European Food Safety Authority

ALPHA UNIT

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare

Minutes of the 93rd plenary meeting

Held on 20-21 October 2015, Parma

(Agreed on 09 November 2015)

Participants

a) Panel Members:

Dominique Bicout, Andrew Butterworth, Anette Bøtner, Paolo Calistri, Klaus Depner, Sandra Edwards**,** Bruno Garin-Bastuji, Margret Good, Christian Gortazar-Schmidt, Virginie Michel, Miguel Angel Miranda, Simon More, Søren Saxmose Nielsen, Liisa Sihvonen, Hans Spoolder, Jan Arend Stegeman, Hans-Hermann Thulke, Preben Willeberg, Christoph Winckler

b) European Commission representatives:

Pierangelo Bernorio, Laszlo Kuster, Francisco Reviriego-Gordejo (G2), Marina Marini (03)

c) EFSA:

ALPHA Unit: Francesca Baldinelli, Franck Berthe, Denise Candiani, Sofie Dhollander, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Andrey Gogin, Eliana Lima, Francesca Porta, Frank Verdonck, Matthew Watts, Gabriele Zancanaro

AMU Unit: Jose Cortinas-Abrahantes

BIOCONTAM Unit: Beatriz Guerra, Pietro Stella

d) Scientific Committee:

Andy Hart

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed the participants to the AHAW Panel plenary meeting. Apologies were received from Antonio Velarde and Mohan Raj.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

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3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes[1] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Declarations of Interest[2], EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest and the Specific 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 have 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 92nd Plenary meeting held on 22-23 09 2015.

The minutes were agreed and published on the EFSA website on 05 10 2015.

5. New Mandates

No new mandates for the AHAW Panel have been submitted since the last plenary meeting.

6. Scientific outputs presented for endorsement

No outputs were presented for endorsement.

7. Scientific outputs presented for adoption

No outputs were presented for adoption.

8. Feedback from the ad-hoc Working Groups of the AHAW Panel

8.1. Scientific Opinion on *Echinococcus multilocularis* infection in animals (EFSA-Q-2014-00728)

When asked if the modelling of the probability of introduction should be done for Norway and Finland only, the Commission clarified that the approach should take into consideration any possible future applications. Therefore, the Panel agreed that the values to be used for the prevalence of infection need to cover also extreme scenarios: very low values (0.01%) representing the situation of countries like Norway and Finland, and higher values (16%) reflecting the situation of countries that can potentially apply in the future for being listed among the "free" Member States (*e.g*. Spain).

Scientific literature about the probability of transmission of *E. multilocularis* presents data that are relevant to characterise geographical areas suitable for the parasite (*e.g*. suitable for the definite and the intermediate hosts and for the survival of eggs in the environment). A detailed map of such suitable areas would enable to estimate the probability of establishment in regions/countries. This would facilitate a proper risk-based sampling as based on these ecological parameters it is possible to identify high risk areas, *i.e.* those more suitable for the parasite. Currently however, no country has these risk maps.

In the opinion it should be clearly stated if the life-cycle of the parasite can be sustained by dogs alone in the absence of wildlife definite hosts or/and in the absence of intermediate hosts. A statement on the consequences this has for the need for surveillance to prove absence of the parasite could be made. However, regarding the need for treatment of dogs prior to entering such a country, the risk that infected dogs pose for human infection needs to be highlighted.

[1] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf
[2] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules2014.pdf

Regarding diagnostic test sensitivity, the panel agreed that until better documentation is available, the diagnostic sensitivity should be set conservatively to the lower bound of the sensitivity values available in scientific literature. A study should be undertaken to estimate the probability of each relevant test to detect infection, given that the animal is truly infected (according to the definition of diagnostic test sensitivity), using a large sample of specimens from endemic areas where the entire range of different infection stages and intensities are represented. Such a survey could be coordinated by the EURL.

