

PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

**MINUTES OF THE 21ST PLENARY MEETING
OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH
HELD IN PARMA ON 16-17 JUNE 2009**

(ADOPTED ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2009)

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PARTICIPANTS

Members of the PLH Panel

Richard BAKER, Thierry CANDRESSE, Erzsébet DORMANNSNÉ SIMON, Gianni GILIOLI, Jean-Claude GRÉGOIRE, Michael John JEGER, Olia Evtimova KARADJOVA, Gábor LÖVEI David MAKOWSKI, Charles MANCEAU, Maria NAVAJAS, Angelo PORTA PUGLIA, Trond RAFOSS, Vittorio ROSSI, Jan SCHANS, Gritta SCHRADER, Gregor UREK, Johan Coert VAN LENTEREN, Irene VLOUTOGLOU, Stephan WINTER, Marina ZLOTINA

Apologies

Dorothee ANDRE, Harry ARIJS, Jean-François MALJEAN (European Commission)

European Commission (DG SANCO)

Guillermo CARDON and Michael WALSH

EFSA

Hubert DELUYKER (Director, Scientific Cooperation and Assistance), Dirk DETKEN (Head of the Legal and Policy Affairs Unit), Torben NILSSON (Acting Deputy Head of Scientific Committee and Advisory Forum Unit), Steve PAGANI (Head of Press Office), Mari VARHO (Finance Officer)

PLH Unit: Elzbieta CEGLARSKA, Sharon CHEEK, Virag KERTESZ, Elizabeth MOORE, Doreen RUSSELL, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Sara TRAMONTINI, Sybren VOS.

1. WELCOME AND OPENING OF THE MEETING, GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO EFSA.

The experts of the PLH and FEEDAP Panels were welcomed to EFSA and congratulated on their appointments to the Panels for the next three years.

2. PRESENTATION OF EFSA

The experts were presented with an overview of EFSA, its core values and the principal activities of the respective scientific directorates (Risk Assessment and Scientific Cooperation). The roles and purpose of the Scientific Committee and Advisory Forums were also explained to the experts. The activities of EFSA Communications directorate was described and experts given a summary of the different roles and responsibilities of the three communication units and were also advised of EFSA's media handling guidelines. The pivotal requirement for EFSA to demonstrate independence was highlighted and the importance of the Declaration of Interests in this respect emphasised. Financial aspects in relation to reimbursements and meetings were also described and explained. At the end of each presentation Panel members were given an opportunity to question the speaker and seek further clarity and explanations on the matters covered.

MEETING OF NEW PLANT HEALTH PANEL

3. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Head of EFSA Plant Health Unit welcomed the Panel members and the Commission observers. Apologise were received from Dorothee ANDRE, Harry ARIJS and Jean-François MAIJEAN (DG Sanco). Agenda item 11 'Work Programme for 2009-2010' not discussed as a separate item but integrated with item 12 'New requests from the Commission'.

4. ROUND TABLE PRESENTATION OF PANEL MEMBERS AND EFSA SECRETARIAT

A "tour de table" was undertaken with the experts providing an overview of their respective backgrounds and areas of expertise. The EFSA secretariat introduced themselves to the Panel outlining their main roles and responsibilities.

5. ELECTION OF PANEL CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Following the EFSA procedure for election of Chair and two Vice Chairs contained in Decision concerning the Establishment and Operations of the Scientific Committee and Panels (MB 11.09.2007) elections for the Panel Chair and Vice Chairs was conducted. The new Chair is Michael John Jeger and Vice Chairs are Maria Navajas and Johan Coert Van Lenteren. The newly elected Chair duly took up his role immediately following the election.

6. UPDATE ON PUBLICATION OF OPINION ON THE OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTH (OPM) *THAUMETOPOEA PROCESSIONEA L.* EFSA-Q-2008-711

EFSA was requested to provide a scientific opinion on a Pest Risk Analysis provided by the United Kingdom on *Thaumetopoea processionea* L., the oak processionary moth (OPM), and in particular whether this organism can be considered as a harmful organism within the meaning of the definition in Article 2.1(e) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC. The opinion was adopted at the 20th plenary meeting with one minority opinion expressed.

The EFSA secretariat presented the editorials requested by the Panel during the adoption of the opinion at the 20th plenary meeting. These related to clarifications of the direct and indirect pest effects. The minority opinion is included as an Annex. The opinion will be prepared for publication by the end of June 2009.

7. PRESENTATION OF THE EFSA DECLARATION OF INTEREST IT TOOL

A presentation was given to the experts on the EFSA Declaration of Interest IT Tool, explaining the difference between Annual and Specific declarations of Interest. EFSA added that additional clarifications on acronyms can be requested from the EFSA IT department or the Head of Unit.

8. PRESENTATION OF THE PLH WEB-BASED WORKSPACE (EXTRANET)

The functionality of the Extranet was explained to the Panel. The importance of the projects and the calendar were emphasised and how notifications, accounts and collaboration settings are created. The procedure for checking in and checking out a document was demonstrated to the Panel so as to rationalise the compilation of comments and to follow this process more readily.

9. EFSA PLH –WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WORK

The Plant Health Unit Scientific Co-coordinator presented an overview of the Panel's first mandate including its activities, history and achievements to date. The presentation described what mandates are and where come from, the overall aim of EFSA including the authority's core values and outputs of the PLH Panel. The need to respond quickly to a request has not as yet been required of the Panel but the Commission did request an opinion within a short timescale which the Panel were able to deliver. The Panel discussed the presentation and the procedures in place to measure the quality of scientific outputs. The INEX review procedure was explained and the Panel informed that an output would not be required to be re-written despite any conclusions from the external review. The Panel were also told that the External reviews of scientific outputs would be public.

