



## European Food Safety Authority

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Brussels, 7 May 2004

EFSA/CONTAM/136

**MINUTES OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY MEETING OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM)  
HELD ON 5 AND 6 APRIL 2004 IN BRUSSELS**

(adopted by written procedure on 7 May 2004)

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### **PARTICIPANTS**

#### *Panel Members:*

Herman Autrup, Denis Bard, Lucio Guido Costa, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Alessandro di Domenico, Roberto Fanelli<sup>1</sup>, Johanna Fink-Gremmels, John Gilbert, Philippe Grandjean<sup>2</sup>, Niklas Johansson, Agneta Oskarsson, Andrew Renwick, Jirí Ruprich, Josef Schlatter (Chair), Rolaf van Leeuwen (Vice-Chair), Philippe Verger (Vice-Chair).

#### *Ad hoc experts:*

Bruce Cottrill<sup>1</sup>, Klaus Appel<sup>2</sup>

#### *EFSA*

Juliane Kleiner (Scientific Co-ordination CONTAM Panel), Djien Liem (Scientific Co-ordination Scientific Committee), Tlaitmass Bounou (Administrative Secretariat CONTAM Panel)

#### *European Commission*

Taina Sateri (DG Health and Consumer Protection), Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumer Protection), Martin Slayne (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

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<sup>1</sup> Only present on 5 April 2004

<sup>2</sup> Only present on 6 April 2004

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair of the Panel opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Apologies for absence were received from Jan Alexander, Angelo Carere, Greet Schoeters and Dieter Schrenk. Members were informed that Christina Bergsten had to resign from the Panel due to unforeseen additional commitments she had to take up at her institute. As the Panel has to deal with quite a series of requests for scientific opinions on undesirable substances in animal feed it was agreed to look for an additional veterinary toxicologist. The EFSA secretariat will revisit the reserve list of experts that applied for the various calls for membership of the Scientific Panels and Committee of the Authority.

**2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The proposed agenda was adopted.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared.

**4. FEEDBACK FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

The Chair updated the members of the CONTAM Panel on the last meeting of the Scientific Committee held on 17 March 2004. Details can be found in the minutes of the Scientific Committee

[http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/sc\\_committee/sc\\_meetings/244/minutes\\_sc\\_06\\_en1.pdf](http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/sc_committee/sc_meetings/244/minutes_sc_06_en1.pdf)

**5. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM EFSA**

*EFSA Scientific Colloquium*

An outline for an EFSA Scientific Colloquium on “methodologies and principles for setting tolerable intake levels for dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs: revisiting the process” was presented. This Colloquium is intended to take place in Brussels on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of June.

Panel members welcomed this initiative but cautioned that the timing for the meeting preparation might be quite tight. It is crucial to have a good balance of experts and discussion should only be driven by scientific arguments. There should be a link to the work of the working groups of the Scientific Committee on a harmonised

approach for genotoxic and carcinogenic substances and on benchmark dose approach in risk assessment.

*Follow-up after the release of the opinion on mercury and methylmercury*

Members were informed about the EFSA Press Release, which accompanied the opinion on mercury and methylmercury in food. EFSA did not consider it adequate to give a pan-European advice on fish consumption and therefore referred to national food safety authorities for additional guidance. Member States through the network of the Advisory Forum are now requested to collect available data or generate new data by means of specific dietary intake studies on individual intake figures for fish and seafood.

## 6. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION

The Commission representative informed the Panel on recent developments in legislation:

- \* A Commission Regulation No 242/2004 was adopted on 12 February establishing a maximum level for inorganic tin of 200 mg/kg in canned foods other than beverages, of 100 mg/kg in canned beverages and of 50 mg/kg in canned foods for infants and young children excluding dried and powdered products. Simultaneously provisions on sampling and criteria for the methods of analysis have been adopted.
- \* Maximum levels for ochratoxin A (0.5 µg/kg) and aflatoxin B1 (0.1 µg/kg) are proposed and will be adopted very soon in processed cereal based foods for infants and young children and for aflatoxin M1 (0.025 µg/kg) in infant formulae and follow-on formulae. Maximum levels for OTA in roasted coffee (5 µg/kg), wine and grape juice (2 µg/kg) will be notified to the WTO. The appropriateness of setting a maximum level for OTA in dried fruit other than dried vine fruit, green coffee, cocoa and cocoa products, spices, some meat products and a review of the existing maximum levels will be considered after an EFSA assessment of the research results on OTA toxicology, which will become available by the end of 2004.
- \* With regard to dioxins, it is proposed to postpone the application of the current maximum level of 3 pg WHO-PCDD-PCDF-TEQ per gram fat for hen eggs to eggs from free-range chickens by another year (until 1 January 2005).
- \* Furthermore, intensive discussions took place on *Fusarium*-toxins and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). With regard to the latter maximum levels for benzo(a)pyrene in oils and fats, food supplements, foods for infants and young children, smoked meat and meat products, smoked fish and fish products and fish and fishery products are under discussion.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