8.2. Scientific opinion concerning the risk of survival, establishment and spread of the small hive beetle (Aethina tumida) in the EU (EFSA-Q-2014-00938)

Many Panel members provided comments and suggestions on the draft scientific opinion. Those that were not only editorial were discussed by the Panel and agreement was reached on how to reword or clarify the specific points. There was no request by the Panel or the EC for a major change in any of the sections.

8.3. Scientific opinion on entry routes into the EU of vector borne diseases (EFSA-Q-2014-00187)

ToR 3 of the mandate requests EFSA to determine the potential health consequences and other impacts to the EU of the vector-borne diseases identified in ToR1. After further discussion with the European Commission, it was agreed that ToR3 can be interpreted as a request to assess the impact of the selected vector-borne diseases on animal health and welfare. Concerning impact on public health, to avoid duplication of efforts, the Panel can make use of the already existing assessments, carried out by other institutions such as ECDC or the WHO and refer to the outcomes of these assessments. Environmental impact and economic impact assessment can be generic and the latter should focus mainly on direct on-farm production losses.

Taking the above into account, different methodological frameworks for impact assessment were reviewed (see point 8.1). Different criteria and scores were presented to the Panel to assess the impact on animal health (case-fatality and case morbidity); welfare (case-level of discomfort/welfare compromise and case duration of compromise of welfare); economic impact (impact on case-farm production, related secondary industry, trade and prevention and control); environmental impact (chemical biocides) and the impact on public health (disability-adjusted-life-year). Animal welfare should be considered as well within the impacts of prevention and control of diseases. The Panel discussed the criteria and scores and agreed on their integration within the mint risk model. The impact of the diseases on individual case levels will then be combined with the overall risk assessment scores, which include both temporal and spatial dimensions (the probability of spread and persistence of the diseases).

8.4. Joint EFSA and EMA scientific opinion on measures to reduce the need to use antimicrobial agents in animal husbandry in the European Union and the resulting impacts on food safety (EFSA-Q-2015-00216)

The Panel discussed the draft table of content (chapter 3.2) of the RONAFA opinion with view to the areas that will be covered by the AHAW Panel. A draft document for a holistic review of antimicrobial usage on farms that would provide a detailed understanding of AM usage and its drivers was discussed.

8.5. Scientific opinion on animal welfare aspects of the slaughter or killing of pregnant livestock animals

The approach for the development of the ToR was discussed. For ToR 1 it was suggested to consider the age at gestation as well as the stage of gestation at the time of slaughter and to capture if the animals were slaughtered for disease control purposes or simply sent for slaughter. The opinion will be one of the AHAW pilot projects for testing the SC guidance of

uncertainty in risk assessment. The development of a study protocol in line with PROMETHEUS was suggested.

8.6. Scientific opinion on health of honey bee colonies (EFSA-Q-2015-00047)

The Panel was informed on the preliminary idea of the WG to design a 'Health Status Index' as an output of a multidimensional analysis of indicators and factors related to bee health. The Panel indicated that it could be useful to look at the Welfare Quality project as an example of an index system. Miguel Angel Miranda was proposed to act as vice-chair in the absence of the chair of the WG. Hans-Hermann Thulke indicated his interest to participate in a WG meeting to discuss possible methodologies that could be used to analyse data on bee health in a holistic manner.

