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**AHAW UNIT**

Parma, 28 March 2011

**SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON AHAW**

**Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the EFSA Scientific Network for  
Risk assessment in animal health and welfare  
Parma, 10 and 11 November 2010**

**Participants**

Network representatives	Aaltonen (FIN), Arvo Viltrop (EST), Edith Authie (FRA), Eva Renčová (CZE), Georgi Georgiev (BUL), Helen Roberts (UK), Nicola Sanitini (IT), Olga Ondrasovicova (SVK), Robert Kocsis (HUN), Susanna Sternberg (SWE), Taina Paschalis Fortomaris (GRE), Wim Ooms (NLD), Vidmantas Paulauskas (LTU). Halldór Runólfsson (Observer from Iceland).
AHAW Panel members	Philippe Vannier (chair of the AHAW Panel), Hans Thulke
Invited speakers	Matthias Greiner, Alexander Singer
Observers	Marina Marini (DG Sanco, Unit 03), Peter Braam (CH)
EFSA	AHAW Unit: Franck Berthe, Ana Afonso, Andrea Guevelmeyer, Denise Candiani, Jordi Tarre, Milen Georgiev, Oriol Ribo, Sandra Correia, Sofie Dhollander, Tomasz Grudnik.  Ilias Papatryfon (SCO - Nov 10), Didier Verloo and Elisa Aiassa (AMU - Nov 11).

**1. Welcome and apologies**

The meeting was chaired by Franck Berthe, head of the AHAW Unit.

Franck Berthe welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Carlo Dahm (LUX), Duncan Chetcuti Fernando Almeida Bernardo (POR), Emilio García Muro (SPA), Ganado (MAL), Ingfrid Slaatto Naess (NOR), Jacek Osek (POL), Josef Köfer (AUS), Gerard Lamsens (BE), Pavlos Toumazos (CYP), Kristian Møller (DK), Maarjia Kristian (EST), Mareks Samohvalovs (LAT), Niall Ó Nualláin (IRL), Thomas C. Mettenleiter (GER), Stefan Nicolae (ROM) and Simona Šalamon (SLO).

Franck Berthe opened the meeting and explained its main purpose: to discuss scientific topics related to risk assessment in the area of animal health and welfare. The main objective is to avoid duplication of the work developed by Member States, and to enhance exchange of information and expertise between EFSA and Member States.

Philippe Vannier, chair of the AHAW Panel, also gave his views on the role to be played by the network and how to reach a good collaboration between the Network and the AHAW Panel/Unit.

## **2. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda<sup>1</sup> was adopted without changes.

## **3. Declarations of interest**

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Declarations of Interests, EFSA encouraged participants to fill in the Annual Declaration of interest (ADoI) and screened filled in ADoI. 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.

## **4. Discussions**

### **4.1. Background of the Network**

Sandra Correia presented the background of the AHAW Network, based on the "*Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission*"<sup>2</sup>. In accordance with Article 22 (7) and 23 of the Regulation, the Authority shall promote the networking of scientific organisations of EU Member States operating in the fields within the Authority's mission. The aim of the networks is to support EFSA and the Member States in carrying out its mission in accordance with the established standards of scientific excellence, transparency and responsiveness foreseen in the founding Regulation. These include *inter alia* facilitating the development of a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects and the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields within the Authority's mission.

### **4.2. Scientific cooperation between EFSA and Member States**

Ilias Papatryfon presented the current tools available for the cooperation between EFSA and the Member States. Focus was given to the role of the EFSA focal points (FP), outsourcing of activities according to the art. 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/ 2002 (grants and procurements), the Expert data base (EDB) and the Information Exchange Platform (IEP). In relation to the IEP, the Network was invited to actively upload new risk assessments outputs, national work plans, countries profiles etc in this IEP, through their respective FP. The Network was also encouraged to promote the EFSA EDB at National level. EFSA will provide a frequent feedback (notification) to the Network on the new documents and information uploaded.

