

Parma, 2 December 2011

EFSA Task Force of Zoonoses Data Collection
The 24th meeting
Held in Rome on 27-28 October 2011

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Observers:

Geraldine Duffy (expert), Christopher Teale (expert).

EFSA:

Pia Mäkelä (Chair), Frank Boelaert, Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil, Fabrizio Abbinante, Giusi Amore, Anca Stoicescu, Valentina Rizzi (Science), Miriam Grasselli and Simona Fusar Poli (Administration).

MINUTES:

The first day, 27 October, was a joined meeting with ECDC's Food- and Waterborne Diseases (FWD) network, from which separate meeting minutes are available.

1. Opening and welcome

The meeting on 28 October was opened by welcoming all the Task Force (TF) members and observers.

2. Minutes from the last meeting

Only one editorial comment was received by email from the Member States (MSs) on the draft minutes. No additional comments were given at the meeting and the minutes were adopted; the final version 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. Conclusions from the first day

The chair summarised the conclusions from the first joint meeting of ECDC and EFSA networks on 27 October. This joined meeting was well received by both networks. Good collaboration and timely exchange of information between different institutes as well as between risk managers and risk assessors are essential in food-borne outbreak (FBO) investigations. Further revision of EU FBO

reporting specifications was generally supported. EU level training in FBO investigations would be welcome; this training will be funded by the European Commission (EC) under the Better Training for Safer Food programme. Criteria to select the priorities for further collaboration between ECDC and EFSA networks should be defined. The joined meeting between ECDC and EFSA networks was a useful way of exchanging experiences from different fields and discuss the development of surveillance and monitoring and should be repeated in the future.

The TF suggested that also antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and usage of antibiotics should be addressed at this joint meeting and that training on FBOs be addressed to both medical doctors and veterinarians.

5. Discussion on draft EU Summary Report on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks in 2010

Frank Boelaert summarised the preliminary results from the 2010 EU Summary Report (EUSR). A positive finding was the continued decrease salmonellosis in humans, in particular for *S. Enteritidis* cases, as well as the lower number of *Salmonella* FBOs. *S. Typhimurium* monophasic has been addressed in detail and was prevalent in pig, pork, cattle and bovine meat. Good progress was observed in poultry populations with regard to compliance with the *Salmonella* reduction targets. *Campylobacteriosis* in humans and *Campylobacter* FBOs increased, but no major changes in the proportion *Campylobacter*-positive foodstuffs or animals were observed. There was no trend in number of *Listeria* cases in humans. There was a clear decrease of human yersiniosis cases, while VTEC cases increased in humans although the trend was not significant. Q fever decreased in humans. Tuberculosis slightly increased in humans and in animals while brucellosis decreased in both humans and in domestic ruminants. For rabies new maps on regional reporting have been included. As for FBOs, there was a decrease of strong evidence outbreaks compared to the verified outbreaks.

The EC emphasized the good progress with regard to *Salmonella* as result of the successful implementation of the control programmes. EC informed the TF that MSs will be asked about their situation regarding monophasic *S. Typhimurium*, which seems still increasing according to the data from the *Salmonella* EU Reference Laboratory (EURL).

The consultation will take place in November 2011.

6. Task Force Conclusions and Recommendations on the EU Summary Reports and reporting – for approval

The chair presented the conclusions where the comments from the previous TF meeting were taken into account. The report should still be printed but in a lower number of copies. The review of analysis of the data is to be an ongoing process. With regard to the conclusions on the reporting, the 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. Particular attention should be given to harmonisation and training supported by EFSA. A legal support for sample-based data reporting would be appreciated. The TF agreed on these conclusions.

The TF suggested to consider the reporting of vector-borne zoonoses and to evaluate the possibility of creating a joint EFSA-ECDC working group on vector-borne diseases. It will be further discussed with ECDC and EC.

