

Minutes of the 8th meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

**Held on 23-24 September 2019, Parma meeting
(Agreed on 24 September 2019)**

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Paola Battilani

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest², EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

The WG revised the opinion regarding the *Pantoea stewartii* US derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902) in the light of the comments received from the EFSA PLH Panel in advance of the September PLH Plenary, where the opinion is scheduled for possible adoption.

The minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 23-24 September 2019 were agreed.

5. Next meeting(s)

None foreseen.

Minutes of the 7th meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

**Held on 30 July 2019, web meeting
(Agreed on 30 July 2019)**

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Paola Battilani

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

6. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

7. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

8. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes³ and the Decision of the Executive Director on

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

Declarations of Interest⁴, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

9. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

The WG revised the opinion regarding the *Pantoea stewartii* US derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902), so as to prepare it for circulation to the EFSA PLH Panel in advance of the September PLH Plenary, where the opinion could be discussed for possible adoption.

The minutes of the WG meeting held on 30 July 2019 were agreed. The agenda of the next WG meeting of 23-24 Sep 2019 was agreed.

10. Next meeting(s)

23-24 September 2019 (Parma meeting).

Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

**Held on 1, 2 & 3 July 2019, Parma meeting
(Agreed on 3 July 2019)**

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Paola Battilani

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

11. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

12. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

13. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes⁵ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest⁶, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

14. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

The WG revised the opinion regarding the *Pantoea stewartii* US derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902), focusing on the justification of the parameter elicitation values and the interpretation of the revised simulation results.

The minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 1-3 July 2019 were agreed. The agenda of the next WG meeting of 30 July 2019 was agreed.

15. Next meeting(s)

30 July 2019 (web meeting).

Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

**Held on 20-21 May 2019, Parma meeting
(Agreed on 21 May 2019)**

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Paola Battilani

⁵ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

16. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

17. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

18. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes⁷ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest⁸, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

19. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

The WG continued drafting the opinion regarding the *Pantoea stewartii* US derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902), focusing on the conceptual model, the parameter elicitation and the interpretation of the simulation results. A presentation was prepared to update the EFSA PLH Panel at the plenary meeting of 22 May 2019.

The minutes of the WG meeting held on 20-21 May 2019 were agreed. The agenda of the next WG meeting of 1-3 July 2019 was agreed.

20. Next meeting(s)

1-3 July 2019 (Parma meeting).

⁷ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

Held on 8-10 April 2019, Parma meeting
(Agreed on 10 April 2019)

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Paola Battilani

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

21. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

22. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

23. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes⁹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest¹⁰, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

24. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

The WG continued drafting the opinion regarding the *Pantoea stewartii* US derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902), focusing on the conceptual model and the parameter elicitation.

⁹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

The minutes of the WG meeting held on 8-10 April 2019 were agreed. The agenda of the next WG meeting of 20-21 May 2019 was agreed.

25. Next meeting(s)

20-21 May 2019 (Parma meeting).

Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

**Held on 18-20 March 2019, Parma meeting
(Agreed on 25 March 2019)**

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Paola Battilani

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

Matthew Messenger (Hearing expert, USDA APHIS)

Michael Perry (Hearing expert, USDA APHIS)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

26. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

27. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

28. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes¹¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest¹², EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of

¹¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

¹² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

29. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

The WG continued drafting the opinion regarding the *Pantoea stewartii* US derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902), gathered key information and prepared the presentation on the WG progress for the March EFSA PLH plenary meeting.

A hearing with USDA APHIS was held by web. Detailed minutes of the hearing are included as annex to these minutes.

The minutes of the WG meeting held on 18-20 March 2019 were agreed, pending agreement for web publication from USDA APHIS (agreement received on 25 March 2019 by email). The agenda of the next WG meeting of 8-10 Apr 2019 was agreed.

30. Next meeting(s)

8-10 April 2019 (Parma meeting).

