess the role and possible importance of: 1) infectious agents with special focus on new genotype of Ostreid herpesvirus-1 (OsHV-1) named OsHV-1 μ var as possible aetiological agents; 2) climatic, seasonal or other environmental factors in their occurrence; 3) other mollusc species which could be involved. Finally, EFSA was requested to evaluate the scientific background that may justify

the authorisation to transfer adult Pacific oysters older than 18 months when they are sourced from an area affected by the increased mortality event.

The approach A WG was constituted on March 2010, which is producing the scientific reports. A literature review was performed regarding increased mortality on Pacific oysters. Epidemiological data provided mainly by the Community Reference Laboratory for mollusc diseases, but also from country reports delivered to the EC and other reports/ risk assessments by National agencies, were also assessed. The data collection is expected to be finalised at the next meeting. The draft opinion will be submitted at the coming September plenary for discussion. A consultation with the Animal Health Network is planned for the 14- 28 September.

9.6. Welfare of Animals during transport (EFSA-Q-2010-00053)

The kick-off meeting with the Commission to discuss and further clarify the ToRs of the Mandate was held on 28 January, 2010. The WG has been set up and first WG Meeting was held on 10 March, 2010 in Parma. The main objectives of the mandate were explained and tasks were assigned according to the draft table of contents distributed to the WG. Following WG was held 3-4 May in Brussels.

9.7. Development of Animal Welfare Risk Assessment Guidelines (EFSA-Q-2007-168)

The amended ToRs were submitted to the EFSA Executive Director on 15 December, 2009 and accepted on 18 January, 2010. The main contents of the guidelines have been agreed by the experts' WG. Next Meeting will be held next 21-22 June in Parma.

10. OTHER ISSUES

10.1. Self-mandates of the Scientific Committee

Daniela Maurici joined the meeting to present 3 self-mandates of the Scientific Committee which could be of relevance to the AHAW Panel. Mo Salman and Hans-Hermann Thulke are the representatives of the AHAW Panel in the ad hoc WG of the Scientific Committee on *statistical approaches to assess adverse or biologically relevant effects*, and *risk assessment terminology in food and feed safety*, respectively. Currently, there is no representative of the Panel on the ad hoc WG for *default assumption*. It was suggested that the draft output be shared with the Panel prior to its adoption for comments from AHAW.

10.2. Assessment of the public health risks from *Salmonella* in pigs

Martin Wierup gave a presentation to inform the Panel about the final outcome of the assessment of the public health risks from *Salmonella* in pigs³, in particular on feed that the final risk assessment highlighted as a major source of *Salmonella*. The Panel thanked M. Wierup for his presentation and also for his contribution to this assessment.

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/biohaz100419.htm>

10.3. Feedback from the Commission on the AHAW activities

Marina Marini presented the feedback from the Commission on the AHAW activities for the period of January to June 2010. Based on the conclusions of the scientific opinion on *Brucella suis* (EFSA-Q-2008-665), the Commission plans to amend Annex B of Directive 90/429/EC to include ELISA test as additional test. The EFSA opinion on Q fever (EFSA-Q-2010-00010) was presented at the SCOFCAH meeting of May; this issue is on the agenda of July meeting, including an update of the situation by The Netherlands. The EFSA opinion on ASF (EFSA-Q-2009-00506) was presented at the SCOFCAH meeting of 1st June; the conclusions were supported by the Commission and the Member States. The opinion on EHD (EFSA-Q-2009-00503) will be tabled for discussion at a CVO meeting, end of June.

Francisco Reviriego Gordejo presented the positive feed-back of the Commission on the quality of the AHAW opinion on Q fever. The delivery of the opinion by the requested short deadline was appreciated.