

Parma, 10 August 2007
EFSA/CONTAM/643

**MINUTES OF THE 22ND PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD ON 11 TO 14 JUNE
2007 IN PARMA**

adopted by written procedure on 20 July 2007

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Jan Alexander¹, Guðjón Atli Auðunsson, Diane Benford, Andrew Cockburn, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Eugenia Dogliotti², Maria Luisa Fernández-Cruz, Johanna Fink-Gremmels (vice-chair)³, Peter Fürst, Corrado Galli, Jadwiga Gzyl, Gerhard Heinemeyer³, Niklas Johansson, Antonio Mutti, Josef Schlatter (chair), Rolaf van Leeuwen (vice-chair)⁴, and Carlos van Peteghem³.

Ad hoc Experts:

Piet Wester⁵

EFSA

Ana Afonso (Senior Officer, AHAW Unit), Valeria Bernazzali (Administrative Assistant, Unit on Contaminants), Ulla Bertelsen (Senior Officer, Unit on Contaminants), Jean-Lou Dorne (Senior Officer, Unit on Contaminants), Stefan Fabiansson (Acting Head of Unit on Data Collection and Exposure), Pia Fallström-Mujkic (Administrative Assistant, Unit on Contaminants), Claudia Heppner (Head of Unit on Contaminants/Scientific Co-ordinator), Hugues Kenigswald (Senior Officer, AFC Unit), Karen Talbot (Communication Department)

European Commission

Almut Bitterhof (DG Health and Consumer Protection), Gudrun Gallhoff (DG Health and Consumer Protection), Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumer Protection), and Michael Walsh (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

¹ Only present on 12 to 14 June 2007

² Only present on 12 to 13 June 2007

³ Only present on 11 to 13 June 2007

⁴ Only present on 11 to 12 June 2007

⁵ Only present on 12 June 2007

1. WELCOME

The chair welcomed the members of the CONTAM Panel to the 22nd plenary meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Alessandro di Domenico, Philippe Grandjean and Philippe Verger.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The proposed agenda was adopted with the following modification: item 9 – draft opinion on the carry-over of monensin into non-target animal feed – was not proposed for adoption, but only for discussion, due to the late arrival of the document. Item 10 – draft opinion on ethyl carbamate – was also only presented for discussion and not for adoption. To agenda item 14 – working programme – item 14.7 – update from the WG on nitrate in vegetables – was added.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following members declared an interest for agenda item 11. Josef Schlatter who was a member of the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), participating in the preparation of the working paper on ethyl carbamate for the 64th meeting of JECFA. Diane Benford who was a WHO Temporary advisor at the 64th meeting of JECFA. The Panel agreed that the above mentioned members can fully participate in discussions on ethyl carbamate in food and beverages.

5. HORMONE RESIDUES IN BOVINE MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the working group (WG) on hormones presented the revisions to the draft opinion on hormone residues in bovine meat and meat products (question number: EFSA-Q-2005-0048) requested by the Panel members during its 21st CONTAM plenary meeting. The CONTAM Panel adopted the opinion subject to incorporation of changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed his appreciation for the work to the WG.

6. CARRY-OVER OF SALINOMYCIN INTO NON-TARGET ANIMAL FEED. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the WG on coccidiostats presented the revisions made to the draft opinion on carry-over of salinomycin sodium into non-target animal feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2005-220A) since its last presentation at the 20th CONTAM plenary meeting. The CONTAM Panel discussed the opinion and noted that

different acceptable daily intakes (ADIs) have been derived by different bodies for different brands of coccidiostats although they contain the same active ingredient. The Panel proposed a number of revisions to the opinion and proposed to see the revised version of this opinion back at the next Panel meeting.

7. CARRY-OVER OF NARASIN INTO ANIMAL FEED. DRAFT OPINION

The opinion on carry-over of narasin into non-target animal feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2005-220B) was not discussed due to lack of time and the fact that revisions proposed to the draft opinion on carry-over of salinomycin sodium into non-target animal feed (see item 6) also need to be applied to this opinion.

8. CARRY-OVER OF LASALOCID INTO ANIMAL FEED. DRAFT OPINION

The opinion on carry-over of lasalocid into non-target animal feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2005-220C) was not discussed due to lack of time and the fact that revisions proposed to the draft opinion on carry-over of salinomycin sodium into non-target animal feed (see item 6) also need to be applied to this opinion.

