

## ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE UNIT

### **MINUTES OF THE 56<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE**

**30 and 31 March 2011, Parma**

#### **1. PARTICIPANTS**

##### **AHAW PANEL MEMBERS**

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

##### **AHAW UNIT**

Scientific officers: Ana Afonso, Franck Berthe, Denise Candiani, Sandra Correia, Sofie Dhollander, Milen Georgiev, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Tomasz Grudnik, Per Have, and Oriol Ribó.

Administrative assistant: Elda Franchi.

##### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION (DG SANCO)**

Sandra Mesman (Unit D1, Animal Health and Standing Committees – agenda item 5.2), and Judit Krommer (Unit D5, Animal Welfare – agenda items 6.1, 6.6, and 6.7).

#### **2. OPENING, APOLOGIES AND AGENDA**

The Chairman welcomed the Panel members and other attendants.

Apologies were received from Albert Osterhaus.

The agenda was adopted.

The May plenary meeting was confirmed on May 4-5. It was proposed to increase the June plenary meeting by one day in order to give sufficient time for the scheduled discussions. The plenary meeting initially planned in July 2011 was cancelled.

Franck Berthe gave a presentation of the new EFSA organization. The Panel welcomed the changes. Philippe Vannier invited Hubert Deluyker to attend the June meeting of the Panel.

#### **3. 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 Panel Members confirmed that no further declarations of interests were to be made in the context of the adopted agenda.

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

The minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel were unanimously adopted by written procedure and published on the EFSA web (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>).

#### **5. DRAFT OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION**

##### **5.1. Development of Animal Welfare Risk Assessment Guidelines (EFSA-Q-2007-168)**

EFSA launched a self-mandate in 2007, revised in 2009, with the following terms of reference: 1) To define a comprehensive harmonised methodology to evaluate risks and benefits in animal welfare, taking into consideration the various procedures, management and housing systems and the different animal welfare issues, with reference to the methodologies followed in the previous EFSA Opinions on various species; 2) the defined methodology for assessing risks and benefits in animal welfare should take into account and adapt current risk assessment methodologies, for example those for animal diseases and food safety, and also the complex range of measurable welfare outcomes; 3) the guidance document should concisely define the generic approach for working groups addressing specific areas of assessment of risks and benefits in animal welfare.

The original 2007 mandate was amended in 2009 and a WG composed of Panel members was formed. Although the terms of reference were revised in 2009 to include benefits, the Panel recognised, at its February plenary meeting, that risk and benefit analysis in the context of animal welfare may require further conceptual and methodological refinement. In order to finalise the Guidance within a reasonable period of time, the Panel had proposed that it concentrates on risk assessment process as the main priority.

The Panel discussed new version of the draft guidance in preparation for its next WG meeting. The approach and content of this new version was felt in line with the expectations of the Panel. Several points were discussed and amendments were suggested.

It was confirmed that implementation of risk assessment methodology to animal welfare is included in the agenda of the AHAW Network meeting as a workshop session next May, 3.

In compliance with EFSA policy on guidance documents, the AHAW Unit will submit the Guidance to a 6-weeks public consultation, starting, most-likely in May 2011.

The Panel was informed that the request to EFSA for an extension of the deadline was approved by the Mandate Review Committee. It is expected that the Guidance will be adopted in October 2011.

##### **5.2. Bluetongue (EFSA-Q-2010-01238 and EFSA-Q-2010-01237)**

On 27 October 2010, EFSA received a request from the European Commission for a scientific opinion on bluetongue, addressing two issues: 1) the possible additional risk posed by bluetongue serotype 8 compared to other serotypes; and 2) epidemiological parameters, such as the expected prevalence under different circumstances and the size of a geographical relevant area for the purpose of monitoring and surveillance programmes. EFSA accepted the mandate and proposed to deliver two separate opinions. Outcomes of these opinions may be considered when preparing proposals for amendments to EC Regulation 1266/2007.

The draft scientific opinions were presented to the Panel for discussion in the view of their possible adoption in May 2011.

Two working groups, including ad hoc experts, were established to deal with the two specific terms of reference:

### **Bluetongue serotype 8**

To answer the first part of the question, a systematic literature review (SLR) has been carried out to evaluate if the kinetics of BTV-8 infections and virulence are different from the other serotypes. For the second part of the question, a SLR focussed on trans-placental transmission and transmission through artificial insemination and embryo transfer of BTV 8 and other BTV serotypes. The conclusions forthcoming from the SLR were used to assess the impact of the potential higher risks for BTV-8 for transplacental transmission and transmission through artificial insemination on the BTV epidemiology as well as the effectiveness, suitability and proportionality of risk mitigating measures

The Panel discussed the draft opinion and suggested that chapter 2.2 focus more on the results of the SLR. The Panel suggested to include a statistical analysis in chapter 2.2.

On chapter 2.3 (oral transmission), the Panel suggested to include the state of knowledge of excretion of BT and to make the conclusions more straight-forward.

