European Food Safety Authority

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE UNIT

MINUTES OF THE 58th PLENARY MEETING OF THE PANEL ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

15-17 June 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, Karen MacKay, and Oriol Ribó.

Administrative assistant: Stefania Mori.

OTHER EFSA PARTICIPANTS

Pia Makela (BIOMO Unit), Hubert Deluyker (RASA Directorate), Djien Liem (SC Unit), Mattia Ragnoli (ITOP).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (DG SANCO)

Marina Marini (Unit 03, Science and Stakeholders by conference call), Silvia Bellini (Unit D1, Animal Health and Standing Committees – agenda item 5.1 by conference call), 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.

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 57th plenary meeting of the AHAW Panel were unanimously adopted by written procedure and published on the EFSA web (http://www.efsa.europa.eu).

5. NEW REQUESTS

5.1. Electrical requirements for waterbath stunning equipment

Judit Krommer presented a request from the Commission to give scientific advice on electrical requirements for waterbath stunning of poultry. The Commission had received information from British and Dutch authorities that might justify amending the electrical requirements for waterbath stunning of poultry laid down in Table 2 of Chapter II of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009. EFSA is tasked to review relevant new scientific references on electrical stunning of poultry and in particular the ones provided by the British and Dutch authorities and to recommend, if necessary, new electrical requirements applicable for waterbath stunning equipment laid down in Table 2 of Chapter II of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009.

The Panel welcomed this request. It was mentioned that alternative methods for the stunning of poultry, such as gas, would also deserve an assessment. It was agreed however that information provided by UK and The Netherlands should be the focus of this opinion and that other issues related to the stunning of poultry could be addressed at a later stage.

The Panel recommended a working group be formed; it was agreed that David Morton will chair this group. The deadline of the request is March 2012.

5.2. Animal-based measures for broiler welfare

Judit Krommer presented a request from the Commission to give scientific advice on the use of animal-based welfare measures to assess the welfare of broilers, similar to the ongoing mandate on dairy cows and pigs. In particular it will be 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 broilers; 2) identify how the Welfare Quality® assessment protocols cover the main hazards identified in EFSA scientific opinions (and vice-versa)and, where necessary, how other scientific information can be used to cover these hazards; 3) identify which relevant animal welfare issues cannot be assessed using animal-based measures for broilers 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 broilers.

The Panel welcomed this request.

The Panel recommended a working group be formed; it was agreed that Joerg Hartung will chair this group. The deadline of the request is March 2012.

Franck Berthe informed the Panel that EFSA is planning to outsource preparatory work in order to facilitate the work of the Panel on this issue by updating the SCAHAW opinion on broilers, as well as the 2010 EFSA opinions on genetic selection for broilers.

5.3. Swine vesicular disease (SVD) and vesicular stomatitis (VS)

The Commission requests updated scientific advice to critically and scientifically review the management measures on Swine vesicular disease (SVD) and vesicular stomatitis (VS). EFSA is requested to deliver a scientific opinion on the extent of the problem and the magnitude of the burden posed by these two diseases. The objectives are to better target, and modulate, the surveillance, and/or control measures that could be put in place to manage the risk. In addition, the scientific opinion should assist in managing areas of uncertainty and to identify whether current protection measures are proportionate.

The Panel welcomed this request but highlighted the broadness of the mandate. It was agreed that a meeting with Commission services and some members of the Panel be organised rapidly to clarify the terms of reference and prioritise issues to be addressed. The discussion also emphasised that despite SVD and VS share commonalities, the two diseases will require completely different treatment by the working group.

The Panel recommended a working group be formed; it was agreed that Frank Koenen will chair this group. The deadline of the request is March 2012.

5.4. Request from Bulgaria for a scientific opinion on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

Referring to the discussion on FMD held in Budapest during the 40th Meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum, The Risk Assessment Centre in Bulgaria has submitted a request to EFSA to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the significance of wild animals and especially wild boars in the epidemiology of FMD and particularly for the strain O1/Panasia- lineage 2?

