

**MINUTES OF THE 13TH PLENARY MEETING
OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH
HELD IN PARMA ON 21-22 MAY 2008**

(ADOPTED ON 02 JULY 2008)

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PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

PARTICIPANTS

Members of the PLH Panel

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Apologies

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1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Panel's Chair welcomed the panel members and the Commission observer.

Apologies were received from Richard BAKER, Erzsébet DORMANNSNÉ SIMON, Bärbel GEROWITT, Olia Evtimova KARADJOVA, Jan SCHANS, and Robert STEFFEK.

New staff appointed to the PLH Unit was also presented.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The agenda was adopted. Presentation by the EFSA Director of Risk Assessment Mrs. Riitta Maijala on Declarations of Interest and External Review was given under agenda #9.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No conflicts of interest were reported.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF 12TH PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 12th Plenary were adopted.

5. REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF WRITTEN ADOPTION PROCEDURE

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Four scientific opinions on pest risk assessments made by France for the French overseas departments had to be adopted by the written adoption procedure by April 30th 2008 because the Panel requested additional information. These included:

- Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Plant Health on a request from the European Commission on Pest risk assessment made by France on *Ceratocystis fimbriata* considered by France as harmful in French overseas departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana and Reunion.
- Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Plant Health on a request from the European Commission on Pest risk assessment made by France on *Mycosphaerella citri* considered by France as harmful in French overseas departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana and Reunion.
- Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Plant Health on a request from the European Commission on Pest risk assessment made by France on *Metcalfa pruinosa* (Say) considered by France as harmful in French overseas departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana and Reunion.
- Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Plant Health on a request from the European Commission on Pest risk assessment made by France on *Parlatoria ziziphi* (Lucas) considered by France as harmful in French overseas departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana and Reunion.

The Panel Scientific Secretariat reported that all of the above four opinions were adopted unanimously.

6. REPORT FROM SCPH ON 31ST MARCH 2008

The Scientific Secretariat reported on positive feedback received from the Standing Committee on Plant Health (SCPH) meeting in relation to the DOMs (French overseas Departments) banana opinions (mandate No EFSA-Q-2006-096 to 110). The SCPH acknowledged the effort evident in the preparation of the opinions, their overall quality and the panel's additional contribution to the formulation of the opinions through the additional search to identify information and data not originally available in the pest risk assessment documents. The SCPH also noted the contribution the panel made in overcoming the problems of the simplified pest risk assessments.

The plenary discussed the lessons learned from the production of the opinions. In general improvements to the overall process noted but the widely held view was that there is still scope for further development. An improvement to the evaluation process was a suggestion to provide a correlation between the weightings given to introduction of a pest and its impact to assist the streamlining the process and to improve consistency. This process is currently underway and will be discussed at the next plenary.

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The panel discussed in detail the process of final adoption as a matter for further consideration. The form of the opinions was debated and as was the need to minimise unnecessary repetition. However, the general consensus was that opinions were both harmonised and consistent.

7. EFSA PLH ROLE IN THE EU FRAMEWORK ON PEST RISK ANALYSIS

The Panel Scientific Secretariat presented the draft paper outlining the role of plant health within the EU from 2008-2013. In essence, the paper examines how the panel can enhance its scientific activities in order to improve its effectiveness. It aims to initiate a discussion around the scope of the panel's remit within Council Directive 2000/29/EU. There has been ongoing discussions and exchange of ideas with DG SANCO and the COPHS (Chief Officers of Plant Health Services) who will be involved in the consultation process.

The deadline for comments on the draft paper is the beginning of September 2008 to enable the paper to be available for the Plant Health Special Advisory Forum meeting on 8 - 9 October 2008.

The terms of reference for the preliminary discussion of the draft paper were largely restricted to comments on the structure of the report and to agree on aspects such as headings. Suggestions from the panel for further consideration included the following: scientific evaluations; studies commissioned under Article 36; member states establishing networks which perform the assessments with EFSA then (in effect a member state acting as a rapporteur) and emerging risks.

Other contributions for further discussion included on aspects such as wild plants, the introduction of alien species, invasiveness, public health risks, improved communication, a reporting system for emerging risks, moving from national to EU-level PRAs, the production of guidelines, biodiversity issues, definitions and economic impacts.

Comments on the draft role paper were required by Friday 30th May 2008 and should be sent directly to the PLH secretariat.

8. NEW MANDATES

- **Presentation of the request from the European Commission to provide a scientific opinion on a pest risk assessment and additional evidence provided by South Africa on *Guignardia citricarpa* Kiely fungal agent citrus black spot disease**

The EFSA Panel on Plant Health has been requested to provide a scientific opinion on a pest risk assessment and additional supporting evidence provided by South Africa on *Guignardia citricarpa* fungal agent of citrus black spot (CBS) disease.

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The mandate asks the panel to produce a scientific opinion on the pest risk assessment and the additional evidence provided by South Africa with specific regard to the following:

- The suitability of the EU citrus fruit producing areas for establishment of CBS in terms of their climatic conditions
- The likelihood of introduction , leading to establishment of CBS into these areas on CBS infected fruit
- The appropriateness of the level of protection under the existing management options listed in Council Directive 2000/29EU and the consideration of new ones.

