



**MINUTES OF THE 22ND PLENARY MEETING OF
THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS
HELD IN PARMA ON 19 AND 20 APRIL 2006**

AGENDA:

- 1 Opening, apologies for absence
- 2 Adoption of the agenda
- 3 Declarations of interest
- 4 Self tasking issues - update
 - 4.1 Risk factors on zoonoses
 - 4.2 QMRA proposals
- 5 Official requests to EFSA
 - 5.1 Presentation of new mandates received from the Commission
 - 5.2 Organization of Working Groups
- 6 Discussion and possible adoption of opinions
 - 6.1 Quantitative Risk Assessment for residual BSE risk: Opinion on Vertebral Column
 - 6.2 Farming systems for calves – Food safety aspects
- 7 Progress reports and discussion on the following mandates
 - 7.1 Opinion on the update of the GBR methodology
 - 7.2 ABP: Progress on process applications received
 - 7.3 Quantitative Risk Assessment for residual BSE risk in sheep
 - 7.4 Breeding for TSE resistance in small ruminants
 - 7.5 BSE related risk from the use of skins and hides for technical purposes from cohort animals
 - 7.6 Visual inspection system in veal calves – TB aspects
 - 7.7 Efficacy of decontamination for poultry carcasses: SAN-PEL
- 8 Feed-back by the Chairman on subjects discussed in the SC of interest to the Panel
- 9 Feed-back by the Panel members attending WG from other Panels
- 10 AOB
- 11 Closure of the meeting

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Herbert Budka, Sava Buncic, Pierre Colin, John D Collins, Christian Ducrot, James Hope, Günter Klein, Hilde Kruse, Ernst Lücker, Simone Magnino (19 April), Antonio Martínez López, Birgit Noerrung, Servé Notermans (19 April), Maurice Pensaert, Terence Roberts, Ivar Vågsholm, Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch

EFSA:

Marta Hugas, Bart Goossens, Eirini Tsigarida, Didier Verloo, Paolo Calistri, Fulvio Barizzone, Tobin Robinson, (Scientific Staff); Angela Cohen, Cristiana Ventura (Administrative staff)

European Commission (EC):

DG Health and Consumer Protection: T Sateri (via telephone conference)

1. OPENING, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Alexander Mac Johnston OBE, Simone Magnino (20 April), Riitta Liisa Maijala, Christophe Nguyen-The, Servé Notermans (20 April) and George Nychas.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST & MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PLENARY

There were no new declarations of interest relating to the above agenda. The minutes of the Plenary of 15-16 March had been adopted by written procedure.

4. SELF TASKING ISSUES – UPDATE

The scientific report on “Food as a possible source of infection with highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses for humans and other mammals”¹, which had been agreed at the 21st BIOHAZ Plenary meeting, was quoted in a news item in *Nature*². The Panel noted that the item had not cited the report accurately on a number of points.

¹ www.efsa.eu.int/science/biohaz/biohaz_documents/1412/biohaz_report_ej74_avian_influenza_en2.pdf
² www.nature.com/news/2006/060410/full/440850a.html

4.1. RISK FACTORS ON ZOONOSES

Possible approaches to review the Community Summary Report³ were put to the Panel in a discussion paper on identifying priorities, risk factors, recommendations and improvements. The key points in the Terms of Reference (ToR) were identified and a brief evaluation of the key points was made to find possible approaches which can also be applied in the future. Some suggestions were made. The first WG meeting will be held on 28 April.

4.2. QMRA PROPOSALS

This item looked at the follow-up to the project launched by EFSA to formulate a strategy for Quantitative Microbiological Risk Assessment (QMRA)⁴. A paper was presented outlining the draft background and ToR on the appropriate use of different types of Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA) to better answer the request of the Commission and support food safety management at the Community level and a discussion followed. The document will be revised and tabled again at a future Plenary meeting.

It was also noted that the draft opinion on microbiological testing, criteria and other objectives⁵ was published for public consultation and the deadline for sending comments to EFSA is 31 May.

5. OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA

5.1. PRESENTATION OF NEW MANDATES RECEIVED FROM THE COMMISSION

There were no new mandates received from the Commission.