2. What kind of surveillance system should be put in place by the competent authorities of Bulgaria and Greece in order to prevent (early recognitions) introduction of FMD virus on the territory of the European Union, taking into account the situation in neighbouring countries?

3. What is the scientific explanation for the genetic differences between the three FMDstrains isolated on the territory of Bulgaria ?

The Panel welcomed this request from Bulgaria. Franck Berthe informed the Panel that the Commission had indicated its intention to make a request to EFSA on FMD. He explained that in application of Regulations 178/2002 and 1304/2003, concerning requests from different parties on an issue, EFSA would propose to address the questions raised by Sanco and the BFSA-RAC in one single opinion, provided that an agreement is reached between the different parties. The two requests would be discussed with the Commission with a view to allow for a coordinated approach and response to questions arising from the current situation in the Balkans. It was agreed that preparatory meetings be organised in anticipation of the tri-partite meeting.

The Panel recommended a working group be formed; it was agreed that Anette Bøtner will chair this group.

6. DRAFT OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR ADOPTION

6.1. 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). Subsequently, the EC clarified that focus should be given to the "*risk posed by the possible use of dead-in-shell chickens for the production of petfood under the provisions currently applicable for processed petfood*." The mandate deadline is 31 July 2011.

The WG dealing with this mandate drafted a text with the possible hazards present in these products, while the BIOHAZ Panel Working Group evaluated the eventual inactivation of the identified hazards through the two different processing methods. The draft chapter with the possible hazards was presented to the Panel and discussed. Small amendments were included and the adoption is foreseen for the next plenary in June. The Panel agreed that the draft chapter be shared with the BIOHAZ Panel WG to be presented at their next Panel plenary.

The opinion was adopted on June 15 2011.

6.2. Public health hazards to be covered by meat inspection (domestic swine, EFSA-Q-2010-00930)

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 draft document ANNEX (meat inspection pigs) was submitted to the Panel for endorsement.

The panel discussed thoroughly: the purpose of the inspection at different points of inspection procedure; and he potential negative or positive consequences if changes are implemented. The practicality for implementation of the proposed changes (e.g. ante-mortem at farm instead of in the abattoir were taken into account. The results of the qualitative and quantitative assessment were presented, conclusions and recommendations were drafted and agreed.

The Panel endorsed, with unanimity, the AHAW Annex to EFSA opinion in meat inspection pigs on 16 June 2011. Adoption of the completed opinion with the involvement of BIOHAZ and CONTAM Panels will follow by written procedure.

7. DRAFT OPINIONS SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION

7.1. 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.

The current deadline of the Mandate is June 2011. The chair of the WG informed the Panel that a new possible deadline was discussed with the Commission. It is proposed that the opinion be delivered at the end of 2011 on the following background: the request for scientific opinions on the use of animal-based measures to assess animal welfare constitutes a new type of question to the AHAW Panel. It is also the first request in a series that is planned to address all major farmed species by the end of 2012. Therefore, in accordance with the EFSA policy on public consultation, the draft scientific opinion could be subjected to public consultation to ensure its completeness, clarity and advise future opinions in this area. The proposed extension of the deadline would also contribute to consistency with the following mandate on pigs, due for December 31, 2011.

The draft scientific opinion was presented to the AHAW Panel. Panel discussion focused on definitions and approach applied to address mandate. The Panel proposed to use the term

''welfare outcome indicator" for animal-based measures (measurements) that could be used for animal welfare assessment, because this term provide the best reflection of the current concepts used by the Panel and its working groups.

Reviewed draft scientific opinion addressing Panel discussion will be re-submitted for Panel approval prior to public consultation. The intention is to open the public consultation early September for a six week period.

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

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

The guidance is being 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 be merged into a single, comprehensive document.

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 July 2011 for a period of eight weeks.

The Panel agreed that the proposal to assess health and welfare in a 4-step process, starting from initial development at the laboratory level and ending with post-marketing monitoring and reporting constitute an appropriate framework to address the topic. One of the major questions concern the feasibility of using a non-GM counterpart as a reference for the assessment and it was pointed out that in some situations such a reference may not be available or sufficiently relevant. In such cases there will be a need to perform an assessment following available guidelines and established procedures.

