

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 139th Plenary meeting

Held on 16-17 March 2022

EFSA, Parma, WEB MEETING¹

(Agreed on 30 March 2022)

Participants

■ Panel Members:

ALVAREZ Julio, BICOUT Dominique, CALISTRI Paolo, CANALI Elisabetta, DREWE Julian, GARIN-BASTUJI Bruno, GONZALES ROJAS Jose Luis, GORTAZAR SCHMIDT Christian, HERSKIN Mette, MICHEL Virginie, MIRANDA Miguel Angel, NIELSEN Søren Saxmose (Chair), PADALINO Barbara, PASQUALI Paolo, ROBERTS Helen, VELARDE Antonio, VILTROP Arvo, WINCKLER Christoph

■ European Commission:

KUSTER Laszlo (Points 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3), KLEMM Moritz (Points 6.5 and 8.1) (ZAFEIROPOULOU Kornilia (Points 6.7 and 6.8), RALCHEV Stanislav (points 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12) and BERLINGIERI Francesco (Points 6.6 and 7.1) and FORCELLA Simona (8.3)

■ EFSA:

BIOHAW Unit: ANTONIOU Sotiria-Eleni, ASHE Sean, AZNAR Inma, BALDINELLI Francesca, BROGLIA Alessandro, CANDIANI Denise, CHINCHIO Eleonora, DHOLLANDER Sofie, FABRIS Chiara, GEFFROY Mariana, GERVELMEYER Andrea, KOHNLE Lisa, LIMA Eliana, LIEBANA Ernesto, LOMBARDO Ludovico, MUR Lina, ROJO GIMENO Cristina, OSWALDI Verena, VAN DER STEDE Yves, VITALI Marika, ZANCANARO Gabriele

■ Hearing experts²: not applicable

■ Observers: not applicable

¹ All meetings were rescheduled to web meetings due to Covid-19

² As defined in Article 17 of the Decision of the Executive Director concerning the selection of members of the Scientific Committee, the Scientific Panels, and the selection of external experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work:
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/expertselection.pdf>.



1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the meeting participants. Apologies were received from Karl Stahl for the whole meeting and from Arvo Viltrop and Christoph Winckler on Day 2.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence³ and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management⁴, EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled in by the Scientific Panel Members invited for the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting had been identified during the screening process or at the Oral Declaration of Interest at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 138th Plenary meeting held on 16 February 2022, WEB

The minutes of the 138th Plenary meeting were agreed by written procedure on 24 February 2022.

5. Scientific outputs submitted for possible adoption and endorsement

N/A

6. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion

6.1. Art. 29 - Assessment of listing and categorisation of animal diseases within the framework of the Animal Health Law (Regulation (EU) No 2016/429): antimicrobial-resistant *P. aeruginosa*

The Panel thoroughly discussed the edits and comments provided by Panel Members in the body text of the Scientific Opinion (SO). It was agreed that the term 'fact-sheet' may be used to refer to the part of the assessment which relates to Article 7 of the Animal Health Law. It was also concluded that the animal species to be listed (according to Article 8 criteria) may be focused mainly on dogs and cats on. In preparation of the written adoption scheduled before the end of March 2022, the document will be circulated again after the meeting for the Panel's last edits and comments.

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

⁴ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf



6.2. Art. 29 - Assessment of listing and categorisation of animal diseases within the framework of the Animal Health Law (Regulation (EU) No 2016/429): antimicrobial-resistant *S. aureus*

The Panel thoroughly discussed the edits and comments provided by Panel Members in the body text of the SO. The difference between 'clinical mastitis' and 'subclinical mastitis' was clarified, and the term 'disease' better defined. It was also concluded that the animal species to be listed (according to Article 8 criteria) may be expressed in a broader way, referring to larger groups instead of individual animal species. In preparation of the written adoption scheduled before the end of March 2022, the document will be circulated again after the meeting for the Panel's last edits and comments.