5.2. ORGANIZATION OF WORKING GROUPS

See item 5.1

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF OPINIONS

6.1. QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT FOR RESIDUAL BSE RISK: OPINION ON VERTEBRAL COLUMN

A progress report was given by the Chair of the Working Group (WG). Some elements are to be updated, given new information. The opinion will be abridged and brought for possible adoption at the May Plenary.

³ www.efsa.eu.int/science/monitoring_zoonoses/reports/1277_en.html

⁴ www.efsa.eu.int/advisory_forum/adv_meetings/1375/af_noteqmra_16thmeet_en_3a1.pdf

⁵ www.efsa.eu.int/science/biohaz/biohaz_consultations/1427/biohaz_consultation_micro_criteria_en2.pdf²

6.2. FARMING SYSTEMS FOR CALVES – FOOD SAFETY ASPECTS

The member of the Panel reported that the document on farming systems for calves was being compiled by the AHAW⁶ Panel. A draft chapter on food safety aspects of veal calf farming was presented to the BIOHAZ Panel and a discussion followed. It was agreed that a detailed comparison of the food safety aspects of different farming practices was both beyond the scope of the ToR and was not possible with the available data. The general overview that had been produced was deemed appropriate. Some amendments were requested by members of the Panel and the revised chapter was adopted subject to editorial changes.

7. PROGRESS REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ON THE FOLLOWING MANDATES

7.1. OPINION ON THE UPDATE OF THE GBR METHODOLOGY

There had been no WG meetings since the March Plenary and the next GBR⁷ meetings will be held on 10-11 May and 12-13 June. Consensus is sought in the WG on some issues (e.g. general structure of the report, criteria for deduction of imported MBM⁸ and live cattle from the calculation). Consensus has been established with regard to categorisation of countries, better meeting the new OIE categorisation. The methods for integrating other factors such as surveillance data, weight factors for imports of MBM and live cattle from BSE risk countries, risk reduction strategies and resources for follow-up are still under discussion.

7.2. ABP: PROGRESS ON PROCESS APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Animal By-Products (ABP) WG met on 6 April to discuss the mandates on lime treatment of manure and biofuel production. More technical information was required on the device for the lime treatment of manure, together with clarification regarding pathogen inactivation. Concerning the biofuel production mandate, clarification was needed on the separation between category 2 and category 3 materials and on what type of material the applicant wants to use. The next meeting will be held on 11 May.

7.3. QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT FOR RESIDUAL BSE RISK IN SHEEP

At the second WG meeting (23 March) new data were presented which were taken into account for the revised risk assessment. It was also agreed that there would be co-ordination with the WG on the “Evaluation of the breeding programme for TSE resistance in small ruminants” (see item 7.4) and the AFSSA opinion on the same subject would also be taken into account. It was stressed that although the EC had asked for the production of the opinion to be accelerated, the

⁶ AHAW: Panel on animal health and welfare

⁷ GBR: Geographical BSE Risk - www.efsa.eu.int/science/tse_assessments/catindex_en.html

⁸ MBM: Meat and bone meal

original work plan will need to be adhered to, given the importance of the subject under discussion.

7.4. EVALUATION OF THE BREEDING PROGRAMME FOR TSE RESISTANCE IN SMALL RUMINANTS

The Chair presented the first reading of the draft report on the breeding programme for TSE resistance in small ruminants. Comments were made regarding the need for clarification of some aspects. These will require further discussion in the WG before their incorporation in the report. A next meeting is foreseen in May or early June with a view to preparing the document for possible adoption at the June Plenary.

7.5. BSE RELATED RISK FROM THE USE OF SKINS AND HIDES FOR TECHNICAL PURPOSES FROM COHORT ANIMALS

The Chair of the WG reported that the next meeting is scheduled on 26 April when the WG will consider the data on prevalence of BSE in cohort animals and address the risk of cross-contamination of material re-entering from leather production into the food and feed chain. The WG aims to present a draft for possible adoption at the May Plenary.

7.6. VISUAL INSPECTION SYSTEM IN VEAL CALVES – TB ASPECTS

The Chair of the Panel presented the draft opinion on behalf of the Chair of the WG. It examined whether a visual inspection system in veal calves raised in an area considered officially free of tuberculosis could be used rather than the current procedures for the incision and palpation of lymph nodes. A survey of 16 Member States (MS) showed that veal calves can be subjected to a significant number of changes in holdings and therefore the changes potentially increase the possibility of contracting TB. In the case of TB calves could be infected even under two weeks of age and tuberculous lesions could easily be missed if only visual inspection is used.