9. DISCUSSIONS ON THE CARRY-OVER OF MONENSIN SODIUM INTO NON-TARGET ANIMAL FEED

The opinion on carry-over of monensin sodium into non-target animal feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2005-220D) was not discussed due to lack of time and the fact that revisions proposed to the draft opinion on carry-over of salinomycin sodium into non-target animal feed (see item 6) also need to be applied to this opinion.

10. DISCUSSION ON ETHYL CARBAMATE IN FOOD AND BEVERAGES

EFSA staff introduced the draft opinion on ethyl carbamate in food and beverages. This opinion was drafted without an involvement of a working group or members of the CONTAM Panel. The members of the CONTAM Panel discussed the opinion and proposed to introduce in the main chapters of the opinion, if needed, subchapters on ethyl carbamate and cyanide. Furthermore, some minor changes in the exposure as well as the hazard identification and characterisation part were asked. The opinion should also include margin of exposure (MOE) calculations for non-consumers of alcoholic beverages. The revised opinion will be presented for possible adoption to the next Panel meeting.

11. EFSA STATEMENT ON MELAMINE

The CONTAM Panel was informed about the EFSA statement on melamine which was released on 8 June 2007 on the Authority's webpage. EFSA had been requested to provide an urgent opinion within ten days after the receipt of the question. EFSA in consultation with the European Commission decided to issue at this point in time an EFSA statement rather than an opinion of an EFSA scientific Panel due to the urgency of the request, the lack of exposure data of (pet) animals and humans, and the short response time. The current contamination of vegetable protein sources with melamine was understood as an incident and not a regularly occurring contamination. The Service within the Commission responsible for legislation on food safety indicated that the EFSA statement is sufficient for the risk managers to manage the current contamination incident and that the member states have appreciated receiving such a statement in such a short response time. As it is expected that it will be possible to close this contamination incident within a relatively short time and as it is not expected to be recurrent problem, the representative of the Commission doubted if an opinion of an EFSA scientific panel is still needed and advised the EFSA Secretariat of the Panel to inquire officially the Commission on this before taking any further initiatives. Furthermore, the CONTAM Panel recommended correcting some minor technical inconsistencies in the main body of the EFSA statement.

12. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM EFSA

The scheduled presentation on matters regarding the reimbursement of CONTAM experts was postponed to the next meeting.

EFSA staff from the information technology department introduced the new secure internet platform, EXTRANET to the Panel members. This system will replace the current EFSA net in the near future. The Panel members were invited to explore this system over the next two months and report back any problems they might have with regard to this new system. Depending on the needs of the Panel members an additional IT training session could be scheduled.

The scientific co-ordinator informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that a new staff member, responsible for the co-ordination of working groups (WG), will join the CONTAM Unit on 1 October 2007.

13. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION SERVICES ON MATTERS RELATING TO CONTAM

The Services within the European Commission (EC) responsible for legislation on food safety was no longer present when this agenda item was scheduled for discussion.

14. WORKING PROGRAMME

14.1 OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA FOR CONTAM PANEL

The Scientific Co-ordinator mentioned that a request from the EC with regards to morphine in poppy seeds can be expected soon (see minutes from the 21st plenary meeting). Therefore, first discussions on possible members of this new WG took place. The members of the CONTAM panel were invited to inform the Secretariat by mid August 2007 if they are interested joining this WG.

14.2 UPDATE FROM THE WG ON UNDESIRABLE SUBSTANCES IN ANIMAL FEED – SECTION PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

The chair of the WG informed the Panel, that the WG will soon have finalised its work on chlordane as an undesirable substance in animal. The draft opinion will be presented to next CONTAM Panel meeting. This will be the last opinion prepared by this WG as all requests related to persistent organic pollutants have been dealt with.

14.3 UPDATE FROM THE WG ON UNDESIRABLE SUBSTANCES IN ANIMAL FEED – SECTION HEAVY METALS (MERCURY)

The chair of the WG informed the Panel that the work with regards to mercury as an undesirable substance in animal feed is progressing very well, but it was also pointed out that there are a lot of scientific data available, and it is a challenge to identify the most important data for the opinion. Member States were acknowledged for submitting a fair amount of occurrence data on mercury in feeding stuffs. However, it was noted that most data relate to total mercury, and the ratio between organic and inorganic mercury would be needed. The draft opinion is scheduled to be presented to the Panel meeting in November 2007.

14.4 UPDATE ON THE WG ON COCCIDIOSTATS

The scientific officer of the EFSA Unit on Contaminants informed the Panel that the work concerning the outstanding opinions on coccidiostats is ongoing. The feedback provided to the four opinions at the 22nd Plenary meeting (see item 6 to 9) will facilitate the finalisation of the remaining seven opinions.