### **7.1 Official requests for scientific opinions of EFSA**

#### *Safety of consumption of wild and farmed fish*

EFSA was requested by the European Parliament to develop a scientific opinion on the safety of farmed salmon marketed in the European Union and to provide a more general assessment on the health risks linked to the consumption of farmed carnivorous fish. EFSA proposed to rephrase the requests as follows: to conduct a scientific assessment of the health risks related to the human consumption of wild and farmed fish (salmon and other carnivorous fish species farmed in substantial quantities) marketed in the European Union. The assessment should focus on the presence of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and other contaminants in these fish species for which adequate analytical data exists, on the human health implications of consuming such fish, and on the methodologies for setting safety limits.

As there is yet no paradigm on how to conduct a risk-benefit analysis, Panel members felt that it may be difficult to come up with a firm position at this stage. However the need for developing means to handle this important issue was recognised and it was proposed to develop a conceptual paper on what is needed to conduct a risk-benefit analysis in this area. In addition it was agreed to start with a data collection on wild and farmed fish. It would also be very important to know the level of contamination in different fish feed. Some members of the Panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA) will be asked to join the working group.

#### *Toxicity of fishery products belonging to the gempylidae family*

EFSA received a request from the Commission for a scientific opinion on the toxicity of fishery products belonging to the gempylidae family. It was reported that consumption of some species, e.g. escolar, oil fish or castor oil fish can cause diarrhoea due to their high content of wax esters. Some Member States, e.g. Germany, Sweden and Italy have already evaluated these fishery products and it was proposed to first get a better picture on which fish species are on the market in Europe, which countries introduced into their legislation a ban on the placing on the market of these fishery products and the available evaluations. The request will be re-discussed at the next meeting.

### **7.2 Update on undesirable substances in animal feed (USAF)**

#### **7.2.1 Draft opinion on Cadmium**

The chair of the Working group on USAF introduced the final draft opinion on cadmium and an ad-hoc expert explained the exposure assessment. The discussion revealed that there are still some amendments to be made before the opinion can be adopted. Some of the conclusions drawn are not adequately reflected in the text. If

available, dose-levels for adverse effects in livestock should be included. The chair will include the comments and the opinion will be adopted by written procedure.

#### 7.2.2 Draft opinion on Lead

The chair on the working group on USAF introduced the final draft opinion on lead and the document was discussed in detail. As too many changes still have to be included, the opinion will be adopted by written procedure after its revision. Accidental poisoning in areas with specific conditions, e.g. hunting areas, or areas in which illegal battery disposal occurs will be added.

#### 7.2.3 Update on further progress of heavy metal subgroup

Members were informed that the working group has started to prepare draft opinions on arsenic and fluorine as undesirable substances in animal feed and first draft opinions will be discussed at the next working group meeting of 21 June 2004.

#### 7.2.4 Update on progress of mycotoxin subgroup

Draft opinions on zearalenone and deoxinivalenol as undesirable substances in animal feed will be submitted to the Panel for possible adoption at the next meeting in June 2004 and could, therefore, meet the deadline for completion. The draft opinion on ochratoxin A is in progress but will probably only be available for possible adoption at the September meeting of the Panel. First draft opinions on ergot and on fumonisins will be discussed at the working group meeting in September 2004.

#### 7.2.5 Update on progress in persistent organic pollutants (POP) subgroup

A first meeting of the working group on POPs as undesirable substances in animal feed is scheduled for end April 2004. The working group will start drafting an opinion on toxaphene and will then continue with endosulfan and lindane. An official letter will be written to the Commission stating that the proposed deadline of June 2004 for completion of these scientific opinions cannot be met.