It also requests to identify whether effective options, alternative to those already present in Council Directive 2000/29/EC, could be suggested to prevent the introduction of citrus black spot into the Community

Within the mandate there is an explicit need to consider climate data and the climatic models submitted with the question and the possibility of climatic conditions similar to those of the areas of CBS current distribution being mirrored in the EU. Also required: the evaluation of the likelihood of introduction through the citrus fruit pathway; the need to scientifically evaluate the efficacy of existing and alternative management options. This is the first time the Panel receives a specific request from the Commission on the scientific evaluation of management options. Also the study on climate suitability for establishment would require for the first time the Panel to apply quantitative approaches. The Panel discussed the mandate, the timetable and the structuring of the opinion, as well as the need to involve external experts.

Due to the particular complexity of the question, the Panel decided to establish a specific Working group on the pest risk assessment and additional supporting evidence provided by South Africa on *Guignardia citricarpa* (CBS), with three operative sub-groups:

- Climate: suitability of the EU citrus fruit producing areas for establishment of CBS in terms of their climatic conditions.
- Fruit pathway: likelihood of an introduction, leading to establishment, of CBS into these areas on CBS infected citrus fruits.
- Efficacy of management options: scientific evaluation of the appropriateness of the level of protection under existing management options in Annex IV, part A, Section I, point 16.4 2000/29/EC. Scientific evaluation of alternative effective options to prevent introduction of CBS.

The deadline for delivery of the opinion is mid October 2008.

- **Presentation on the development of a guidance document on the evaluation of pest risk assessments made by third parties for phytosanitary purposes**

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The Panel on Plant Health has been requested to provide a guidance document on the evaluation of pest risk assessments prepared by third parties to justify phytosanitary measures under the Council Directive 2000/29/EU. The document is required to establish guidelines by which a pest risk assessment dossier should be reviewed. A transparent evaluation procedure on presented dossiers is required, that is based on scientific principals to ensure an objective and consistent approach of the evaluation of such documents. The guidance document will support decision making by EU risk managers on organisms potentially harmful to plants or to plant products.

The panel discussed the working groups' members and the timescale for adoption.

9. PRESENTATION BY EFSA DIRECTOR OF RISK ASSESSMENT ON DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND THE REVIEW SYSTEM FOR SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

- **Declarations of Interest – New IT Tool**

A presentation and demonstration of the new web-based Declaration of Interests application was given which replaces the currently used paper version. Panel members can access the DoI database through the EFSA website inputting the information in the appropriate fields as directed. The information needed does not differ significantly from the paper version. Once filled in, this information will appear in the revision and the only parts that need to be changed can be typed in. This makes it easier for the experts to update their DoI, and submit special DoIs if needed. There is summary at the end of the process where the expert can review the information to verify that it is complete. For the EFSA secretariat advantages include the ability to detect changes and identify missing information and to monitor the workflow of this activity to improve the management of the process.

The panel had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on aspects of this new system.

- **Review System for EFSA Scientific Activities**

Based on a report by the Scientific Committee, EFSA proposes the introduction of a review system for the quality assessment of opinions. This will contain an internal and an external review component, and all EFSA's scientific activities, including all opinions will be subject to this system.

At this stage all panels are being alerted to the introduction of the review system and the matter will be further discussed at the plenary in July 2008.

10. MISCELLANEOUS

- **Advisory Forum Presentation**

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On 8- 9 October 2008, there will be a special interest meeting of the advisory forum focusing on plant health, with a representative of each Member State (MS) in attendance. The purpose of this meeting is to provide advice to the EFSA's Executive Director and to promote networking and cooperation between EFSA and MSs. It provides the opportunity for EFSA to consult MSs on the current and future direction of EFSA's work.

The chair and up to 5 panel members can attend the meeting.

Further discussions will take place around the advisory forum in the plenary session in July 2008

- **EFSA Scientific Colloquium Report on Plant Health**

An EFSA Scientific Colloquium was held in Parma in December 2007 to discuss issues around PRAs methodologies and other aspects. A summary report will be published in June 2008 accompanied by a CD. The draft report has been circulated to all participants of the colloquium for their comments and the input provided has been valuable and appreciated.

- **The appearance of the PLH Panel at international conferences**

To promote the work of EFSA the PLH Secretariat is appearing at several international conferences at which the scientific activities of the panel will be presented and discussed. Some of these conferences involve poster presentations while others are fuller scientific sessions. The panel agreed that such events are useful forums for raising the Panel's profile and adding value to its work and should therefore be encouraged. Suggestions included the panel proactively arranging symposia at conferences to increase the panel's visibility. Panel members offered to inform the Panel secretariat of forthcoming international conferences to further this aim. The secretariat would organise EFSA PLH representation at such forums.

- **Scheduling of the panel plenary meetings**

The Panel discussed the timing of upcoming Plenary Meeting for the rest of 2008 and the first half of 2009. The following dates were suggested:

The **next plenary** meeting will take place in Parma on **2-3 July 2008**.

Additional plenary meetings in 2008:

- 10-11 September
- 22-23 October
- 17-18 December

Plenary meetings for the first half of 2009:

- 21-22 January

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- 18-19 March
- 13-14 May
- 17-18 June