On the chapter on transplacental transmission, it was suggested to summarise the personal communications received by the working group. The conclusions of chapter 2.5 and 2.6 have to be grouped in a chronological order. Conclusions on embryo transfer should focus on whether or not special features exist for BTV8, which might influence the epidemiology of the disease.

On Chapter 3, Sandra Mesman commented that the opinion should report more clearly on the mechanisms which may lead to spread, persistence or seasonality of the special features of BTV-8.

### **Bluetongue monitoring and surveillance**

The panel discussed the draft opinion. The panel suggested to clearly define the different types of prevalence used in the report in the glossary and to explain the concept of design prevalence and when and how to use it. Existing European BT models (De Koeijer et al., 2011; Ducheyene et al., 2011; Szmaragd et al., 2010) will be briefly described regarding their applicability and limitations to estimate expected prevalence and assess the relevant geographical unit. Further, it was suggested to include a recommendation for further developing these models into a European BT model accommodating different epidemiological situations. The panel felt that the culicoides chapter needs shortening. Regarding the geographical unit, it was suggested to include a table addressing the needs in the different phases of a BT epidemic, considering different parameters such as purpose of surveillance, surveillance method, expected prevalence, the need for estimate precision and factors to consider such as time since introduction of virus, extent of animal movement. Overall, the panel felt that the conclusions should be revised with view to making them more useful for the risk managers.

Sandra Mesman expressed her particular concern that the opinion mainly includes experiences and data on the BTV8 outbreak of 2006-2010, while this part of the mandate should address all serotypes of BTV in all parts of the EU.

It was decided that Simon More will replace Marcus Doherr as deep reader (other deep reader: Mo Salman).

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

### **6.1. Use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of dairy cows (EFSA-Q-2010-00941)**

The mandate requests to: 1) identify how animal-based measures could be used to ensure the fulfilment of the recommendations of EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare of dairy cows; 2) identify how the Welfare Quality assessment protocols cover the main hazards identified in EFSA scientific opinions (and vice-versa); 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.

Deadline of the Mandate is June 2011. The WG is formed from Panel members. Hearing experts were also invited to contribute on specific points. A “review of methodologies applicable to the validation of animal based indicators of welfare” was outsourced and made available for WG consideration by the end of February 2011.

The Panel discussed definitions, methodology and approach applied to address mandate (relations and links network between hazards, adverse effect and animal welfare measures), and preliminary assessment outcomes.

### **6.2. Request for a scientific opinion and technical assistance on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat (domestic swine,EFSA-Q-2010-00930, and poultry,EFSA-Q-2011-00019)**

The Commission requested 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.

The AHAW Panel will ensure that any change to current inspection does not jeopardize the capacity to detect animal diseases nor compliance with the animal welfare regulation. For this purpose, the Panel considered needed to determine the importance and integration of meat inspection in the EU animal health surveillance and monitoring.

This mandate is addressed in collaboration with several other EFSA Units. An overarching was formed to ensure coordination of contributions from all participants.

The AHAW Panel WG is formed of Panel members. The approach is to identify a list of diseases/conditions of interest, a subset of which will be chosen for further modelling, based on agreed criteria. The work is ongoing and organised in the 3 main steps:

Step1: Defining diseases/conditions of interest

Step 2: Modelling the impact of proposed changes to the current meat inspection system

Step 3: Modelling the impact of proposed changes to the current meat inspection system on the overall monitoring and surveillance system

The Chair of the working group (WG) provided and update of ongoing work. Assessment on the implication of proposed changes in meat inspection for AHAW is started over provided draft recommendations by BIOHAZ and CONTAM. The timelines and dependencies between EFSA Units for all animal species and potential implications for the WG of AHAW and contractors were presented and discussed. The draft document (meat inspection of swine) will be submitted to the Panel at the next plenary meeting for discussion.

Taking stock on the work performed for domestic swine, work on poultry was initiated. For this purpose, ad hoc experts were called to assist the WG. A draft list of diseases/conditions of interest (step 1 poultry) was presented and agreed by the Panel. The timelines and milestones were presented and discussed. The final list will be delivered to the contractor for subsequent modelling. Recommended changes to be proposed by BIOHAZ are expected Nov-Dec 2011 and the deadline for completion of the poultry opinion is June 2012.

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

In March 2010, the European Commission requested a guidance on animal health and welfare aspects of GM animals in addition to those on safety assessment of GM animal-derived food and feed. The agreed deadline is end of 2011.

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 scheduled to take place from June 2011 for a period of eight weeks.

The guidance is developed in close cooperation with the GMO Panel and its guidance on the safety assessment of genetically modified animal-derived food and feed. The two guidance documents will form a comprehensive package.

The chairman of the WG gave a brief update of the draft guidance. The draft document will be submitted to the Panel at the next plenary meeting for discussion.