The draft chapter on animal health and welfare was discussed as well as the integration into a consolidated guidance. The document was endorsed for public consultation and the final version will be circulated to the AHAW Panel members for comment following the GMO Panel meeting July 6-7.

7.3. Risk posed by Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome

The mandate: On 1 December 2010, EFSA received a request from the European Commission for a scientific opinion on the risk posed by Epizootic ulcerative syndrome (EUS). The mandate specifically requests 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.

The approach: EUS is an infection by the oomycete *Aphanomyces invadans* that affects wild and farmed freshwater and estuarine fish. The disease is listed by the OIE and is included as an exotic disease in the list of diseases of Directive 2006/88/EC for which import, placing on

the market and control rules applies. The trade of ornamental live fish that is to be placed in closed ornamental facilities is allowed from infected areas and countries.

The expert WG has prepared a report with relevant scientific information and data available for the completion of the Import risk assessment. Data gaps were recognised and the report also contains a section on uncertainty. EFSA organized a technical hearing (14/6/2011) with different stakeholders to receive feedback on proposed pathways and collect expert opinion and commercial data where peer reviewed information was not available. The draft opinion was presented for discussion.

The discussion focused on the following main issues:

- Include contaminated water as a pathway for introduction
- The need to take in consideration data at EU level, i.e. level of imports and fish country of origin
- Impact assessment approach and uncertainty

The draft conclusions and recommendations were presented and thoroughly discussed with the panel and the commission. The chairman and secretariat will address comments as discussed.

The opinion will be submitted for possible adoption in September 2011.

8. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT MANDATES

8.1. Guidance for Risk Assessment on Animal Welfare (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 draft guidance was presented during the second meeting of the EFSA Network for Risk Assessment in Animal Health and Welfare in a workshop session on May 3. The draft guidance received very good feedback from the network members. It is now open for a public consultation[1] on the draft guidance was launched on May 4 and will be open for a 6-week period until June 17.

[1] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultations/call/ahaw110504.htm

It is expected that the Guidance will be adopted in October 2011.

8.2. Other mandates

Progress report on other ongoing mandates of the AHAW Panel was provided to Panel members with the briefing notes of the meeting.

9. OTHER ISSUES

9.1. Meeting with the Director of the Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance (RASA) Directorate

Hubert Deluyker, Director of the Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance (RASA) Directorate, presented the new EFSA structure and objectives and missions of the newly formed RASA. Philippe Vannier thanked him for sparing some time with the Panel.

9.2. Zoonoses, Zoonotic Agents and Food-borne Outbreaks report

Pia Makela (Head of the BIOMO unit) presented the Summary Report on Trends and Sources of Zoonoses, Zoonotic Agents and Food-borne Outbreaks in 20092. Philippe Vannier thanked her for the very comprehensive presentation. It was suggested that an exercise similar to the one undertaken previously to review the BIOMO report by the AHAW Panel could be of value. It was agreed that the mandate could also be expanded to proposals by the AHAW Panel on specification of data needed for risk assessment at the human animal ecosystem interface. It was proposed that an internal mandate be prepared for possible discussion in September.

9.3. EFSA Science Strategy

Djien Liem (Head of the SCOM unit) presented the main features of EFSA's draft Science Strategy as the basis for an exchange of views and strategic discussion on this topic. He informed the Panel that the Strategy would be submitted to consultation process later in 2011. Philippe Vannier thanked him for his very interesting presentation. The discussion clarified that animal health was an upcoming issue in the EFSA work on emerging risks. The Panel insisted on the need to improve data collection in animal health and welfare. The concept of risk-benefit assessment was discussed with its current limitations to food consumption. Concerns were raised about the opening of plenary meetings to stakeholders and other interested parties. Finally, the discussion emphasized the importance that EFSA opinions are based on collective assessment in order to protect individual experts from external pressure.

9.4. New tele- and web- conferencing system

Mattia Ragnoli (ITOP) presented the new capacity in tele- and web- conferencing.

[2] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2090.htm