



European Food Safety Authority

Brussels, 26 August 2003
EFSA/CONTAM/9 Rev.1

MINUTES OF THE 1ST PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD ON 21 MAY 2003 IN BRUSSELS

PARTICIPANTS

CONTAM panel:

Jan Alexander, Herman Autrup, Denis Bard, Christina Bergsten, Angelo Carere, Lucio Guido Costa; Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Alessandro Di Domenico, Roberto Fanelli, Johanna Fink-Gremmels¹, John Gilbert, Philippe Grandjean; Agneta Oskarsson, Andrew Renwick, Jirí Ruprich, Josef Schlatter, Greet Schoeters, Dieter Schrenk, Rolaf van Leeuwen, Philippe Verger

EFSA:

Claudia Heppner (Scientific Co-ordination CONTAM panel), Djien Liem (Scientific Co-ordination Scientific Committee), Christine Majewski¹ (Strategic Development), Hanne Pedersen (Administrative Secretariat CONTAM panel), Geoffrey Podger¹ (Executive Director)

European Commission:

Michael Walsh¹ (DG Health and Consumer Protection), Taina Sateri (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

I. GENERAL INAUGURAL MEETING (MORNING SESSION)

The Executive Director welcomed all attending the meeting. The objective of the first part of the meeting was to brief the Members of the Scientific Panels and Committees on their role, the role of EFSA and the joint interrelationship with other European institutions and with National Authorities. The first session was intended to provide opportunities for everyone to participate in the discussion.

It was hoped that there would be strong and lively interaction between EFSA and members of the Scientific Committee and Panels on all future dealings, as this was the

¹ Attending morning session only

way to build mutual confidence and make best use of the very considerable scientific expertise which was available.

The Executive Director stressed that EFSA wished to build on the many achievements of the previous scientific committee system. Equally EFSA had not been created to simply replicate the previous system but to make innovations in a number of key areas. In particular, there was a need:

- (i) to develop and make open and transparent the science of risk assessment. The Scientific Committee would have a particular role in this;
- (ii) to engage, in liaison with national authorities, in more timely and meaningful communication of risk assessments. This would in itself require considerable dialogue between EFSA and its Scientific Committee and Panels
- (iii) to provide public and realistic timeframes for work which was undertaken and, except in exceptional circumstances, to adhere to these;
- (iv) to provide greater opportunity for stakeholder participation in the risk assessment process for the delivery of a final opinion;
- (v) to ensure that the best expertise available was used. The Scientific Committee and Panels should be ready to form Working Groups or use other means to obtain the external expertise they needed.

In concluding his opening remarks, the Executive Director took the opportunity of congratulating the members of the Scientific Committee and Panels on their selection by the EFSA Management Board. The standard of selection had been high and many very good candidates had unfortunately had to be disappointed, although it was hoped there might be opportunities for them to participate in Working Groups. EFSA staff very much looked forward to working with and supporting those present.

The participants were then given practical information on the internal rules of procedures (by Christine Majewski) and on the role of the Interface Unit of the Commission (by Michael Walsh).

II. 1ST PLENARY MEETING OF THE CONTAM PANEL (AFTERNOON SESSION)

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Scientific Co-ordinators welcomed the participants and congratulated the members of the Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain to their nomination. Apologies for absence were received from Niklas Johansson.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted without amendment.

3. TOUR DE TABLE: INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

All participants briefly introduced themselves. A short resume of the CV of each member was included in the documentation package. These CV's will be placed on the EFSA website (www.efsa.eu.int).

The members of the Panel were given the opportunity, before and during the meeting, to propose colleagues or themselves to be candidates for the task of chair and vice-chairs of the CONTAM panel.

4. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS

The Scientific Co-ordinator introduced the rules and procedure of the election by a short presentation.

Dr. Josef Schlatter (CH) was elected as chair for the CONTAM panel, supported by all his fellow members by raising hands. He then continued chairing the meeting together with the scientific co-ordinators .

Prof. Philippe Verger (FR) and Dr. Rolaf van Leeuwen (NL) were elected as vice-chairs for the CONTAM panel supported by all their fellow members by raising hands.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY/INDEPENDENCE

The Scientific Co-ordinator explained briefly the different declaration forms which needed to be filled in. The participants were invited to submit all documents in relation to the declaration of interest, confidentiality and independence to the administrative secretary.