7. Feed-back from special Task Force meeting of IT experts on 21-22 September 2011

Fabrizio Abbinante presented the milestones of XML submission in zoonoses as well as the conclusions agreed upon at the IT experts meeting on 21-22 September 2011. The Data Collection Framework (DCF) will be used for future XML/Excel/CSV files submissions to Zoonoses. There will be an automatic migration from DCF to the Zoonoses database and also an automatic aggregation of isolate-based data. The plan is to move from the current XML transmission, where Zoonoses and DCF still coexist, to the new XML submission scenario with one single system to be maintained. As for data models and XML schemas, simple flat models will be used for both aggregated and sample based data and the validation of pick lists will be done outside the XML schema and using a built-in feature of DCF. The pick lists should be updated and published before each reporting season, but, if needed, an update mechanism to refresh published pick lists will be implemented also during the reporting season. The suggestion to revise the zoonoses pick lists that contain “several” scientific concepts inside the same pick list hierarchy (e.g. Sampling Context, Sampling Stage) was discussed and it was agreed that EFSA will evaluate this issue and make a proposal for both the web-application and the XML/Excel/CSV submission.

Fabrizio Abbinante informed the TF that the data models for using XML and CSV/Excel files will be available in 2012 for all tables and will be sent to the MSs in January 2012. Some MSs expressed their interest in case a pilot is launched in 2013 on reporting 2012 sample-based food data.

8. Feed-back from special Task Force meeting on antimicrobial resistance on 4-5 October 2011

Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil gave a feed-back from the specific TF on AMR data. The fields that need particular attention were presented as well the conclusions from the Expert WG on the further harmonisation of AMR monitoring and reporting. In particular, the collection of isolated-based data would easily allow for more detailed data collection and analyses. There is a need for testing the statistical significance of temporal trends in occurrence of resistance, as well as for assessing temporal trends in full-scale MIC distributions. Additionally, more harmonised data are needed. The plan of analysis of 2010 EUSR was also summarised: no major changes were foreseen in comparison with 2009 EUSR. A positive feed-back was given from the 2011 pilot on AMR isolate based data.

The MSs were invited to express their interest in reporting isolate-based data and 20 MSs replied in the affirmative. The MSs were also invited to report detailed information on animal/food origins of isolates (broilers, etc.) either by reporting isolate-based data or through the Zoonoses Web Reporting System. It was acknowledged that reporting detailed epidemiological information on sampling origins is facilitated by reporting isolate-based data.

It was commented that more information at food chain level would be needed. With this regard EFSA is waiting for a mandate from EC on the revision of technical specifications on AMR data monitoring and reporting, covering also specific requirements for Extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL). The TF was as well informed that the European Medicine Agency (EMA) will set up a WG to discuss the approach and the harmonisation of data on the usage of antimicrobials.

9. Amendments to the reporting application for 2012 and XML data transfer

Fabrizio Abbinante presented the proposed amendments for next year. A general revision of the “default rows” in the prevalence tables will be implemented. Q-fever tables and text forms will be revised including the addition of the new column “number of clinically affected herds”. For FBO data, the field “place of origin (of problem)” will become a multiple choice field, and the food category “mixed and buffet meals” will be split in two separate categories. Additional amendments will regard the cut-off values tables (‘EFSA’ is automatically written in the “standard column” when the value is imported from the EFSA’s recommendations) and the pick lists (different sampling units will appear in accordance to the type of table, i.e. animal, food, feed). Other amendments are foreseen with regard to User Management, Print Management and as well as other general enhancements.

The chair informed the participants that the VTEC pick list should be revised with regard to the reporting of virulence genes and human pathogenic *E. coli* strains in collaboration with the EURL. It will be stated in the reporting manual that MSs should report for 2012 all information available on the pathogenic strains, such as STEC O104. The chair also clarified that other possible amendments on FBO reporting will be discussed with the WG.

10. Proposal for revised default rows in zoonoses web application

Valentina Rizzi presented the proposal for revised default rows. The revision took into consideration the current legislation, harmonised technical specification for monitoring zoonotic agents in certain animal or food categories as well as scientific literature including EFSA’s scientific reports. The amendments suggested for some prevalence tables were showed as an example.

Some remarks were received with regard to the default rows for the *Salmonella* control programmes in poultry populations and for Q fever. Moreover, it was suggested to report in columns some of the information that is currently included in rows. This issue will be further investigated with the IT team. MSs were invited to comment the revised default rows by end of November 2011.

11. Document on quick publication of aggregated data in crisis situation – for discussion and possible approval

The chair presented the document on quick publication of zoonoses data in crisis period. Only data that are aggregated at EU level will be published quickly without consulting the MSs. However, MSs’ specific data can be published without consultation in case the data are already included in the EUSRs’ main tables. Previously unpublished MSs’ specific data can only be published after relevant consultation of the MSs. A minor amendment was suggested and the revised document was approved by the TF.