#### 7.2.6 Risk assessment on botanical impurities

Due to time constraints no subgroup on botanical impurities as undesirable substances in animal feed has been set up yet. The proposed deadline for completion of the assessments on glucosinolates, tropane alkaloids, ricin, hydrocyanic acid and pyrrolidine alkaloids in animal feed is December 2004. More details on how to proceed will be discussed in the next Plenary meeting.

### **7.3. Draft opinion on organotin compounds**

Due to the absence of the Chair of the Working Group, a member of the working group introduced the draft opinion on organotin compounds.

The Panel acknowledged the big effort of the working group but did not consider the opinion as being at a final stage yet. The rationale for the derivation of a group-TDI has to be extended and to be based on a broader scientific basis. Therefore, a new chapter on mechanistic data of those organotin compounds to be included in the group TDI needs to be prepared. The opinion should be more focussed on the crucial data for the risk characterisation. The Panel also considered two additional recently published studies on tributyltin. Overall, the Panel considered that these studies confirmed that immunotoxicity being the most sensitive endpoint but did not alter the view expressed in the opinion. The Chair of the working group with another member of the Panel will participate in a meeting of an EC DG Research project on sources, consumer exposure and risk of organotin contamination in seafood (OT-SAFE) to see whether the complimentary occurrence data evolving from this research project would change the overall exposure assessment derived from the SCOOP data in the present opinion. As the adoption of the opinion will be delayed, a short minute-statement on the provisional outcome of the evaluation will be prepared for inclusion in the minutes of the Panel's plenary meeting in June 2004.

### **7.4 Update on non-dioxin-like PCBs (NDL-PCB)**

The Chair of the Working Group informed the Panel on the outcome of the third meeting of the WG held in March 2004. The background document on non-cancer health effects of NDL-PCB in animals needs to be revised as at present there is no clear distinction between the results for NDL-PCBs and dioxin-like PCBs. In addition the results of studies with commercial mixtures need to be included. The working group also reviewed a small but solid database on NDL-PCB in food and feed. With the help of the EC Joint Research Centre these data were extracted from data submitted to DG SANCO through the EC recommended monitoring programme on dioxins and PCBs. However, occurrence data are not available for all countries and not for all food and feed categories. The EFSA exposure group of the Scientific Committee will be asked to assist with the food consumption data. As the working group has to address as well risk assessment of NDL-PCB in animal feed the WG is currently looking for an expert on adverse effects in livestock. It is planned to submit a draft opinion to the November plenary of the Panel.

The working group considers to organise a session on risk assessment of NDL-PCBs at the Dioxin 2004 Symposium, September 2004 in Berlin.

## **7.5 Mandate to work on perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and its salts**

Members were informed that a mandate for self tasking on PFOS and its salts has been sent to the EFSA Executive Director for consideration. As soon as it has been accepted a working group will be set up.

## **7.6 Collaborative work with other panels**

The CONTAM Panel has been asked to assist the Panel on additives and products or substances in animal feed (FEEDAP) in the development of a guideline to assess the efficiency and safety of detoxifying agents for Mycotoxins. A joint working group of the two panels will be set up to address the question which studies are necessary to assess the safety of detoxifying agent for mycotoxins in human, animal and environment.

## **8. PRESENTATION: DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

A specific Document Management System (DMS) using OpenText's Livelink has been set up by the EFSA IT department. This document repository and collaborative solution can now be deployed on the Internet through a secured network.

By using a personalised password, latest (working) documents and functionalities can be made available to Panel members, who will be automatically alerted each time a new document is uploaded in the DMS instead of receiving directly the document in their mailboxes (allowing them to choose where and when they want to download the document). Other collaborative features are foreseen and will be proposed to the Panel members whenever they are available.

The full deployment schedule is said to be one year to one year and a half (before the move of the EFSA to Parma) but "pioneer" Working Groups are already using it since the end of March. Members welcomed this new tool and expressed their wish to use it in the near future.

## **9. MEETING DATES 2004**

The meeting dates for this year were confirmed. At the next meeting in June 2004 the meeting dates for 2005 will be fixed. If feasible the September 2004 meeting will be held in Parma.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no any other business and the meeting was adjourned at 16.00.