6.3. Art. 29 - Assessment of listing and categorisation of animal diseases within the framework of the Animal Health Law (Regulation (EU) No 2016/429): antimicrobial-resistant *E. coli*

The Panel thoroughly discussed the edits and comments provided by Panel Members in the body text of the SO. It was concluded that the animal species to be listed (according to Article 8 criteria) may be expressed in a broader way, referring to larger groups instead of individual animal species. In preparation of the written adoption scheduled before the end of March 2022, the document will be circulated again after the meeting for the Panel's last edits and comments.

6.4. Art 29. AHAW Panel guidance for Good Practice in Conducting Scientific Assessments in Animal Health using Modelling

The Panel thoroughly discussed the comments provided by Panel Members on the drafted updates of the guidance document and agreed on improvements. The document will be circulated for potential adoption at the next plenary meeting.

6.5. Art 29. ToR4 of mandate on control measures for Cat A. diseases – review and discussion of sections

The Panel discussed the feedback provided by Panel Members on the drafted Opinion sections. Improvements were agreed. Draft sections on the assessment of prohibitions of movements of products of animal and non-animal origin and the assessment of prohibitions of movements of germinal products will be submitted for detailed review for the next plenary meeting.

6.6. Art. 29. SARS-CoV-2 monitoring in mink, mustelids, raccoon dogs: Update

The WG Chair updated the Panel about the main points and actions agreed at the WG meeting. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) outputs are expected by mid-April, and these results will feed the assessment of the other ToRs. A comment was raised about which species of pets and wildlife to be considered for the assessment. It was agreed that all animal species on which evidence will be provided through the SLR about their susceptibility for SARS-CoV-2 will be assessed for possible monitoring. The EC underlined that the monitoring needs should be benchmarked towards the new available risk mitigation measures, e.g., vaccination of workers and of animals.



6.7. Art. 29: Scientific Opinion concerning the protection of Pigs (EFSA-Q-2020-00484): Section addressing Specific Scenario 2 on the welfare of gilts and dry sows – from the time they are transferred into the farrowing facilities up to the completion of farrowing in housing systems offering different degrees of behavioural freedom in relation to nest-building material.

The WG Chair introduced the aim of the discussion of this topic and the following two agenda points (Points 6.8 and 6.9) to the Panel. The documents assess three of the 17 exposure variables characterising the specific ToRs of the draft SO on the protection of pigs. These documents were submitted to the Panel for a first reading. The editorial comments of the Panel were accepted, the main comments were thoroughly discussed, and the actions to improve the text were agreed as following.

Concerning the semi-quantitative exercise on the suitability of different nest-building materials to enable nest-building behaviour, it was agreed to describe this behaviour as composed by four functional behavioural elements (FBE), to define what a 'fully functional' FBE means, to explain why FBE-4 (to arrange) was considered by the WG of double importance (weight) compared to the other three FBEs, and to clarify in the narrative text that the 'amounts' of materials indicated in the exercise were examples used for methodological purposes only (i.e. they should not be intended as exact figures and cannot be recommended). It was also agreed to report the evidence supporting the scorings that were given to the diverse materials in the section 'Arguments used by experts when filling in Table 1'. Conclusions and recommendations were thoroughly discussed and agreed by the Panel.

6.8. Art. 29: Scientific Opinion concerning the protection of Pigs (EFSA-Q-2020-00484): Section addressing Specific Scenario 3 on the welfare of sows and piglets from farrowing to weaning in different housing systems offering different degrees of behavioural freedom in relation to enrichment material

The main comments referred to the conclusions and recommendations, which were thoroughly discussed and agreed by the Panel. Following on a request from the EC, it was agreed to ask the WG to assess whether the location where the material should be provided in the farrowing facility could be reported and recommended.

