

Parma, 18 July 2008
EFSA/CONTAM/787

**MINUTES OF THE 27TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON
CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD ON FROM 9 TO 10
JUNE 2008 IN BRUSSELS**

Adopted by written procedure on 8 July 2008

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Jan Alexander, Diane Benford, Andrew Cockburn, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Eugenia Dogliotti, Alessandro di Domenico, Johanna Fink-Gremmels (vice-chair), Peter Fürst, Corrado Galli, Jadwiga Gzyl, Niklas Johansson, Josef Schlatter (chair), Rolaf van Leeuwen (vice-chair), and Carlos van Peteghem.

Ad-hoc expert:

Christer Andersson¹

EFSA:

Valeria Bernazzali (Administrative Assistant, Unit on Contaminants)², Ulla Bertelsen (Senior Officer, Unit on Contaminants), Jean-Lou Dorne (Senior Officer, Unit on Contaminants), Mari Eskola (Scientific Officer, Unit on Contaminants), Stefan Fabiansson (Head of Unit on Data Collection and Exposure), and Claudia Heppner (Head of Unit on Contaminants).

European Commission:

Almut Bitterhof (DG Health and Consumer Protection), Livia D'Angelo (DG Health and Consumer Protection), and Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

1. WELCOME

The CONTAM chair, Josef Schlatter, welcomed the members of the CONTAM Panel to the 27th plenary meeting and particularly thanked the European Commission for providing the venue.

¹ Only present on 10 June 2008

² Only present on 9 June 2008

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the CONTAM Panel María Luisa Fernández-Cruz, Philippe Grandjean, Gerhard Heinemeyer, Antonio Mutti, and Philippe Verger and from the European Commission from Michael Walsh.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The item “declaration of interest” was added as item number 4 to the agenda. The revised agenda was adopted.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following interests were declared for item 6. Diane Benford and Rolaf van Leeuwen were WHO Temporary Advisors at the 64th meeting of Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), participating in the preparation of the working paper on polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Josef Schlatter was a member of the JECFA at the 64th JECFA meeting. The members of the CONTAM Panel agreed that the participation in the 64th JECFA meeting is not considered to be a conflict and that they could fully participate in the discussions.

5. MARINE BIOTOXINS IN SHELLFISH: AZASPIRACID GROUP. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the working group (WG) presented the draft opinion on marine biotoxins in shellfish: azaspiracid group (question number: EFSA-Q-2006-065B). 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. POLYCYCLIC AROMATIC HYDROCARBONS (PAHs) IN FOOD. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the WG presented the draft opinion on PAHs in food (question number: EFSA-Q-2007-136). 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.

In addition, the members of the CONTAM Panel addressed also the question regarding rounding of figures. For the PAH opinion it was agreed that non-rounded figures should be used during the various steps of the calculations and only the final result should be rounded. Results related to the exposure assessment should be rounded to one decimal figure, and when results relate to the margin of exposure (MOE) calculation figures should be rounded to the nearest hundred. In addition, the members of the CONTAM Panel would appreciate guidance on these generic issues from the Scientific Committee.

7. CADMIUM IN FOOD. DISCUSSIONS THE DRAFT CHAPTERS ON OCCURRENCE AND EXPOSURE.

The chair of the WG presented the draft chapters on occurrence and exposure assessment of the opinion on cadmium in food (EFSA-Q-2007-138). The members of the CONTAM Panel agreed with the principal approach taken so far, but recommended to merge some datasets in the occurrence part and to describe in a transparent manner how data e.g. non-detects, were treated. The full opinion will be presented for possible adoption to the 28th CONTAM Panel meeting (9 to 11 September 2008).

8. CONTAM MEETING DATES FOR 2009

The members of the CONTAM Panel have set the following dates for plenary meetings in Parma in 2009: 28-30 January, 25-27 March, 26-28 May, 7-9 July, 16-18 September and 18-19 November. The meeting dates from May 2009 onwards have to be confirmed by the members of the renewed CONTAM Panel.

9. THEOBROMINE AS AN UNDESIRABLE SUBSTANCE IN ANIMAL FEED. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the WG presented the draft opinion on theobromine as an undesirable substance in animal feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2005-223). 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.

10. RICIN AS AN UNDESIRABLE SUBSTANCE IN ANIMAL FEED. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the WG presented the draft opinion on ricin as an undesirable substance in animal feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2003-062). 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.

11. WORKING PROGRAMME

11.1. OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA FOR CONTAM PANEL

No official requests which fall within the mandate of the CONTAM Panel have been received by EFSA.

12. FEEDBACK FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (SC) MEETING

The minutes of the 30th SC plenary meeting³ are published on the EFSA web page. The chair briefly introduced the draft SC opinion on “Transparency in the risk assessment – scientific aspects” and invited the members of the CONTAM Panel to send comments related to this opinion to the CONTAM unit by 25 July 2008 at the latest. A compilation of these comments will be transmitted to the SC. The Panel noted that at a first glance this draft document is quite general and seems not to provide a framework on transparency in risk assessment. In addition, the CONTAM Panel pointed out that transparency is very important; however the implementation of this guidance document should not be handled too strictly by EFSA until sufficient scientific resources are provided to the CONTAM unit to assist the CONTAM experts carrying out e.g. systematic reviews.

13. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM EFSA

Due to lack of time this agenda item was deferred to the next CONTAM plenary meeting.

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

The Service within the European Commission (EC) responsible for legislation on food safety in the area of contaminants asked a question of clarification related to the recommendations⁴ of the on 25 January 2007 adopted opinion on pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs) as undesirable substances in animal feed (EFSA-Q-2003-065)⁵, particularly why the alkaloid jacobine was not proposed for monitoring, although it seems to be the major alkaloid in *Senecio jacobaea* L. (ragwort). The CONTAM Panel noted that for *S. jacobaea* two different chemotypes, the jacobine type and the erucifoline type, have been described. The jacobine types contain jacobine and jacozine however lacking erucifoline, the erucifoline types contain erucifoline and acetylerucifoline but nearly no jacobine. Both chemotypes have similar concentrations of other PAs such as senecionine and seneciophylline. In addition, jacobine and its related compounds are absent in other *Senecio* species such as *S. vularis*, *S. vernalis*, *S. erucifoliae* and *S. inaequidens*. In consideration of the objective that the number of alkaloids for monitoring purposes should focus on the most common ones the CONTAM Panel did not propose the

³ Available at URL: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/Event_Meeting/SC_minutes_30th_plenmeet.pdf

⁴ “... given the large variation in toxic PAs in plant material, analytic surveys should focus on selected alkaloids, which have been identified as major (hepato)-toxic compounds, while at the same time being representative for major PA containing plant families. In a first analytical survey for the presence of PAs in feed materials, the following compounds should be monitored: the *Senecio* alkaloids senecionine, seneciophylline and erucifoline, which are found in high concentrations in the *Senecio* species occurring in Europe, and which have been associated with clinical intoxications in livestock...”.

⁵ Available at URL:

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/Scientific_Opinion/contam_ej447_op_pyrrolizidine%20alkaloids%20in%20feed_en.pdf

inclusion of the alkaloid jacobine in its recommendations due to its absence in various other *Senecio* species.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No any other business was reported.