Parma, 30 March 2010
EFSA/CONTAM/1104

MINUTES OF THE 36TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN (CONTAM) HELD FROM 18 TO 20 JANUARY 2010 IN PARMA

Agreed on 29 March 2010

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:
Jan Alexander, Diane Benford, Alan Boobis, Sandra Ceccatelli, Jean-Pierre Cravedi, Alessandro Di Domenico, Daniel Doerge, Eugenia Dogliotti, Lutz Edler, Peter Farmer, Johanna Fink-Gremmels[1], Metka Filipič[2], Peter Fürst, Thierry Guérin, Helle Katrine Knutsen, Miroslav Machala, Antonio Mutti, Josef Schlatter (chair), and Rolaf van Leeuwen

EFSA:
Unit on Contaminants (CONTAM unit)
Carolina Di Bona, Gina Cioacata, Jean-Lou Dorne, Mari Eskola, Sandra Gracci, Claudia Heppner, George Kass, Valentina Mota, Anna Odone, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi and Marc Vandenbroeck

Unit on Data Collection and Exposure (DATEX unit)
Stefan Fabiansson

Director of Risk Assessment
Riitta Maijala

European Commission:
Marina Marini (DG Health and Consumers, 03 Science and Stakeholder relations) and Almut Bitterhof (DG Health and Consumers, E3 Chemicals, Contaminants, Pesticides)

[1] Only present from 19 to 20 January 2010
[2] Only present from 18 to 19 January 2010

1. WELCOME

The vice-chair of the CONTAM Panel welcomed the members to the 36th CONTAM plenary meeting. Anna Odone, in-house trainee in the CONTAM unit was introduced to the Panel members. Anna is working with the working group (WG) on brominated flame retardants. The chair of the CONTAM Panel took over the chairmanship from item 5 onwards.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Frans Verstraete of the European Commission.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

No revisions were proposed to the draft agenda, and the agenda was adopted.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

EFSA secretariat screened both the annual and specific declaration of interests (ADoI, SDoI) filled in by the scientific experts invited to this meeting in accordance with EFSA's Policy on declarations of interests.

With regard to the ADoI, SDoI and this meeting, no interests were declared by the experts other than those already declared in the ADoI or in a previous SDoI and screened by EFSA in accordance with its Policy on Declaration of Interests and implementing documents thereof.

5. LEAD IN FOOD. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the WG introduced the draft opinion on lead in food (question number: EFSA-Q-2007-137), highlighted the approach taken for selecting the critical endpoints of lead toxicity, the dose-response calculations carried out for the various endpoints, and presented the changes and revisions conducted in the exposure part based on the comments received by the members of the CONTAM Panel during the previous CONTAM plenary meeting. The current approach was in principle agreed by CONTAM Panel, however further clarification in the area of the dose-response modelling, the relationship between dietary lead intake and blood-lead levels, the risk characterisation, and the uncertainty chapter were asked by the CONTAM Panel. The draft opinion will be further finalised taking into account the comments made by the members of the CONTAM Panel. It is planned to present the draft opinion for possible adoption to the 37th CONTAM plenary meeting in March 2010.

6. MELAMINE IN FOOD AND FEED. DRAFT OPINION

The chair of the WG introduced the approach taken related to derivation of the health based guidance value for melamine related to the draft opinion on presence of melamine and structural analogues such as cyanuric aid, ammeline and ammelide in food and feed (question number: EFSA-Q-2009-234). The CONTAM Panel in principle supported the dose-response modelling for the animal and human data, and asked for further clarification regarding the choice of the applied uncertainty factor. The members of the CONTAM Panel provided further steering related to the finalisation of the opinion. It is planned to present the draft opinion on melamine for possible adoption to the 37th CONTAM plenary meeting in March 2010.

7. FEEDBACK FROM EFSA

7.1. RULES OF PANELS, INEX AND MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010

EFSA´s Director of risk assessment presented the revised rules for Panels and Scientific committee, focussing on the major changes which were adopted by the EFSA Management Board in December 2009[3]. These new rules foresee also increased indemnities for experts. CONTAM Panel members were also informed that EFSA has initiated a six month pilot project related to improving experts travel arrangement. The key priorities for EFSA and the CONTAM work programme for this year were presented. Members of the CONTAM Panel were informed about the main findings of the internal and external quality review process at a general level, and more specifically about the outcome of the two reviewed CONTAM opinions.