6.9. Art. 29: Scientific Opinion concerning the protection of Pigs (EFSA-Q-2020-00484): Section addressing Specific Scenario 4 on the welfare of weaners and rearing pigs, in particular with the risks associated with practice of mutilations - tooth reduction

The Panel discussed the feedback provided by Panel Members on the document and agreed that, for consistency with the main body of the draft SO where this document will be integrated, also this text should refer to 'welfare consequences' and not to 'welfare implications'. In particular, the text should report the relation between tooth reduction and the specific welfare consequence 'soft tissue lesion and integument damage' and explain how this relates to the over-arching welfare consequences (e.g. pain). It was also agreed to verify in the literature whether any quantification of pain was reported. In the case that the reduction of the tooth is necessary, it was agreed that the scientific basis supporting the differences between the practices of tooth grinding and tooth clipping should be better explained from an animal welfare point of view. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were thoroughly discussed. It was agreed to firstly recommend how to eliminate the risk factors of tooth reduction (including in terms of farmers' perception) and secondly how this practice can be done in the best possible way (including training of farmers and operators).



6.10. Art 29: Uncertainty assessment & approach in Animal Welfare F2F mandates

The approach of the uncertainty assessment to be implemented in the Farm to Fork mandates (animal welfare) was explained. It was agreed that for all SO, a table listing the sources of uncertainty will be integrated. In addition and optionally, two different methods were proposed and agreed for expressing the uncertainty on the conclusions. One method directly uses the obtained uncertainty from a structured Expert Knowledge Elicitation (EKE) exercise. In case that an EKE exercise was not performed the conclusions will be classified according three categories that expresses the uncertainty (50-100%, 66-100% & 90-100%). These two methods are optional, otherwise the table listing the sources of uncertainty is sufficient.

6.11. Art. 29: Scientific Opinion concerning the protection of animals during transport (Animals in containers EFSA-Q-2020-00482): Working document - heat stress & cold stress

The concept of heat stress was discussed and it was agreed to refer to heat stress and severe heat stress (the latter constituting the welfare problem). Dominique will help building the curve for the combination of Temperature and Humidity. Also the concept of travelling in the alert zone was discussed and it was agreed there is no welfare rationale for which the animals should travel in the alert zone. Still the welfare consequences for animals travelling in the alert zone could be described. Concerning the use of cameras on the lorry it was agreed to recommend the use of new technologies for the future. The EC requested to indicate the animal body temperature for transport, but it was agreed that it's not a feasible ABM. The EC also requested to indicate limits for the thermo comfort zone in T°. It was explained that this is not possible because T° and humidity must be accounted for in a combined index. It was finally agreed to conclude and recommend possible ranges of T° with the indication of maximum humidity.

6.12. Art. 29: Scientific opinion concerning the protection of animals during transport (Animals in containers EFSA-Q-2020-00482): Working document - prolonged hunger & thirst

The concept of hunger vs prolonged hunger was discussed, and it was agreed to change it into prolonged hunger and severe prolonged hunger and explain the differences in physiology for the different concepts. Also, the lack of strong evidence to reach conclusions was discussed, e.g., for maximum time of feed withdrawal. It was explained that this is based on expert opinion, and it is now explicitly stated in the conclusions. In addition, there will be an uncertainty assessment.

For the even more limited evidence available for rabbits and for the extrapolation for turkeys and end-of-laying-hens and chicks, it was agreed that the Panel can suggest the maximum feed withdrawal time based on expert opinion, where the uncertainty will be very high.

It was agreed that poultry and domestic birds are used as synonyms. The working group proposed that maximum feed withdrawal time (and consequently maximum journey time) accounts for catching, crating and loading as well as uncrating. The EC would prefer EFSA to indicate how long these operations would take on average, but it was agreed that this is not possible, as the time for these operations varies very much among farms. In addition, the EC requested that all info is separately given for animal categories so to have nice stand-alone documents although this would be very repetitive. The compromise was agreed to provide short summaries and references to other sections for more details. Finally, concerning the SWAR tables, it was agreed that the usual outcome tables, starting from the welfare consequence perspective, will be produced.



