



EFSA
European Food Safety Authority

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**MINUTES OF THE 2nd PLENARY MEETING OF
THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS
Held in Brussels on 24 September 2003**

AGENDA:

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 22 May 2003
4. Feed-back by the chairman on subjects discussed in the SC which are of interest to the Panel
5. Progress reports on:
 - 5.1. Tuberculosis in bovine animals: risks for human health and control strategies.
 - 5.2. The effects of nitrites/nitrates on the microbiological safety of meat products.
 - 5.3. Revision of meat inspection procedures for lambs and goats.
 - 5.4. Revision of the opinion on culling strategies.
6. Official requests to EFSA received from the European Commission
 - 6.1. Discussion and adoption of the mandates
 - 6.2. Organization of working groups
7. Schedule of plenary meetings for 2004
8. Miscellaneous

MINUTES OF THE 2nd PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

**Held in Brussels on 24 September 2003
Adopted by written procedure 24 October 2003**

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Sava Buncic, Pierre Colin, John D. Collins, James Hope, Mac Johnston, Günter Klein, Hilde Kruse, Ernst Lücker, Antonio Martinez López, Christophe Nguyen-The, Birgit Noerrung, Servé Notermans, George-John Nychas, Maurice Pensaert, Terence Roberts, Ivar Vågsholm, Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch.

Apologies

Herbert Budka, Christian Ducrot, Simone Magnino, Riitta Liisa Maijala .

EFSA

Bart Goossens (scientific co-ordinator of BIOHAZ Panel), Marta Hugas (scientific co-ordinator of BIOHAZ Panel), Angela Cohen (administrative secretary of BIOHAZ Panel).

Commission

Eric Thévenard, Pia Mäkelä (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees. Apologies were received from Herbert Budka, Christian Ducrot, Simone Magnino and Riitta Liisa Maijala. There were no specific interests declared.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Agenda was adopted.

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 22 MAY 2003

The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Scientific Panel held on 22nd May 2003 were adopted.

4. FEED-BACK BY THE CHAIRMAN ON SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN THE SC WHICH ARE OF INTEREST TO THE PANEL

The Chair informed the Panel about the Colloque EFSA is organising in Ostend, Belgium, from 23-25 October. The main objective of this Colloque is to start a dialogue between EFSA and its stakeholders. The chairs of the Scientific Panels and Committee have been invited to

take part in this important event. In addition the Chair reported on the Risk Assessment – Risk Management Interface Workshop held recently in Noordwijkerhout (NL).

The panel members were also informed about possible interaction with other panels and the Scientific Committee, e.g. members of the panel on BioHaz may be invited to contribute to specific WG organised by other Scientific Panels or the Scientific Committee.

The chairman informed the members on the discussion by the Scientific Committee on cases where a potential conflict of interest may arise. In cases where there is a difficulty regarding interpretation, the Chair and the Secretariat may decide to contact the Executive Director in order to discuss the most appropriate way of handling the issue. The Secretariat of the Scientific Committee is preparing a guidance note on declaration of interest.

With respect to liability, the Chair explained that in all cases, liability lies with EFSA and not with the individual experts. Each panel member is to receive a letter from the EFSA Secretariat to confirm same.

Further topics discussed included the format of questions to EFSA and their acceptance, format of opinions and the inclusion of recommendations and deadlines for opinions set by the petitioner or by EFSA in case no deadline is given. In the case of relation EFSA – Commission, the Interface (Unit D5, the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate General) is the responsible Unit to deal with this.

All above discussed items can be found as topics of the previous Scientific Committee meetings on the following links:

http://www.efsa.eu.int/pdf/minutes_sci_01_adopted_en.pdf

http://www.efsa.eu.int/pdf/minutes_sci_02_adopted_en.pdf

http://www.efsa.eu.int/pdf/minutes_sci_03_adopted_en.pdf

5. PROGRESS REPORTS ON:

5.1. Tuberculosis in bovine animals: risks for human health and control strategies.

Prof Collins, the chair of the WG reported on the current status of the draft opinion and the expectation to have the document ready for adoption at the next plenary of November or in January the latest.

Prof Johnston reported on the recent UK report on bovine tuberculosis from FSA which was distributed to the members of the WG.

5.2. The effects of nitrites/nitrates on the microbiological safety of meat products.

The chair of the WG (Dr Notermans) reported the outcome of the first WG meeting. The members requested for the new reformulation of the mandate after the amendments they made on the first plenary.

The secretariat reported that Commission had reformulated the mandate and asked for a deadline by the end of November. The draft opinion would have to be adopted on the next plenary in November. The members requested to see the document as soon as possible before the plenary. It was agreed to send the document one week in advance.

5.3. Revision of meat inspection procedures for lambs and goats

Prof Johnston (chair of the WG) reported on the first WG meeting held the day before the plenary. The opinion on revision of meat inspection of lambs and goats will form part of a series of opinions on the revision of meat inspection procedures for different animal species. He reported on the discussions on animal definition and on housing systems.

