

Parma, 11 July 2011

EFSA Task Force of Zoonoses Data Collection

The 23rd meeting

Held in Parma on 21-22 June 2011

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PARTICIPANTS:

Members and other National, ECDC or Commission representatives:

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Observers:

Drazen Knezevic (Croatia), Ana Ivanovska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Guzin Sahin (Turkey), Snezana Vucinic (Montenegro), Alessandro Mannelli (expert).

EFSA:

Pia Mäkelä (Chair), Frank Boelaert, Pierre-Alexandre Belœil, Fabrizio Abbinante, Giusi Amore, Elena Mazzolini, Anca Stoicescu, Valentina Rizzi (Science), Marco Leoni (Information Technology), Miriam Grasselli and Simona Fusar Poli (Administration), Saadia Norani (AHAW).

MINUTES:

1. Opening and welcome

The meeting was opened by welcoming all the Task Force (TF) members and observers.

2. Minutes from the last meeting

No comments were received by email from the Member States (MSs) on the draft minutes. One comment was given at the meeting regarding the main focus of the European Union Summary Reports (EUSRs). It will be taken into account in the final version of the minutes which were adopted and will be published on the EFSA website.

3. Declaration of interest

None of the participants declared an additional interest related to the subjects of the meeting.

4. Feedback from reporting of zoonoses, food-borne outbreaks and antimicrobial resistance for 2010 in framework of Directive 2003/99/EC - Needs to revise the zoonoses reporting web application for 2011 data reporting

Fabrizio Abbinante presented the feedback from the 2010 reporting season from the IT perspective. Some technical problems were encountered which were mostly promptly solved. The only activity still ongoing is the migration of historical data. The TF members agreed to migrate also the human

data. The TF was updated on the statistics of the helpdesk activities and the validation phase, and were reminded of the deadline for submitting corrections to the national reports, Friday 24 June 2011. The addressees of the request for clarifications should be further discussed since some MSs requested to not send those to all reporters. For MSs with many reporters this might generate confusion. EFSA will prepare a list of proposed amendments to the web reporting application for next reporting season prior to next TF meeting.

The needs for revision of the web application were discussed. Few amendments are foreseen for next year, including possible revision of Q fever tables and text forms. The use of XML files will be extended to all types of tables. As the pagination for large tables was not well received by some MSs, it was decided to give the MSs the possibility to decide how many rows they want to be shown per page. The possibility to copy into the new report rows or columns added by the countries in the previous year was requested and to give reporters the rights to create and see the full pdf report. A proposal on revised default rows in the web application will be drafted by EFSA. MSs were invited to send additional proposals for modifications or improvements by email. All the received suggestions will be addressed at the next TF meeting.

Frank Boelaert gave a feed back on the 2010 data validation from the scientific point of view. Generally a very good data quality and quantity was observed. Some MSs didn't report data either on all the mandatory zoonotic agents or on the mandatory reporting tables. Problems were observed in reporting data on *Salmonella* control programmes in poultry and data on histamine in food. Data gaps were spotted with regard to some analytical results (*Listeria monocytogenes* in food), diagnostic methods (VTEC, *Yersinia*, Q fever, *Toxoplasma*), speciation (*Echinococcus*), and details on food vehicle in some strong food-borne outbreaks (FBOs). With regard to animal populations, some inconsistencies were observed in comparison with data reported in 2009. MSs commented that it is not always feasible to have the updated figures and that sometimes there are overlapping between different animal subcategories (e.g. categories per production type and per age). The number of existing flocks to be included in the prevalence tables should include only the flocks covered by the control programmes. The reporting of figures for 'Susceptible animal population' needs to be clarified and more precise guidelines will be proposed by EFSA.

The reporting on monophasic *S. Typhimurium* was also addressed and a proposal for data analysis with regard to the target verification for each poultry animal population was presented. It still needs to be discussed with the European Commission (EC) and a revised version will be circulated to the TF for final comments.

Fabrizio Abbinante and Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil gave a feedback on the pilot on the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) isolate-based data reporting. Twelve countries submitted data using XML or Excel. Only minor issues were encountered during the testing phase. Data from the pilot will be aggregated and moved, after MS validation and approval, into the national zoonoses reports. Data extraction of AMR data (aggregated and isolate-based) will be performed in the middle of July.

5. Outcome from the special Task Force meeting on Food-borne Outbreaks on 3-4 May 2011

Valentina Rizzi summarised the outcomes from the special TF on FBOs. In particular the feedback from the discussion groups and the proposed amendments to the FBO reporting specifications were

presented as well as the general conclusion from the meeting. EFSA already gave some clarifications on some specific issues related to the reporting. The proposals for amendments to the new FBO reporting specifications will be discussed in autumn when the data from 2010 reporting are available at the shared EFSA/ECDC meeting. The MSs were invited to start to use the EFSA FBO discussion forum to facilitate the harmonisation on the interpretation of the reporting specifications.

The TF commented that the reporting should be improved with regard to data on human cases that became infected abroad. The reporting of detailed data also for FBOs with weak evidence was again raised and supported by several MSs.