7. New mandates

7.1 Art. 31. Request for scientific and technical assistance for a coordinated surveillance system under the One Health approach for cross-border pathogens that threaten the Union – Ares (2022)1571037

The mandate requesting scientific and technical assistance from EFSA for designing, implementing and reviewing a coordinated surveillance system in animals and the environment for cross-border threats to human health was presented and discussed with Panel members and the EC.

8. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, the European Commission

8.1. Art. 31. Rabies: update on working group establishment

The Working Group (WG) installation is in progress and the Declaration of Interest approval of one expert is still pending. The WG composition (external experts, panel experts, hearing experts) was presented with Helen Clare Roberts being the chair of this WG. The 1st WG meeting will take place on Monday the 21st of March. The literature review has been assigned to an external contractor and so far the protocol of the review and the datasets have been delivered and already distributed to the experts for review and discussion during the 1st WG.

8.2. Art 31. ASF -EPI 6 report: Focus on TOR 3: outcomes of Stochastic model to evaluate the measures in a white zone near an adjacent affected area with limited control measures in place

The proposed solutions on the comments from the deep reviewers in the final draft were agreed upon. Conclusions on Term of Reference (ToR) 1 and 2 were already presented in the plenary in January. For ToR3, the outcomes of the stochastic model, evaluating the effectiveness of measures applied in a white zone in the context of an adjacent ASF-affected area where limited measures are applied, were presented and conclusions were agreed upon.

8.3. Art 31. Report on Equine herpesvirus – 1 (second output of the mandate)

The report was tabled for last check by the Panel, the main conclusions were summarised and the Panel was provided an opportunity to provide final comments.

8.4. Scientific Committee: brainstorm on cross-cutting topics

The Panel brainstormed shortly on several cross-cutting topics of possible interest for other EFSA Panels which could possibly be included in the work plan of the Scientific Committee Panel for 2022-2024.



8.5. EU One Health 2020 Zoonoses report

A staff member of the BIOMO team presented major findings on non-foodborne zoonoses as published on 9 December 2021 in the EU One Health Zoonoses report 2020, which is a joint scientific report by EFSA and ECDC. Data analyses were particularly challenging due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU. Together with the report also two online communication tools were published that dealt with foodborne diseases outbreaks, a dashboard and a story map. During 2022-2024 online communication tools will be built for foodborne and non-foodborne zoonotic pathogens. The 2020-2023 report and accompanying communication tools are produced through outsourcing by a Consortium contracted by EFSA and ECDC, which is constituted by five Institutions: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale (IZS) dell’Abruzzo e del Molise (leader), IZS delle Venezie, IZS della Lombardia e dell’Emilia Romagna, Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) and the French Agency for food, environmental and occupational health and safety (ANSES).

8.6. SPIDO: ongoing roadmap 'More Welfare'

A staff member gave information on the upcoming procurement for the project EFSA is developing in Animal Welfare. The Panel was informed this project will focus on developing a roadmap for action, or strategic plan, that will identify what needs to be done in the coming years to ensure that EFSA can successfully develop a methodology for the quantitative assessment of animal welfare in farm/husbandry systems, as well as to promote adequate data collection activities to support this work. The Panel was informed that the open call for tenders will be launched at the end of April, and the pre-information notice for the call ([link](#)) was shared with them. Panel members were encouraged to spread the word amongst colleagues in their networks and also to consider applying for the call.

8.7. Chronic wasting disease

A staff member of the BIOHAZ team presented an update on chronic wasting disease (CWD). The four topics included in the presentation were: a) description of the disease, history, epidemiology, distribution and susceptible species; b) review of the three EFSA scientific opinions published since the detection of the first case of CWD in Europe in May 2016, covering a proposal for surveillance, the review of previous surveillance conducted in the EU, the public health impact and zoonotic potential, the risk factors and measures to prevent the introduction into the EU and the spread within, the diagnostic methods and the possible presence of different strains in Europe; c) the preliminary results of the surveillance conducted in six member states during the period 2018-2020, d) current issues including the terms of reference of the new mandate received in February 2022 on the analysis of surveillance data, epidemiology, control measures and genetics.

9. Any other business

N/A