Annex to the Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

The chair of the WG welcomed the meeting participants, who introduced themselves. The WG chair thanked USDA APHIS for their willingness to share knowledge on Stewart's wilt with EFSA and for having kindly provided written answers to the questions of the WG in advance of the meeting (please see below). It was agreed to go during the meeting through the questions and answers, trying to clarify any doubt. In some cases, it was agreed that USDA APHIS would try to retrieve additional information and make it available to EFSA by email.

Questions on the kind of corn (maize) seed shipped to the European Union (EU) and on the geographic origin of those seeds and the parents and earlier ancestors of the plants producing the seeds; also the genetic resistance to Stewart's wilt of those seeds

1. By approximation, of the total corn seed export of the USA to the EU, how much (measured as tons/year) is destined for direct sowing (i.e. it consists of hybrid seed) and how much is destined for seed production from inbred lines (i.e. it consists of seed of inbred lines)?

For one major U.S. Company, the majority of seeds sent to the EU from the United States is intended for breeding purposes, such as germplasm exchanges

and testing purposes, hybrid seed production for the EU market is contained within the EU. However, it was agreed that USDA APHIS would provide a more comprehensive answer after consultation with the U.S. Seed Industry.

2. Of the corn seed of inbred lines, if this is exported from the USA to the EU, what is the quantity of this seed (tons/year)

It was agreed that USDA APHIS would provide a more comprehensive answer after consultation with the U.S. Seed Industry.

3. Of the total corn seed export of the USA to the EU, how much (measured as ton/year) is for sweet corn?

2017 (2,789 total shipments)

Approximate total of all corn seed: 11,439 tons

Approximate total of sweet corn seed: 1,252 tons

2018 (2,334 total shipments)

Approximate total of all corn seed: 9,512 tons

Approximate total of sweet corn seed: 944 tons

2019 (January – March) (929 total shipments so far)

Approximate total of all corn seed: 2,860 tons

Approximate total of sweet corn seed: 335 tons

4. If corn seed of inbred lines is indeed transported from the USA to the EU, is this seed meant for further propagation by selfing, or will this seed be used in the next generation to produce hybrid seed?

Seeds are typically utilized for breeding purposes which could be selfing or in some cases hybrid make ups for development of new lines. However, it was agreed that USDA APHIS would provide a more comprehensive answer after consultation with the U.S. Seed Industry.

5. In commercial breeding, are parent genotypes that are susceptible to Stewart's wilt used for production of hybrid corn seed? If so, are such susceptible varieties exported from the USA to the EU, are they used for further selfing or for hybrid corn seed production, and what is the quantity shipped per year?

Although the availability and advances in molecular breeding capabilities has allowed some U.S. Companies to be able to select for resistant lines with greater success, they remain capable of complying with all phytosanitary requirements set forth by the NPPO. As stated above, production for the EU market is done in the EU; seeds sent to the EU from the United States are used for breeding purposes mainly for line development.

6. Of the corn seed of inbred lines and hybrids, if this is exported from the USA to the EU, is all of this seed produced within the USA, or is some portion produced in other countries? If the latter is the case, which countries? Any further information that you could provide on this aspect would help us in our assessment and would be greatly appreciated.

Routinely corn seed is produced in the United States. However, there may be a potential for an insignificant amount of germplasm inventory of non-U.S. origin.

Questions on the letter from USDA APHIS to the European Commission of 30 Oct 2017

9. In the letter by APHIS to Ms Dorothée André, head of unit in the European Commission's DG Health and Food Safety of 30 October 2017, undersigned by Andrea B. Simao, is written: "Proposed condition (c) requires production of corn seed using resistant seed varieties. APHIS is unable to certify seed resistance on a phytosanitary certificate." Why is it that APHIS is unable to certify seed resistance on a phytosanitary certificate?

It is APHIS PPQ policy to not recognize and certify varietal resistance and genetic composition on phytosanitary certificates. For the Authorized Certifying Official, it is nearly impossible to conduct an inspection of corn seed and validate/determine whether or not it is from a resistant seed variety. Other USDA agencies, such as the Biotechnology Regulatory Services and/or the Agricultural Marketing Service, may recognize resistant varieties for specific pathogens; however, APHIS would not be the authority.