6. Proposed conclusions and recommendations from the discussion groups at the Task Force meeting on 15-16 March 2011 – discussions in groups

The chair introduced the discussion group session. The participants were divided into three subgroups to discuss the proposed conclusions and recommendations from the discussion groups at the TF meeting in March 2011 and to address in particular the following questions:

1. Do you agree with the conclusions and recommendations regarding EU Summary reports?
2. Do you agree with the conclusions and recommendations regarding Reporting?
3. Do you have some additional suggestions for conclusions and recommendations?

The outcomes of the discussions were presented at the plenary meeting.

Group 1 concluded that the printed report is really useful even though not essential and that the shorter version is not a valid alternative. Revision of analyses should be an ongoing process. The reporting web application should be kept even though the system is gradually moving toward automatic data transfer. Sample-based data reporting is feasible for some specific fields but not in all MSs. The need for a training “train the trainer” was underlined. A suggestion for improvement was the full revision of the web reporting system and of the reporting manual.

Group 2 reported back that the paper version of the report is useful but expensive so that its distribution should be better coordinated and limited to very specific people. The electronic version is more in use, in particular between young experts despite the reports are not easy to find on EFSA website. The short version is interesting only for general public use. Epidemiological information should be used retroactively other than for prioritisation of actions. The TF should be involved in the review of the analysis approach. The group agreed on the conclusions and recommendations regarding reporting and suggested that support by EU legislation on single-based data reporting would be useful.

Group 3 was of the view that fewer copies of the printed report should be distributed and that the short version is not an alternative to the full printed version. Also international institutions (e.g. OIE, WHO) and consumers’ organisations should be included in the target audience. The group agreed on the recommendations regarding reporting, emphasising that harmonisation should be optimised.

The general conclusion was that the report should still be printed but in a lower number of copies and the shorter version is not a valid alternative for the target audience, which include also international organisations. Also the review of analysis of the data is to be an ongoing process. Agreement was found with regard to the conclusions on reporting, and particular attention should be focused on harmonisation and on training supported by EFSA. A legal support for sample-based data reporting

would be appreciated. EFSA will circulate the revised version of the document “Conclusions and recommendations based on the outcomes from the discussion groups from the Task Force meeting on 15-16 March 2011”.

7. EFSA Grants to support the use of XML – for information

Fabrizio Abbinante informed the TF that a call for proposal for grants under Article 36 has been launched to support 11 MSs in the implementation and testing of electronic submission of zoonoses data in XML format. More grants are planned for next year.

Fabrizio Abbinante updated the TF about the next IT experts meeting which will take place on 21-22 September 2011 in Parma. The topics to be discussed at the meeting were presented, mainly related to XML submission, feedback from the AMR sample-based pilot and state of progress of the Working Group (WG) on XML/Excel use. MSs should inform EFSA by 15 July 2011 if different IT experts, compared to last year, are to be invited to the next IT meeting.

8. Discussion on the report on Technical specifications on harmonised epidemiological indicators for biological hazards to be covered by meat inspection of pigs

The chair updated the TF on the work of WG of epidemiological indicators for meat inspection of pigs. The hazards covered were partly from the legislation, others from BIOHAZ opinion and some others based on decision of the WG. The report will be sent for internal final circulation by end of July. The report will not be endorsed by TF but it will be indicated that the TF has reviewed the report.

Comments were provided on the definition of epidemiological indicator, which should be improved, and on the concept of hazards with a public health burden, which should be stressed. Additional comments are accepted by 22 June 2011.

9. STEC O104:H4 outbreak in Germany; ECDC-EFSA report on STEC/VTEC in humans, food and animals; need to review the VTEC/STEC reporting

The chair gave some information of EFSA activities related to the German STEC O104:H4. EFSA was involved in different ways: monitoring of the FBO in collaboration with MSs, ECDC and EC; issuing of different documents regarding advice, preventive measures and presence of STEC strains in the EU/EEA countries; as well as providing support to German Authorities in the outbreak investigation with an EFSA delegation.

Hubert Deluyker provided more information on EFSA activities. The role of EFSA was mainly to provide support to investigations related to tracing back the suspected seeds.

TF members suggested that harmonised guidelines for FBO investigation at EU level would be very useful in future large outbreaks.

The issues regarding the quick publication during crisis of documents without TF consultation was raised and the TF agreed that EFSA can publish quickly data already published in the EUSRs or data aggregated at EU level (not country specific data) if not yet published. EFSA will send to the TF a document to be endorsed regarding the quick publication on the EFSA web site of zoonoses aggregated data, without MS consultation, in crisis situations.

It was also agreed that the reporting guidelines for VTEC are to be revised when final results from the German outbreak investigation are available.

10. Progress reports from working groups

10a. Antimicrobial resistance data analyses

Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil briefly updated the TF on the progress of the WG on AMR data analyses. The WG has acknowledged the need for AMR data to be collected and analysed at isolate level. The next WG teleconference will take place in July and the report will be finalised by the end of the year.