5.4. Revision of the opinion on culling strategies.

An earlier mandate which had been transferred from the Commission was considered. The new information was reviewed by the BSE WG. It was considered that no new information was added to the already existing scientific data which would warrant an update of the opinion on culling strategies in cattle. However, a formal mandate will be revised and transferred to EFSA after which a final opinion will be formulated.

6. OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA RECEIVED FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

6.1. Discussion and adoption of the mandates

Vaccines for the control of *Salmonella* in poultry flocks

The Scientific Panel of Biological Hazards is requested to identify the different types of vaccines available against salmonella in poultry and to indicate their practical advantages and disadvantages against their possible use in the framework of control programmes taking into account the different types of flocks.

Antimicrobials for the control of *Salmonella* in poultry

The Scientific Panel of Biological Hazards is requested to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the use of antimicrobials in the framework of salmonella control programmes taking into account the different types of flocks, to assess the risk that could result from the use of such antimicrobials for the (i) prevention of salmonella infection in animals, (ii) treatment of flocks infected with salmonella without clinical signs and (iii) treatment of clinically affected flocks. The Panel was asked to highlight any aspects related to the use of antimicrobials that may jeopardize a successful implementation of a programme to control salmonella.

***Campylobacter* in animals and foodstuffs**

The Scientific Panel of Biological Hazards is requested to deliver a scientific opinion on *Campylobacter* in animals and foodstuffs in particular to: (i) identify categories of foodstuffs where *Campylobacter* represents a significant risk to public health, (ii) identify possible control options to reduce the risk along the food chain and (iii) identify gaps in available data as well as best means of collecting this information.

TSE in Sheep

The Panel on Biological Hazards is requested by the Commission to deliver an opinion on the interpretation of results of EU surveillance of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) in ovine and caprine animals, culling strategies for TSEs in small ruminants and the TSE- related safety of certain small ruminant products. Recent scientific evidence and data received from Germany, Japan and UK will be reviewed and included in an opinion which should be finalized by end of 2003.

Over Thirty Months Rule – Date Based Export Scheme – Moderate risk request (UK)

EFSA was requested by the Commission to provide an opinion on (1) the scientific justification or proposed amendments to the United Kingdom Date Based Export Scheme and (2) the application of the United Kingdom for moderate risk BSE status. In particular the Commission requests EFSA to estimate the extra BSE risk to human health which would occur if the United Kingdom Date Based Export Scheme were amended to (a) remove the upper (30 month) age limit for eligible cattle and (b) remove the dam survival rule and lower (6 month) age limit for eligible cattle and to base the answers on the statistical modeling carried out as part of the review of the Over Thirty Months Rule in the United Kingdom, and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence regarding the possibility of maternal transmission of BSE. In addition EFSA is requested in particular to examine how this risk compares with the BSE risk to which EU consumers (outside the UK and Portugal) are currently exposed by consumption of bovine meat, meat products and preparations.

High-Pressure Hydrolysis Biogas (HPHB)

The Commission asked the European Food Safety Authority to assess the HPHB process on the basis of new data provided and to re-assess this process in view of its ability to safely dispose of Category 1 animal by-products. If the process is considered to present a risk, the Commission asks the EFSA to advice on the risks of the use of that process and on possibilities to addressing them. In view of the major implications for public health, this assessment should be completed before the end of 2003. A pre-assessment of the new information was carried out and a WG will be established.

Tongue infectivity

On 10 July 2003, the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the United Kingdom issued a statement on the BSE risk from bovine tonsil and the consumption of ox tongue. Its opinion was based on two reports *i.e.* a Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) report on the presence of tonsil tissue on ox tongue and an assessment of BSE risk from bovine tonsils carried out by DNV Consulting. The Commission would therefore like the Authority to consider the SEAC report in view of a possible update of the Scientific Steering Committee opinion of 22–23 November 2002 on tissue infectivity distribution.

6.2. Organization of working groups

In accordance with the current work programme, different working groups will be created in relation to the requests made by the EU.

Working group on **Vaccines for the control of Salmonella in poultry flocks**, being chaired by Prof. Riita Majjala.

Working group on **Antimicrobials for the control of Salmonella in poultry** being chaired by Dr. Pierre Colin.

Working group on **Campylobacter in animals and foodstuffs** being chaired by Dr. Hilde Kruse.

Working group on **TSE in Sheep** being chaired by Dr. Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch.

Working group on **OTM-DBES-MOD (UK)** being chaired by Dr. Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch.

Working group on **HPHB**: the BSE WG of the Panel on Biological Hazards will discuss the pre-assessment in collaboration with external experts.

Working group on **Tongue Infectivity** being chaired by Prof Ernst Lücker.

The members of the working groups will be identified after consultation with the Chair of the WG and the Chair and Panel members.

7. FORTHCOMING MEETING

The dates for next plenary meeting were scheduled on 26th and 27th of November 2003.

The following meetings will be held on 21st and 22nd of January and on 3rd and 4th of March.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

No items were discussed.