14.5 UPDATE FROM THE WG ON MARINE BIOTOXINS

The scientific co-ordinator of EFSA informed the Panel that at the last meeting of the WG, which took place in May 2007, again intensive discussions related to the exposure part of the opinion on okadaic acid (OA) took place. The question was raised how to present the uncertainties in the exposure assessment and whether the proposal outlined in the opinion of the Scientific Committee (SC) on uncertainties

in the exposure assessment should be followed. The chair of the Panel will seek input from the SC on this matter. Furthermore, the WG made progress on the toxicological part of the opinion and tentative derived a NOAEL, this means at the next WG meeting the risk characterisation will be discussed. The draft opinion on OA will possibly be presented for possible adoption to the next Panel meeting.

14.6 UPDATE FROM NON-CONTAM WGS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CONTAM EXPERTS

- **AFC PANEL – WG ALUMINIUM**

The scientific officer of the AFC Panel informed the CONTAM Panel that the opinion on aluminium is progressing, but the contribution of food additives is difficult to assess. It can be expected that the opinion will be presented to the AFC Panel for adoption by November 2007.

- **AHAW PANEL – WG FISH WELFARE**

The scientific officer of the AHAW Panel informed the CONTAM Panel that a series of five opinions on fish welfare related to various fish species are in preparation. The first opinion which will be presented for adoption to the AHAW Panel in July 2007 relates to the welfare of Atlantic salmon. The member of the CONTAM Panel participating in the AHAW WG will make sure that all the aspects related to contaminants in fish are included in these opinions by taking into account the CONTAM opinion on the safety assessment of wild and farmed fish. The CONTAM Panel recommended considering also the impact of changes in the feed composition on the nutritional composition of the fish meat in the opinions. It was recommended to also consult the NDA Panel on this issue.

- **BIOHAZ PANEL – WG REPTILE MEAT**

The Scientific Co-ordinator informed the CONTAM Panel that the BIOHAZ opinion on reptile meat is quite advanced and will be presented for possible adoption soon to the BIOHAZ Panel. The chapter on possible contaminants in reptile meat is quite brief as there are only limited data available.

- **SC – ANIMAL TESTING**

The CONTAM expert participating in the SC WG on animal testing reported back that the current draft document describes what kind of animal testing are requested in the various guidelines for dossier submission and recommendations for further research in the opinions of the EFSA panels. A draft report for feedback will be distributed to all involved Panels once available.

- **SC – WG RISK-BENEFITS**

The chair of the CONTAM Panel reported that the SC WG on risk benefits had its

first meeting in May where discussions on the scope and the mandate of this WG took place. It was mentioned that the definition of benefits is not straight forward, and further discussions in the WG are needed to agree on a common scale of measuring risk and benefits. The members of the WG also noted that the term risk-benefit analysis is maybe not appropriate, and the term risk-risk analysis would fit better. The opinion of the SC is expected to be available by the end of 2009. The WG will also closely follow the discussions and developments of a new established DG research project, BRAVO, which is also looking into risk-benefit aspects e.g. fish and mercury.

- **SC – WG BENCHMARK DOSE MODELLING**

The chair of the CONTAM Panel reported that the SC WG on benchmark dose modelling currently discusses how epidemiological aspects could be integrated in the mathematical models. This is a challenging task as it needs to address how confounders can be taken into account when different substances act on the same endpoint. The opinion will be proposed for possible adoption to the SC by the end of 2007.

14.7 UPDATE FROM THE WG ON NITRATE

The chair of the WG informed the Panel that the WG had its 4th meeting and the work is progressing very well. It was pointed out that Member States have submitted a large amount of nitrate occurrence data in vegetables, but also on other food items. The exposure part as well as the toxicological chapters of the opinion are already in an advanced stage. The WG still will need some intensive discussions on the risk-benefit aspect of the opinion as this is a new area.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Due to the heavy agenda for the next upcoming Panel meeting the 23rd plenary meeting was extended by half a day, meaning the meeting will start on the 18th of September at 8.30 and will finish on the 20th of September at 14.00 hrs.

The members of the CONTAM Panel also discussed what kind of procedures could be put in place to speed up the process for adoption of opinions. A proposal that a Panel member, could act as a reviewer before the opinion is circulated to the whole Panel, was considered not to be practicable due to the additional burden of workload. A second proposal, setting up for each WG a small drafting group which acts as a review body, and consists of the WG chair, a few WG members and if needed additional Panel members was favoured. An EFSA scientific editor, if available, would be an asset to have in the small drafting group. For the next upcoming opinions the latter approach should be tested.