7.2. GENERAL FEEDBACK

The head of unit (HoU) from EFSA CONTAM unit updated the members of the CONTAM Panel on the following matters:

- **Letter received from Spanish National Research Council**
  The CONTAM unit received a letter from the Spanish National Research Council, Institute for Agrochemistry and Food Research, asking for clarifications related to the analytical aspects, particularly chapter 3.3.1, related to the opinion on arsenic in food. The CONTAM Panel discussed this matter and asked the CONTAM unit to prepare a reply letter indicating that the Panel does not see the need for revising this chapter.

- **Letter received from French Food Safety Agency (AFSSA)**
  The French Food Safety Agency (AFSSA) asked further clarification related to the French consumption data used in a series of adopted risk assessments on marine biotoxins. The Panel members discussed this matter and asked the CONTAM unit to prepare a reply letter indicating that the Commission will ask EFSA to re-visit the overall consumption figure of 400 g shellfish meat used in these risk assessments in the near future.

[3] Available at URL: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/mba1209ax7.pdf

- **Art. 36 project**
  The CONTAM Panel was informed that an Art. 36 project was successfully granted to the University of Parma related to a toxicity study on 3-MCPD esters[4]. The project should be finalised by February 2011.

8. FEEDBACK FROM THE LAST SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes of the plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) held on 11 December 2009 in Brussels are available on the EFSA web page[5].

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

The members of the CONTAM Panel received the regular bi-annual update related to the follow up of the CONTAM Panels scientific outputs by the European Commission (EC). In addition, the CONTAM Panel was informed on the following matters:

- Germany highlighted the need to the EC for considering the setting of harmonised maximum levels for uranium in natural mineral waters, and particularly for infant formula. The CONTAM Panel has adopted an opinion on uranium in foodstuffs, in particular mineral water in March 2009[6].
- An endorsement regarding a recommendation on ethyl carbamate is foreseen for the next meeting of the SCFCAH section Toxicological Safety of the Food Chain in February 2010.
- As regards the Directive 2002/32/EC on undesirable substances a replacement of Annex I is foreseen to incorporate all the legislative changes made over the last seven years based on various animal feed risk assessments the CONTAM Panel has carried out.
- The Commission and Member States continued their discussions on the approach as regards mycotoxins in feed and possible changes to the current guidance levels in animal feedstuffs.
- The official publication of the revised maximum levels for aflatoxins in almonds, hazelnuts and pistachios and Brazil nuts aligning the EU legislation to the Codex decision regarding aflatoxins is foreseen in February 2010.

[4] For more details see page 11 of the 3-MCPD ester knowledge information database: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/ahawtopics/topic/contamestersdb.pdf

[5] Available at URL: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/scaf091211-m.pdf

[6] Available at URL: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/doc/1018.pdf

10. WORKING PROGRAMME

10.1. OFFICIAL REQUEST TO EFSA FOR CONTAM PANEL

The CONTAM Panel was informed that the EC was not in favour of extending the deadline related to the opinion on lead in food beyond November 2009. EFSA has received a request for an assessment of recent scientific information on the toxicity of ochratoxin A provided to the EC by a law firm. This request was allocated to the CONTAM Panel (question number: EFSA-Q-2010-00038). The CONTAM Panel discussed this request, but felt there is no need to establish a WG as the CONTAM Unit could prepare a draft output for the CONTAM Panel. In addition, the CONTAM Panel noted that generally a reflection should be made if requests referring to review the previous risk assessment base on few selected scientific papers should be accepted.

10.2. UPDATE FROM THE WG MARINE BIOTOXINS

The chair of the WG informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the WG is working on the remaining emerging marine biotoxins currently not regulated within the European Union. The WG envisages that the draft opinion on ciguatoxins, a fish toxin, might be presented for possible adoption to the 37th CONTAM Panel meeting (17-19 March 2010).

10.3. UPDATE FROM THE WG BROMINATED FLAME RETARDANTS

The chair of the WG on brominated flame retardants (BFRs) informed the members of the CONTAM Panel about the ongoing progress of the two opinions related to PBDEs and PBBs and that EFSA has launched a call asking for additional occurrence data for the different classes of BFRs[7].

10.4. UPDATE FROM THE WG AMBROSIA IN FEED

The chair of the WG on ambrosia in feed informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that all aspects of the terms of reference have been addressed, and that the WG will have its final meeting in February 2010. The intention is to present this opinion for possible adoption to the 37th CONTAM plenary meeting (17-19 March 2010).

[7] Available at URL: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/data/call/datex091215.htm

10.5. UPDATE FROM OTHER EFSA WGS WITH THE PARTICIPATON OF CONTAM EXPERTS

The SC WG on Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) is progressing with its draft opinion.

The work of the SC WG on genotoxicity testing strategies will have its kick-off meeting of this new established WG on 20 January 2010 and two CONTAM Panel members are members of this WG.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other matters were raised.