An internal mandate for the analyses of AMR isolate-based data collected in the framework of the pilot collection exercise has been established and the work will be outsourced for a contractor. EFSA is in the process of selecting the contractor. One MS volunteer for the isolate based data collection has recently declined participation to the analytical step; such being the case for other volunteer countries, those should inform EFSA.

The specific TF meeting on AMR will take place on 4-5 October 2011 (lunch to lunch). In that occasion the main proposal of the draft report of the WG will be presented as well as the preliminary results from the contractor on analyses of AMR isolate-based data.

The chair informed the TF that Denmark is planning to organise a conference on AMR in the context its EU presidency in 2012 covering both veterinary and human side. The conference will take place on 14-15 March 2012. ECDC network on AMR will be invited. EFSA will send to Denmark the contacts details of the TF members to be contacted with regard to this event.

10b. Epidemiological indicators for meat inspection of poultry

The chair gave an update about this WG. The first meeting took place at the beginning of June. The same approach to select the epidemiological indicators that was used for the meat inspection of pig WG will be applied.

10c. Statistical analysis of temporal and spatial trends of zoonotic agents in animals and food

Frank Boelaert updated the TF on the progress status with the draft Report Part II on Statistical analysis of temporal and spatial trends of zoonotic agents in animals and food. The draft report has been peer-reviewed and some moderate changes consequently made. The report will be sent for a short final consultation to the TF at the beginning of July and will be published by the end of July 2011.

10d. Excel and XML use

Fabrizio Abbinante updated the TF about the progress of the WG on Excel/XML use for the provision of aggregated and sample-based data to the Zoonoses system. The Terms of Reference of the mandates were clarified as well the plan for the next activities and the timelines. The final report is expected by January 2012.

11. Progress with grant and contract projects

11a. - Analyses of Salmonella serovar data and the source attribution analyses

Frank Boelaert presented the draft external Report submitted by a contractor to EFSA on the estimation of the relative contribution of different food and animal sources to human *Salmonella* infections in the EU, already sent for consultation to the TF. The objectives were clarified as well the methodology applied (attribution based on serotyping and on FBO data). Data included in the analyses were those from the 2006-2009 EUSRs, from 2006-2008 baseline surveys, trade data, data on production and estimation of consumption. The following four food animal sources were included: broilers, pigs, turkeys and laying hens. Certain variability was observed in relation to different methodologies used and different geographical areas. TF members were invited to comment the draft report by 30 June at the latest.

11b. - Reporting of vector-borne zoonoses in animals

Alessandro Mannelli updated the TF on the draft report on proposal for reporting vector-borne zoonoses, currently under revision by EFSA. Methods for generating the proposals and criteria for selection of species were explained. A summary of the proposals for some diseases was presented. It was suggested that different surveillance plans should be integrated as much as possible to cover different agents. TF and ECDC will be consulted on this report.

11c. - Microbiological contaminants in food

Elena Mazzolini updated the TF on the progress with this contract. Data have been submitted to the contractor. The first draft of the report is expected by the end of August and the TF will be consulted on it in October.

11d. - Statistical analyses of achieving the reduction target

Frank Boelaert presented the draft external Report submitted by a contractor to EFSA on the statistical evaluation of the achievements by MSs of the EU *Salmonella* reduction targets in animal populations, already sent for consultation. The objective and the methodology were explained. The conclusion was that there are important differences in methodological analyses possibilities and thus the results between aggregated and sample-level data, leading to different choices of approaches. TF members were invited to comment the draft report by 30 June at the latest.

11e. - Statistical analyses on antimicrobial resistance data

Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil updated the TF on the progress of the contract on statistical analyses on AMR data. The report is under finalisation.

12. Presentation of the Information Exchange Platform (IEP)

Saadia Noorani explained the characteristics of the Information Exchange Platform (IEP), the rules for access and the benefit. The use of the platform on Sciencenet was also shown.

13. Presentations from Member States

No presentations were given by the MSs.

14. Any other business

The chair informed the TF that the publication of the AMR EU-SR has been postponed due to the STEC outbreaks and that a shared press release between ECDC and EFSA will be published.

The TF was also informed that the 2009 EUSRs will be submitted to BIOHAZ and AHAW panels for their review. They will focus on special aspects which they find most relevant for them.

The chair reminded the TF of the next TF meetings scheduled in 2011:

- specific IT meeting: 21-22 September 2011 (lunch to lunch) in Parma;
- specific AMR meeting: 4-5 October 2011 (lunch to lunch) in Parma;
- next TF meeting: 27-28 October 2011 in Rome; the first day shared meeting with ECDC's Food- and Waterborne Diseases network. The main topics will be FBOs, AMR and *Campylobacter*.

The first TF in 2012 will be in combination with the Danish conference on AMR.

Hubert Deluyker updated the TF about the reorganisation of EFSA. The tasks, processes, methods and outputs were presented. It was clarified that the role of EFSA in data collection is to provide assistance to MSs, but the quality of data should be guaranteed by MSs.