12. Presentations from Member States

12a. Findings from the EU project of ProSafeBeef, Geraldine Duffy, Ireland

Geraldine Duffy presented a multi-country project on beef chain (ProSafeBeef) funded by the EU under Framework 6 programme. The objectives of the project were presented and attention was focused on beef microbial safety and the models for Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment. Details

of the sampling strategy for four pathogens (VTEC, *Listeria*, *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*) in four different countries were given as well the analytical results of the investigations. The project results underlined that hide is an important source of pathogens and that there is a low rate of transfer to carcass. Specific considerations were made for VTEC, the distribution of serogroups and virulent genes; it was stressed that further characterisation of virulence is needed as well as phenotypic studies (pH / temperature) on emergent serogroups and molecular risk assessment. Reporting should focus on clinical strains and their virulence factors.

12b. Study on VTEC in cattle in Czech Republic, Petr Satran

Petr Satran presented a study on VTEC in cattle in the Czech Republic. The investigation covered three groups of animals of different ages in three farms of dairy cattle during two different period of the year (summer and winter). The results provided evidence of high prevalence of EHEC in cattle faeces, with the lowest shedding observed in the youngest animals. A wide range of VTEC serotypes were detected and high prevalence of virulence factor gene was observed in the serogroup O157. The importance of EHEC monitoring was emphasized, with particular attention to virulence genes.

13. Progress reports from working groups

13a. Antimicrobial resistance data analyses

Pierre-Alexandre Beloeil briefly updated the TF on the progress of the WG on AMR data analyses. The final draft report will be sent for consultation to the MSs mid of November. The official deadline for the report is the end of the year.

13b. Epidemiological indicators for meat inspection of poultry

The chair gave an update about this WG. So far two meetings took place and the agents *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* have been addressed. Also ESBL will be probably considered. The suggestion to consider also the resistance to fluoroquinolone will be addressed with the WG.

The chair informed the TF that a new WG for the Epidemiological indicators for meat inspection of cattle will be soon set up.

13c. 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 next WG meeting will be in November and the final report will be sent for consultation to the TF in December.

14. Progress with grant and contract projects

14a. Reporting of vector-borne zoonoses in animals

Giusi Amore informed the TF on the draft report on a proposal for reporting vector-borne zoonoses. The draft report was sent for consultation to the MSs and all the comments received were considered from the contractor. The revised report is currently under revision by EFSA.

14b. Microbiological contaminants in food

The chair updated the TF on the progress with this contract. The second deliverable has been commented by EFSA and the revised version is expected from the contractor. The consultation will take place in November.

14c. Statistical analyses on antimicrobial resistance data

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

14d. Grants to support XML/Excel data transfer

With regard to the grant under Article 36 to support XML/Excel data transfer, 8 applications were received. The evaluation process is concluded and the award letters will be sent in November.

The intention is to launch a similar call next year. EFSA will send to MSs a questionnaire on the new grants to support XML/Excel data transfer in 2012 to understand who is interested in it.

15. Dates of TF meetings in 2012

On 14-15 March the Danish Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture will organise a Conference on AMR in Copenhagen. The TF has been invited to combine TF meeting with this conference.

On a preliminary basis the dates for the meetings in 2012 were agreed as follows:

- **25th TF meeting** : 13 March 2012 in Copenhagen (before the Danish AMR Conference);
- **specific AMR meeting**: 16 March 2012 in Copenhagen (after the Danish AMR Conference);
- **specific FBO meeting**: 26-27 April (lunch to lunch) in Parma;
- **26th TF meeting** : 26-27 June 2012 in Parma;
- **specific IT meeting**: September 2012 (date to be confirmed);
- **27th TF meeting**: 23-24 October 2012.

The joined meeting with ECDC's FWD network is foreseen in the beginning of 2013.

16. Any other businesses

16a. EFSA expert satisfaction Survey

This topic will be addressed at the next TF meeting.

16b. Collaboration with WHO's Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN)

The WHO's Global Foodborne Infections Network is carrying out many activities. WHO wants to collaborate more with EFSA and invited EFSA to participate in training course providing trainers. If the MSs volunteer for this, EFSA can cover the costs. The TF supported this approach and three MSs expressed their interest.

16c. Review of EU Summary report 2009 by BIOHAZ and AHAW panels

The chair informed the TF about the mandate to review the EUSR 2009 by Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) and Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ) panels.