10. In the same letter is written: "over the past decade, corn seed varieties in the United States have been grown, selectively, to increase overall resistance to *P. stewartii*. At the same time, the incidence of *P. stewartii* in the United States has decreased significantly." Implicitly a connection is made between resistance of corn to Stewart's wilt and declining prevalence of the disease in the field. However, this decline could as well be linked to the simultaneous increase in seed treatments with neonicotinoids. Can APHIS provide evidence that the apparent decline in Stewart's wilt is due to increasing levels of resistance and not to the effect of neonicotinoid seed treatments?

Studies have primarily and strongly attributed lower incidences to improved levels of resistance. Seed treatment insecticides are considered one of the complementary control tactics to manage the vectors at a very early stage. If you analyse the holistic effect as it pertains to the risk of introducing *E. Stewartii* during movement of seeds, there are other determinant factors to consider such as the extremely low level of seed transmissibility with studies conducted sans seed treatment factors; .038% (Michener et al. 2002).

It was agreed that USDA APHIS would provide a more comprehensive answer after consultation with the U.S. Seed Industry.

11. USDA contends that a single field inspection would be sufficient to detect Stewart's wilt disease. However, according to experience in Europe with the recent outbreaks that have occurred, early inspections were valuable as the early infected plants die before a late inspection may result in their discovery and disease identification. However, while these early infected plants may not be identifiable as victims of Stewart's wilt later on, they still may have spread infection through vectors, though perhaps asymptomatic at the time of a late survey. Can APHIS provide evidence to rule out this scenario?

This scenario is possible indeed and active scouting to monitor diseases and vectors throughout the growing season has been standard agronomic practice for many U.S. Companies; even more so effectively due to the relatively small-scale corn production of breeding exports into the EU. This best practice and the considerable low rate of seed transmissibility even in studies conducted with inoculated susceptible sweet corn varieties, the risk for inadvertent movement of *E. Stewartii* in the context of seed movement is reasonably manageable with a phytosanitary field inspection at the optimal growth stage window.

Cited Reference:

Michener, P.M., Pataky, J.K., and White, D.G. 2002. Rates of transmitting *Erwinia stewartii* from seed to seedlings of a sweet corn hybrid susceptible to Stewart's wilt. Plant Disease 86: 1031-1035. (<http://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/StewartsWilt.aspx>)

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

**Held on 29 January 2019, Parma meeting
(Agreed on 29 January 2019)**

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Paola Battilani

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

31. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

32. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

33. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes¹³ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest¹⁴, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

¹³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>

34. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

The WG started drafting the opinion regarding the *Pantoea stewartii* US derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902), gathered key information and prepared the presentation on the WG progress for the January EFSA PLH plenary meeting.

The minutes of the WG meeting held on 29 January 2019 were agreed. The agenda of the next WG meeting of 18-20 March 2019 was agreed.

35. Next meeting(s)

18-20 March 2019 (Parma meeting).

Minutes of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on the *Pantoea stewartii* derogation

**Held on 17-18 December 2018, Parma meeting
(Agreed on 18 December 2018)**

Participants

- **Working Group Members:**

Wopke Van der Werf (WG chair)

- **EFSA:**

Alpha Unit: Marco Pautasso

36. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

37. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

38. Declarations of Interest of Working Groups members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes¹⁵ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest¹⁶, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of Interest and the Specific Declaration of Interest filled in by the working group members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

39. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

The WG discussed the terms of reference of the mandate of the WG on *Pantoea stewartii* derogation (EFSA-Q-2018-00902), gathered key information and planned the remaining work.

The minutes of the WG meeting held on 17-18 December 2018 were agreed. The agenda of the next WG meeting of 29 Jan 2019 was agreed.

40. Next meeting(s)

29 January 2019 (Parma meeting).

¹⁵ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf>