



Brussels, 21 October 2004
EFSA/CONTAM/200 final

MINUTES OF THE 8TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD ON 21 AND 22 SEPTEMBER 2004 IN BRUSSELS

(ADOPTED BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE ON 20 OCTOBER 2004)

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Jan Alexander, Herman Autrup, Denis Bard, Angelo Carere, Lucio Guido Costa, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Alessandro di Domenico, Roberto Fanelli, Johanna Fink-Gremmels, John Gilbert, Philippe Grandjean¹, Niklas Johansson, Rolaf van Leeuwen (vice-chair), Agneta Oskarsson, Jiri Ruprich, Josef Schlatter (chair), Greet Schoeters, Dieter Schrenk, Philippe Verger (vice-chair)

Ad hoc expert:

Klaus Appel²

EFSA

Claudia Heppner (Scientific Co-ordinator CONTAM Panel), Juliane Kleiner (Scientific Expert Services), Herman Koeter, (Director of Science)³ Ulla Bertelsen (Assistant Scientific Co-ordinator CONTAM Panel), Tlaitmass Bounou (Administrative Secretary CONTAM Panel), Vanderheyde Dimitri (Information Technology)⁴

European Commission

Almut Bitterhof (DG Health and Consumer Protection)², Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumer Protection), Martin Slayne (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The chair of the Panel opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Renwick and from Jürgen Lucas (DG Research).

¹ Only present on 22 September 2004

² Only present on 21 September 2004

³ Only present in the morning of 21 September 2004

⁴ Only present in the morning of 22 September 2004

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The proposed agenda was adopted with the following modifications: agenda item 11 undesirable substances in animal feed – arsenic was not discussed at the plenary meeting as the document could not be finalized in time. Two additional items, a presentation related to EFSA net (item 16) and a draft chapter on chemical contamination from a scientific report on welfare aspects of various systems of keeping laying hens prepared by the AHAW Panel (item 8.7) have been added to the agenda. The modified agenda was adopted.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1. SPONTANEOUS DECLARATIONS

No specific interests were declared by the CONTAM Panel members.

3.2. ANNUAL DECLARATIONS

The members of the CONTAM Panel were asked to fill in their annual declarations of interest and to hand them over to the Secretariat.

4. MATTERS ARISING SINCE THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The chair summarised the experience with the adoption of the opinion on Gempylidae by written procedure. The Panel members agreed that this procedure should be only used when opinions have been discussed in the Panel and only if just editorial revisions are needed.

5. FEEDBACK FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The chair updated the members of the CONTAM Panel on the last meeting of the Scientific Committee held on 28 July 2004 in Parma. Details can be found in the minutes (EFSA/SC/92)⁵ from the Scientific Committee (SC).

The chair invited the Panel members to reflect on topics related to emerging risk issues as the SC would like to have inputs from all Panels by the end of September. The Secretariat was asked to transmit the Panels suggestions to the SC Secretariat. The chair informed the Panel members that EFSA is in the process of building up an internal scientific expert services unit and in this context EFSA would appreciate inputs from the Panel on the expertise needed in the area of contaminants. The Panel stressed that expertise in the identification of substances which might be able

⁵ http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/sc_committee/sc_meetings/517/sc_meet08_minutes_en1.pdf

to pose a risk using a systematic and pro-active approach would be desirable. Furthermore, it would be helpful if EFSA could build up a collection of food consumption data. Expertise in searching the actual literature related to the Panels work activities, more scientific support in the preparation of draft opinions as well as mathematical modelling of risk estimates and exposure would also be welcomed.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM EFSA

The scientific co-ordinator of the CONTAM Panel informed the members of the Panel of the following items:

EFSA's scientific colloquium

The final report of EFSA's first scientific colloquium on methodologies and principles for setting tolerable intake levels for dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCB's is now published on the web site of the authority⁶. Furthermore, it was announced that a 2nd scientific colloquium with the title: "Microorganisms in Food and Feed Qualified Presumption of Safety – QPS" will be held on 13 to 14 December 2004 in Brussels. The announcement can be found on EFSA's web site⁷. The Panel members were invited to send suggestions for further scientific colloquiums in the CONTAM area to the Secretariat within the next 4 weeks.

Upcoming Advisory forums (AF)

The next AF will be held on 30 September and 1 October in Rome. However, special attention should be paid to the AF meeting from 8 (afternoon) to 9 (morning) November 2004 in Berlin (Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung, BfR) as this will be for the first time a public event with the aim to engage in a broader public debate regarding future perspectives in risk assessment. Panel members will be invited by letter, but a first glance can be also found on EFSA's web site⁸. It was noted that the next CONTAM plenary meeting (9 and 10 November) coincides with this public AF event.

Stakeholder colloquium

EFSA is organising its 2nd stakeholder colloquium on 9 (afternoon) to 10 (morning) November 2004 in Berlin (BfR). The colloquium is a follow up of last years colloquium in Ostend. The goal of the event is to further develop EFSA's policy in involving stakeholders more in the work of EFSA. The chairs of the Panels and the Scientific Committee will be invited.

⁶ http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/colloquium_series/no1_dioxins/catindex_en.html

⁷ http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/colloquium_series/no2_qps/catindex_en.html

⁸ http://www.efsa.eu.int/advisory_forum/af_events/catindex_en.html

7. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION

The Service within the Commission responsible for legislation informed the Panel that at the next Standing Committee Meeting (12 October 2004) discussions on setting maximum levels for benzo(a)pyrene will take place. Furthermore, the view of the Standing Committee on “hijiki seaweed” (*Cystophyllum fusiforme* or *Hisikia fusiforme*) will be sought as the risk assessment of arsenic by JECFA will not take place in February 2005.

The Standing Committee will also vote on a proposal for setting levels of ochratoxin A in roasted coffee, wine and grapes. Measures on ochratoxin A in other food commodities will not be introduced until the outcome of an EU Research project on ochratoxin A is published (Prevention of ochratoxin A in cereals. Project No. QLK1-CT-1999-00433) and assessed by EFSA.

Discussions on brominated flame retardants as regards availability of occurrence data in food took place in the Member States Expert Committee meeting and it is most likely that EFSA will receive a request on this issue in the near future.

Currently, following the publication of the EFSA opinion on lead, cadmium, zearalenone, deoxynivalenol as undesirable substances in animal feed discussions on measures have been initiated with the Member States. It is planned to finalize the discussions at the technical level by the end of this year.

In addition, the Members of the Panel have been informed that discussions on levels of dioxin-like PCBs for inclusion in the maximum levels for food have started. The Panel members were also informed about the mycotoxins prevention cluster dissemination day which will take place in Brussels on 21 October 2004.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 Official requests to EFSA received from the European Commission

The scientific co-ordinator informed the Panel that for the 8th CONTAM plenary meeting no new requests from the Commission which fall within the mandate of the Panel were received by EFSA. However, the Panel has received a mandate for a self-tasking on furan.

8.2 Update on undesirable substances in animal feed

The chair of the WG on undesirable substances in animal feed (USAF) informed the Panel that the three WG sections on heavy metals (HM), persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and mycotoxins (MT) have met in June, July and August 2004, respectively. The Panel was informed that for the section MT the opinion on ergot as an USAF, particularly the occurrence of alkaloids in feed is a quite challenging task. However, it is foreseen to present this opinion as well as an opinion on

fumonisin to the next CONTAM plenary meeting. The WG USAF-MT will address the requests related to plant and natural plant toxins once the requests on mycotoxins are finalised.

The chair of the WG on USAF-HM reported that the draft opinion on arsenic is being finalising and it is likely that this opinion will be presented to the next CONTAM plenary meeting.

For the WG USAF-POPs enough experts have been assembled and their 2nd meeting took place in July. At their next meeting in October first draft opinions on camphechlor (toxaphene), endosulfan and lindane (hexachlorocyclohexane – HCH-gamma isomers) will be discussed. The Service within the Commission responsible for legislation considered these requests of high priority. It was also pointed out that in the area of undesirable substances some further requests will be sent to EFSA within the near future.

8.3 Update on non-dioxin like PCBs

The chair of the WG on NDL-PCBs informed the Panel about the outcomes of the last WG meetings which took place in July and during the Dioxin2004 symposium in Berlin. It was pointed out that a lot of work has been carried out, and the chapter on occurrence and exposure are at a quite advanced stage. The chair of the WG thanked the Commission for their assistance in this area. A revised version of the background document on non-cancer health effects of PCBs in animals was prepared by an outside expert who also addressed questions raised by the WG. Two additional experts have joined the WG to work on metabolism and reactive metabolites and on the issue of carry-over. A third additional expert has been contacted with the request to prepare a report on animal health aspects. The WG is confident in finalizing the opinion by beginning of next year.

8.4 Update on safety of wild and farmed fish

The chair of the WG provided an update on the progress of the project. Fish species to be considered will include farmed, wild, marine, freshwater, oily and lean fish and the following ranking criteria for the selection of fish species were used: European production data, concentration of some persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals and concentration of omega 3 fatty acids. The WG plans to finalise a draft opinion for adoption by the Panel in spring 2005.

8.5 Establishment of a WG PFOS

The members of the Panel agreed to assemble a small group of CONTAM experts for a first brainstorming meeting in order to elaborate the outline of the opinion as well as to decide what kind of expertise/experts are needed. Furthermore, the Panel

supported the idea to explore whether any laboratory has performed analysis of these substances and holds relevant data in for food and feed.

8.6 Discussions on boron and fluoride in natural mineral water

The NDA Panel has adopted an opinion on tolerable upper intake level on boron and is in the process to finalize a similar opinion on fluorine. These opinions will be used as a basis by the CONTAM Panel for an opinion on boron and fluoride in mineral waters. The noted that the National Academy of Science is currently in the process to finalise a report on fluorine and boron in water and the Secretariat was asked to check whether this has been considered in the preparation of the NDA opinion. A member of the Panel will look into data of level of boron in various waters and the Panel agreed in case there are no specific data in the public domain to use a crude intake estimate. The Secretariat was asked to check the status of the final terms of reference. The Panel members pointed out that there should be consistency in the derivation of chemical specific uncertainty factors by the various Panels. The chair was therefore asked to bring this issue to the attention of the SC and ask for guidance.

8.7 Draft chapter on chemical contaminations for a scientific report from the animal health and welfare (AHAW) Panel.

A chapter on chemical contamination for a scientific report on welfare aspects of various systems of keeping laying hens, was drafted by a WG from the AHAW Panel. A member of the WG on NDL-PCBs has revised this chapter and the Panel members were asked to transmit their comments on this version to the Secretariat within the next two weeks.

9. Organotins in food. Draft opinion

The chair of the WG on Organotins introduced the draft opinion on organotin compounds. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of changes as suggested during the discussions. The Panel members were asked to submit their editorial comments within the next two weeks to the Secretariat. Furthermore, the Secretariat was asked to elaborate on EFSA's policy for setting a provisional TDI.

10. Undesirable substances in animal feed – ochratoxin A. Draft opinion

The chair of the WG on USAF-MT introduced the draft opinion on ochratoxin A. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion, subject to incorporation of some changes as suggested during the discussions. The Panel members were asked to submit their editorial comments within the next two weeks to the Secretariat.

11. Undesirable substances in animal feed - arsenic. Draft opinion

This item was not discussed at the Plenary meeting (see also item 2)

12. Undesirable substances in animal feed - fluorine. Draft opinion

The chair of the WG on USAF-MT introduced the draft opinion on fluorine. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of changes as suggested during the discussions. The Panel members were asked to submit their editorial comments within the next two weeks to the Secretariat.

13. Furan. Draft report

The chair informed the Panel that the mandate for this self-tasking was accepted by EFSA. A first meeting of an *ad hoc* WG took place in August. The members of the Panel discussed the draft report produced by the *ad hoc* WG and the various chapters were revised during the meeting. A request for occurrence data was sent out to the Member States as well as industry organisations, but no data were received so far. A revised version of this report will be circulated to the Panel members within the next three weeks.

14. Discussions of the report of the European Workshop on the Interface between risk assessment and risk management

In general the CONTAM Panel was satisfied with this document. However, it needs to be pointed out that it is rather general. These comments will be forwarded to the SC.

15. Meeting dates 2005

The Panel members agreed to reserve the following dates in 2005 for CONTAM plenary meetings:

31 January – 1 February; 18-19 April; 21-22 June; 5-7 September (in Parma; starting at 14.00 hrs on 5 September and finishing at 14.00 hrs on 7 September); 7-9 November (in Parma; starting at 14.00 hrs on 7 November, and finishing at 14.00 hrs on 9 November).

16. EFSAnet

A presentation by EFSA's information technology staff was given on an external secure intranet called EFSAnet. This tool can be used by members of the CONTAM Panel and working groups in the near future in order to share and exchange documents. The members of the Panel appreciated this system and are

looking forward to use this tool. Passwords and user manual will be issued by the IT team by the end of September.

17. Any other business

There was no AOB.