Collaboration and communications activities were highlighted as important not only with the EU risk managers but also risk assessors in member states, the scientific community, the EU consumer and international phytosanitary organisations such as EPPO. The Panel sought further clarifications on the nature and scope of such collaboration with external organisations, in particular with regard to independence. Such collaboration is governed by the remit of the organisation in question though in any event it will always be possible to have an exchange of ideas at some level.

10. EU LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PLANT HEALTH

The Commission representative presented an overview of the EU plant health regime the central focus of which is to prevent the introduction and spread within the community of harmful organisms and to ensure that a harmonised policy in place in all member states. The regime adheres to WTO and FAO (IPPC) conventions. An overview of Council Directive 2000/29/EC including its associated Annexes was given to the Panel and the ability of the Standing Committee on Plant

Health to require modifications to the plant health inspection regime explained. Effective phytosanitary controls are augmented by the EUROPHYT information system which is an invaluable tool in the control system and allows inspections to be targeted. Inspection frequencies, outbreaks, notifications and eradication measures were outlined and the activity of the Food and Veterinary Office to conduct inspection missions both to verify compliance and carry out inspections in EU Member States and Third Countries explained. The Directive permits the establishment of protective zones within the EU for a small number of harmful organisms and also has provision for approving derogations, both by EU member states and by third parties. The speaker emphasised that the success of the legal framework is based on its proper implementation and that enlargement of the EU and other challenges has meant that it has had to respond accordingly. An exercise to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing plant health regime is currently underway.

The Panel asked questions regarding the impacts of invasions not only on plant health but also on environmental and human health. The speaker confirmed that the legislation only deals with plant health matters and though there is no specific legislation to cover these areas it is a matter that will be subject to discussion as part of the evaluation mentioned above.

Within this agenda item a short presentation was given by the Commission on the follow up of the scientific opinions produced by the Panel.

11. NEW REQUESTS FROM THE COMMISSION

Two new mandates were presented to the Panel: *Dryocosmus kuriphilus* Yasumatsu, the oriental chestnut gall wasp (EFSA-Q-2009-00677) and *Gibberella circinata* Nirenberg & O'Donnell for the EU territory (EFSA-Q-2009-00688). In each mandate, the Panel is asked to provide a pest risk assessment, and to identify and evaluate risk management options. The structure of the current permanent working groups was discussed and it was agreed that new mandate specific working groups would be convened. The Chair for each working group was agreed for the new mandates and cross-cutting issues e.g. climate modelling of establishment potential, may be addressed more effectively by horizontal working groups or joint meetings.

12. PRESENTATION OF THE OPINION “GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON EVALUATION OF PEST RISK ASSESSMENTS PREPARED BY THIRD PARTIES TO JUSTIFY PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES UNDER THE COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/29/EC”

An overview of the “Guidance document on Evaluation of Pest Risk Assessments prepared by third parties to justify phytosanitary measures under the Council Directive 2000/29/EC” was presented by the rapporteur, who explained the background to and structure of the document. The document describes the evaluation process used by the Panel and was noted as a useful reference for new Panel members.

13. PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT OPINION “GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON A HARMONISED FRAMEWORK FOR PEST RISK ASSESSMENT AND THE EVALUATION OF PEST RISK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS BY THE EFS

To assist the Panel with its work, a self-task activity has been accepted to produce a guidance document on a harmonised framework for the assessment of risks of organisms harmful to plants and plant products. The mandate is registered as EFSA-Q-2009-704.

The endorsed draft document was presented to the Panel prior to the launch for the public consultation. The coalescing of 3 legal frameworks in the document has been demanding given that one of the frameworks prohibits the consideration of monetary impacts. The rapporteur outlined the type of requests that the EFSA PLH Panel is asked to consider and presented the conclusions to the guidance document.

The Panel discussed the draft document in detail. Concerns were expressed about launching the document in its present condition and the short timeframe for comments from consultees. It was agreed that the chair of the Working Group and the EFSA secretariat would convene to resolve the editorial changes and there would be an increase in the time period for public consultation.

14. PRESENTATION ON THE CONCEPT OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND THEIR ROLES IN THE ARTICULATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

In connection with the “Guidance Document on a Harmonised Framework” the Panel were given a presentation and the impact of organisms on large scale ecological services. Ecosystem services represent the various resources supplied by natural ecosystems that although beyond human control are very much influenced by human activities. In relation to plant health the impact of agricultural activities have increased demand for natural assets such as water and affected nutrient cycles such as the nitrogen and carbon cycles.

This element was requested for further elaboration within the guidance document.

15. SPECIAL ADVISORY FORUM ON PLANT HEALTH – MEETING OCTOBER 2009

A summary of the role of the Advisory Forum on Plant Health was presented, noting that the next meeting is scheduled for 20-21 October 2009. The meeting provides an opportunity for EFSA to discuss its current and future work with Member States. Draft proposals for discussion were presented to the Panel and contributions sought from the Panel members on other suggested topics. The draft agenda will be issued in July 2009 and suggestions for inclusion should be sent to the Secretariat.

16. MISCELLANEOUS

The Panel were advised that the call for external experts for INEX has been extended to 29 June 2009. The experts were requested to alert appropriate colleagues and contacts through their membership of networks.

The meeting closed with the Chair thanking the Panel for their participation.

Date of next meeting: 16th and 17th September 2009, Parma.