Comments were collected which will be further discussed in the WG meeting. The opinion will be amended and brought for possible adoption at the May Plenary.

7.7. EFFICACY OF DECONTAMINATION FOR POULTRY CARCASSES: SAN-PEL®

The opinion on the efficacy of SAN-PEL® for use as an antimicrobial substance applied on carcasses⁹ and in washing the shells of eggs was adopted. It had not been possible for EFSA to evaluate the efficacy of the substance for this purpose as inadequate data and supporting documentation had been provided by the applicant. It was also noted that the draft guidance document on the efficacy of

⁹ Carcasses of chickens, turkeys, quails, pigs, beef, sheep, goats and game

decontaminating agents other than potable water¹⁰ had been published for public consultation and the deadline for comments is 26 May. The aim is to help applicants to prepare their submissions for evaluation by EFSA.

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

The Chair reported on the Scientific Committee (SC) meeting of 10-11 April¹¹.

8.1. AREAS FOR RESEARCH UNDER FP 7

The Chair emphasised that the EC DG Research was looking forward to receiving proposals from the Panels identifying research areas under Framework Programme 7.¹²

The following suggestions were made by the BIOHAZ Panel:

- Transmission of AI H5N1 virus from birds to humans
- Survival and inactivation of avian influenza virus strains (H5N1 and others)
- Exposure assessment models
- Development of databases for QMRA
- Application of new processes in safe food production
- Development of multi-disciplinary approaches to defining the human-animal TSE species barrier (where animals examined are cattle, sheep and deer and TSEs including BSE, scrapie, a-typical scrapie and chronic wasting disease of deer).

8.2. EXPERT INDEMNITIES

The subject of whether or not there would be an increase in the amount of indemnities paid to experts was still under review. A member expressed the view that the indemnity was insufficient.

9. FEED-BACK BY THE PANEL MEMBERS ATTENDING WG FROM OTHER PANELS

9.1. QUALIFIED PRESUMPTION OF SAFETY

A member of the Panel reported that the sub-working groups concerned, e.g. probiotics, had produced working documents in the overarching WG and will meet on 30 May. The final document will be forwarded to the SC.

¹⁰ www.efsa.eu.int/science/biohaz/biohaz_consultations/1429_en.html

¹¹ www.efsa.eu.int/science/sc_commitee/sc_meetings/1432_en.html

¹² www.cordis.lu/fp7/

10. AOB

10.1. JOINT STATEMENT ON EFSA TALLOW OPINION PREPARED BY BUNDESINSTITUT FÜR RISIKOBEWERTUNG (BfR) AND FRIEDRICH-LOEFFLER INSTITUT

The German Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR) and Friedrich-Loeffler Institut (FLI) prepared a joint statement on the EFSA tallow opinion of April 2005¹³. This statement was sent to EFSA in an official letter from the Commission advising EFSA to invoke article 30¹⁴. A member of the Panel presented a detailed document addressing the points raised in the BfR/FLI joint statement. After a short discussion, the Panel adopted the document reflecting the opinion of the Panel. It will be sent, together with a letter, to the EC with BfR/FLI in copy.

10.2. SRM BACK CALCULATIONS

The Chair gave a progress report on the first WG meeting of 28 March. Currently, the WG is identifying persons to perform the back calculations at MS level. Taking account of this additional work, the finalisation of the opinion may require additional time.

10.3. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS IN OPINIONS

A member of the Panel asked if EFSA could clarify the criteria for acknowledging the participation of experts in the drafting of opinions and other EFSA publications. It was agreed that EFSA would provide further information to the Panel members on this subject.

10.4. UPDATE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW BIOHAZ PANEL

A shortlist of Panel applicants was submitted to the Advisory Forum (AF) so that MS could comment on those selected. The Management Board (MB) will meet on 11 May and the Panel selection will then be finalised. The date of the inaugural meeting will be announced.

11. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The meeting ended at 13.00.

¹³

www.efsa.eu.int/science/biohaz/biohaz_opinions/1110_en.html

¹⁴

Article 30 of Regulation 178/2002 is a procedure for dealing with divergence between opinions from EFSA and MS. This could involve replying to the MS to see if they accept the reply or for the two parties to meet to see if there are diverging opinions. A clarifying statement can then be made reflecting a common view.