### **6.4. Risk posed by Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EFSA-Q-2010-00011)**

In December 2010, the European Commission requested a scientific opinion on the risk posed by EUS (Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome), specifically to assess: 1) the risk of introduction of EUS in the EU by means of import from third countries 2) the risk of EUS to spread and persist within the EU and the possible significance and impact in the European Aquaculture taking account of the epidemiology, the available diagnostic methods, the susceptible species range, and the relevant environmental conditions.

The mandate deadline is November 2011.

Relevant previous work by the AHAW Panel: in 2008, the AHAW Panel published an opinion on aquatic species susceptible<sup>1</sup> to diseases listed in Council Directive 2006/88/EC in which EUS is discussed. In 2007, the AHAW Panel published an opinion on possible vector species<sup>2</sup> for certain fish diseases.

An outline of the structure of the opinion was presented, along with detailed methodological approach. AHAW also intends to organise a technical hearing with different stakeholders to receive feedback on proposed pathways and collect expert opinion when data is not available. The AHAW network was informed of the mandate and comments were received from a few Member States.

The chairman of the WG gave a brief update of the draft guidance. The draft document may be submitted to the Panel at the next plenary meeting for discussion.

#### **6.5. Request for a scientific opinion concerning hatchery waste as animal by-products (EFSA-Q-2011-00077)**

In November 2010, the European Commission requested a scientific opinion concerning changes of categorisation of particular animal-by-products from Category 2 to Category 3 (Ref. Ares(2010)860477 - 25/11/2010). The mandate has four ToR: 1) to assess the risk to animal and public health of transmission of the most important infectious agents in hatchery by-products, such as *Salmonella* spp., Avian Influenza virus and Newcastle disease virus from dead-in-shell chicks through animal feed; 2) to assess the risk of transmission of vertically transmissible avian diseases, such as Avian Leucosis, Chicken Infectious Anemia viruses, Avian Adenoviruses (egg drop syndrome), Reticuloendotheliosis, Avian Encephalomyelitis, Mycoplasma and Avian psittacosis from dead-in-shell chicks through animal feed; 3) to assess the risk to animal and public health of the transmission of other biological hazards from dead-in-shell chicks, such as *Campylobacter*, *Enterobacteriaceae*, *Erysipelas*, Botulism toxins, Toxoplasmosis through animal feed; 4) in the case of identified risk in points 1-3, to indicate the most important factors which would have to be monitored in the production of feed for farmed animals and processed pet food, should dead-in-shell chicks be categorised as Category 3 materials. Meanwhile some clarifications have been requested to the EC and focus will be given to the “*risk posed by the possible use of dead-in-shell chickens for the production of pet food under the provisions currently applicable for processed pet food.*”

The mandate deadline is 31 July 2011.

The AHAW Panel is dealing with possible hazards present in the products while the BIOHAZ Panel is evaluating the eventual inactivation of the identified hazards by the two different processing methods.

A draft list of infectious diseases of interest was presented to the Panel and discussed. The draft document will be submitted to the Panel at the next plenary meeting for discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/808.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/584.htm>

## **6.6. Request on animal based indicators for pig welfare (EFSA-Q-2011-00277)**

Similarly to the ongoing mandate on dairy cows (see point 6.1), it is requested to: 1) identify how animal-based measures could be used to ensure the fulfilment of the recommendations of EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare of pigs; 2) identify how the Welfare Quality® assessment protocols cover the main hazards identified in EFSA scientific opinions (and vice-versa); 3) identify which relevant animal welfare issues cannot be assessed using animal-based measures for pigs 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 pigs.

The deadline of the request is December 2011.

A first working group meeting is planned for the end of April.

A literature review and update of previous opinions on pig welfare (last adopted in 2007) was outsourced as preparatory work to this mandate. The contractor of the grant will perform a bibliographic search and provide EFSA with a list of references, together with the abstracts, he considers relevant for updating the previous opinions on pig welfare. Such preparatory work will be distributed to the members of the working group. The deadline for the completion of this preparatory work is end of April.

## **6.7. Request to update scientific opinions on beef cattle**

In anticipation on future mandate on animal based indicator for the welfare of cattle, the European Commission requested EFSA to update the scientific knowledge concerning the welfare of cattle kept for beef production (SCAHAW, 2001<sup>3</sup>) and the welfare of intensive calf farming systems (EFSA, 2006<sup>4</sup>), in particular to consider if the conclusions and recommendations of these two previous scientific opinions are still valid. The update is a preliminary work for a future mandate on the use of animal-based welfare measures to assess the welfare of beef cattle and calves.

The deadline of the request is June 2012.

A literature review will be outsourced as preparatory work to this mandate for providing the working group with a comprehensive list of recent literature to be used for updating the past scientific opinions. The update will focus only on beef cattle and calves (animal categories and farming systems of the referred opinions).

## **7. OTHER ISSUES**

### **7.1. Training in systematic reviews**

The programme of the Systematic Review Training Workshop was presented. The Panel opted for the workshop on 25-27 October 2011. AMU was requested to reserve places for 15 panel members and 8 AHAW staff members for the October workshop.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fs/sc/scah/out54\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fs/sc/scah/out54_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup><http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/366.pdf>