### **4.3. Mandate of the AHAW Network**

Franck Berthe presented the current mandate of the AHAW Network<sup>3</sup>, with focus on the terms of reference. This presentation was followed by a discussion where Network representatives and participants were invited to comment the current mandate, make suggestions on how to prioritize activities to be developed in terms of collaboration, and how to best approach these priorities. The main conclusions from the discussion were:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/ahawnetworks/docs/ahaw101110-a.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/networks/supportingunits.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/ahaw/ahawnetworks.htm>

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- Members of the network need to develop and maintain a good network at national level and to keep aware and engaged in spreading the information within their own national networks.
- Continuous communication between risk assessors (RA) and risk managers (RM) is important to ensure risk assessment provides useful recommendations. The participation of RM during the work of the RA can be useful for this purpose. The network recognised that having members both from RA and RM in the network itself could be useful from that point of view.
- Capacity/capability to perform RA differs among MS (see also EFSA 2009 “*Fostering harmonised risk assessments approaches on animal health and welfare issues in the Member States*”<sup>4</sup>).
- Identified priorities: i) look for synergies in AHAW RA activities; ii) enhance exchange of information and data; and iii) harmonization of AHAW RA practices and methodologies.

#### 4.4. Ongoing AHAW activities: paving future collaboration

Sandra Correia presented the ongoing activities of the AHAW Panel, and identified where input from the network and the type of support required that could be useful. The network will be contacted whenever data or information is required, using the communications tools already existent in EFSA.

It was agreed that harmonisation of the procedures for risk assessments was not necessarily the ultimate goal *per se*.

Edith Authie presented the new structure of the French agency. One of the remits of this new agency remains to deal with animal health and welfare issues and at the same time to develop RA through scientific expertise (independent, multidisciplinary with the support of scientific panels and working groups). Surveillance and monitoring issues are also part of their remit.

It was recognised that presenting ongoing activities in Member States during the meetings of the Network would be most beneficial for all members. Sharing of work being developed in the different MS would avoid duplication of efforts and stimulate collaboration between EFSA and MS.

Oriol Ribo presented ongoing activities on animal welfare, including mandates and art.36 grants. The work being currently developed by the AHAW Panel on the risk assessment methodology for animal welfare received interest; the Network requested to be informed of the outcome of this work. It was suggested to organise a workshop on this topic in 2011.

The network emphasised the relevance and importance of syndromic surveillance and also role of wildlife as reservoirs of several animal diseases. It was also referred to bee health (CCD) and CCHF as topical issues for the Network.

#### 4.5. Workshop on the use of models in risk assessment

Hans Thulke, member of the AHAW Panel opened the workshop. The guidance of the AHAW Panel on “*Good Practice in Conducting Scientific Assessments in Animal Health using Modelling*”<sup>5</sup> served as the basis for discussion with the Network.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1344.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1419.htm>

Alexander Singer presented a report published by EFSA<sup>6</sup> reviewing the previous opinions of the AHAW Panel concerning the application of quantitative tools, in the sequence of the previously referred self mandate on “Good Practice in Conducting Scientific Assessments in Animal Health Using Modelling”. Matthias Greiner presented an open source programme for quantitative risk assessment. The background and the main functionalities of this programme were described. It is available on the Bfr webpage. Helen Roberts presented a rapid method for determining import risk of animal disease developed by DEFRA. It is a tool to monitor the occurrence of the major animal diseases outbreaks worldwide as an early warning to assess the risk that such events may pose to UK. All phases of this project including report with its RA are available on the DEFRA webpage (in “International disease monitoring”). Susanna Sternberg Lewerin, presented the current activities developed in Sweden and related to veterinary RA. The majority are expert statements followed by risk profiles and in few cases, formal RA. The process for this later one were presented (examples are RA for PRRS, BTb in farmed deer, MAP, EM with Finland and Norway). Wim Ooms presented the RA Framework for Emerging Vector-Borne diseases in the Netherland. It covers all aspects related to the risk of introduction, spread and consequences of vector-borne diseases.

After these presentations, members of the network exchanged views and discussed several issues. As a summary of the overall discussions and presentations, members of the network referred some points to reinforce the future collaboration of this network.

#### **4.6. Current developments in Assessment Methodology (AMU)**

Didier Verloo presented the main tasks and work developed by the AMU Unit: 1) develop and apply new or refined risk assessment and decision support approaches; 2) provide direct access to scientific literature for EFSA staff and experts.

Elissa Aissa presented the published guidance on the “Application of systematic review methodology to food and feed safety assessments to support decision making<sup>7</sup>”. The definition, suitability and summarised procedure were described.

The utility, advantages and disadvantages of the SR were thoroughly discussed. It was agreed that it should only be used when there are all the condition and resources to develop it.

#### **4.7. Next meeting**

I was agreed to organise two meetings in 2011:

- May 2 - 3, including a workshop on risk assessment methodology for animal welfare.
- A second meeting is foreseen in the fall of 2011.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/43e.htm?wtrl=01>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1637.htm>