6. MANDATE OF THE PANEL

The Scientific Co-ordinator gave a brief introduction on the mandate of the CONTAM panel. Under Article 18 of the Decision concerning the establishment and operations of the Scientific Committees and Panels, adopted by the Authority's Management Board on 17.10.2002, the mandate of the Panel is set out as follows: "Contaminants in food and feed, associated areas and undesirable substances such as natural toxicants, mycotoxins and residues of non authorised substances not covered by an other Panel."

The Panel discussed the mandate and came to the conclusion that it is quite general.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The Scientific Co-ordinator gave a brief introduction on the draft work programme based on pending questions from the European Commission which will be most likely transferred to EFSA. The official work program is still to be received.

7.1 NON-DIOXIN LIKE PCBS

The CONTAM panel is requested by the European Commission to perform an evaluation of the health risks of dietary exposure to non-dioxin-like PCBs. This evaluation was already started in the framework of a collaborative project between the European Commission and the World Health Organisation in 2002.

The Panel agreed to evaluate the current status of the project in collaboration with the respective legislative services of the Commission and to re-discuss how to proceed at its next plenary meeting. Rolaf van Leeuwen accepted the task to co-ordinate this work on behalf of the CONTAM panel.

7.2 ORGANOTIN COMPOUNDS

The European Commission is considering the possible need to establish maximum levels for organotin compounds in food at Community level, based on the legal framework of Council Regulation EEC 315/93 of 8 February 1993². It therefore seeks the advice of the CONTAM panel on the risks to human health from exposure to these compounds.

The CONTAM panel is requested to assess the health risks to consumers associated with exposure to organotins in foodstuffs.

The CONTAM panel is in particular invited to indicate, on the basis of current knowledge, which organotins are of most concern for public health and for which there may be an urgent need for measures to reduce their presence in foodstuffs.

In considering these issues the CONTAM panel is asked to take note of a proposed parallel assessment on organotins in consumer products by the European Commission Scientific Committee on Toxicity, Ecotoxicity and the Environment. Liaison between the

² OJ L37, 13.2.1993, p.1

two Scientific Panel/Committee might be appropriate, particularly where exposure to similar organotin compounds arises from foods as well as from other routes.

7.3. REVIEW OF UNDESIRABLE SUBSTANCES

Council Directive 1999/29/EC³ of 22 April 1999 on the undesirable substances and products in animal nutrition is currently under revision.

An evaluation of all the undesirable substances and products identified in Annex I of Directive 1999/29/EC was started but not completely finished by the Scientific Committee on Animal Nutrition (SCAN). As consequence the CONTAM panel would be requested to evaluate all the undesirable substances and products using an approach based on priority substances.

The members of the CONTAM panel requested to have an update on the status of the terms of reference at its next plenary meeting.

8. ORGANISATION OF WORKING GROUPS

The CONTAM panel agreed that Working Groups should be established to address the questions related to the above mentioned work programme.

For non-dioxin like PCBs it was agreed that the members who have worked previously on this matter should continue. From the CONTAM panel Andrew Renwick, Greet Schoeters, and Dieter Schrenk will join the existing group and Rolaf van Leeuwen kindly agreed to become the co-ordinator of this group.

The CONTAM panel also confirmed that the members of the working group on organotin compounds should continue with their work. Philippe Verger and Alessandro Di Domenico (CONTAM panel) will join the group. Angelo Carere accepted his nomination as a chair of this working group.

It also was suggested that a new Working Group be established on undesirable substances. Johanna Fink-Gremmel was nominated as the chair of this working group. The structure and potential members of this working group will be discussed at the next Plenary meeting of the CONTAM panel after taking into consideration the update on the outstanding questions.

³ Council Directive 1999/29/EC of 22 April 1999 on the undesirable substances and products in animal nutrition (OJ L 115, 4.5.1999, p. 32) repealed from 1st August 2003 by the Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 May 2002 on undesirable substances in animal feed (OJ L 140, 30.5.2002, p. 10).

9. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2003

Next Plenary meetings of the CONTAM panel are scheduled for 7/8 July, 15/16 September and 25/26 November 2003.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Scientific Co-ordinator informed the Panel that EFSA will employ a new Document Management System (DMS) which currently is being set up and will be implemented in the future.

The chair of the CONTAM panel Josef Schlatter suggested putting a proposal together on how to process in cases of emergencies related to food crises.