8.7. Scientific opinion on Avian Influenza (EFSA-Q-2015-00160)

The EC asks EFSA to have broad look at HPAI viruses which circulated in the EU or might enter the EU in the near future. The WG proposed to look at three viral clades instead of different H and N viral subtypes since the phenotypic characteristics of HPAI viruses seem to be related with the clades. The Panel indicated that this is an artificial approach but did not propose an alternative suggestion. The presented approach is mainly looking at the viruses and the Panel recommended to also include host and environmental aspects in the assessment. The Panel was informed on the recent feedback received from the EC to focus more on introduction and wild birds than on spread between poultry holdings (TOR3). Therefore, it was suggested to spend fewer efforts than previously foreseen on modelling HPAI spread and to stop the planned work on LPAI spread modelling. The Panel agreed with this proposal and indicated that a simplified version of the HPAI spread model from CVI would be sufficient to assess differences in spread between the three viral clades. No between-flock models are required. It was mentioned that the research group of Osterhaus developed models connecting wild bird movements and AI infections. It was suggested to look at this work and to use it as a knowledge base for a narrative description. The Panel underlined the need to cover the spread of HPAI from migratory to resident wild birds in the opinion. The Panel also asked to assess why H5N8 affected mainly indoor poultry (and not outdoor poultry, at least in Germany). Data on the outbreaks will be collected but it was questioned if this will provide enough scientific evidence to draw conclusions. The opinion will be one of the two AHAW pilot projects for testing the SC guidance of uncertainty in risk assessment.

9. Other scientific topics for information and/or discussion

9.1. Scientific Committee and Scientific Committee Working Groups

SC member Andy Hart presented the SC guidance on uncertainty in risk assessment and the proposal for testing it in a pilot phase. The AHAW opinions that will be included in the pilot project are the scientific opinion on animal welfare aspects of the slaughter or killing of pregnant livestock animals and the scientific opinion on avian influenza. The risk managers requesting these opinions should also be involved in this project. The "ambassadors" from the AHAW Panel will be Hans-Hermann Thulke, Virginie Michel, Preben Willeberg, Christoph Winckler and Arjan Stegeman. AHAW Panel and team ambassadors should attend the respective training course, and support the uncertainty assessment in the opinions included in the pilot project.

9.2. New mandate received by EFSA

A new mandate has been received by EFSA. It requests a scientific opinion on the risk for the development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) due to feeding of calves with milk containing residues of antibiotics. The Panel discussed the background and the ToR. It was noted that the risk mitigation measures that are to be proposed in response to ToR 3 might have an

impact on the health and welfare of the calves and that this impact should be considered/ assessed in the opinion. Further, the scenarios listed in the mandate cover only calves raised in dairy production. Potential exposure of calves to antimicrobial residues in milk occurs also in other circumstances*, e.g*. in suckling calves. Finally, it was highlighted that the mandate does not consider the risk of AMR developing from the environment, *e.g*. in the case that the milk produced during the withdrawal period is discarded.

9.3. The use of animal-based measures to assess animal welfare in the EU - state of art of the last 10 years of activities and analysis of the gaps - review and analysis of the results (EFSA-Q-2015-00148)

The outcomes of the gap analysis and the workshop were presented. The need for further validation of animal-based measures was recognized. An EFSA initiative to provide data models and act as a data hub to facilitate data collection and validation was suggested. So far, specific projects still need to be drafted.

9.4. Disease impact assessment framework proposal

Background information on the rationale of the project was provided to the Panel. An overview of different methodological frameworks on disease impact assessment developed and used by other institutions and researchers was presented to the Panel, focusing on the design of the studies, the topics and criteria used. On the basis of the information provided, the Panel discussed the approach for developing its proposal on a general and extensive method that will be systematically applied to different diseases, and will allow a direct comparison between the impacts of several diseases.

It was suggested to work on a method that allows for both a relative and overall aggregation of the score by topic, and to standardise as much as possible the areas by topic. In the animal welfare topic, the Panel suggested to focus not only on pain, but rather on impairment of animal welfare, and to include both its severity and duration. It was suggested that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) could be considered as one aspect of the impact of ‘control measures’. Alternatively, AMR could be included as part of the impact on ‘public health’. Resilience and epidemiology of the agent may be aspects to include in the assessment, whereas exposure should not be included. Panel members Miguel Miranda and Dominique Bicout offered their support to further develop the environmental impact assessment and the overall methodology, respectively.

10. Any other business

Anna Campanini explained the support provided by EFSA and the rules pertaining to expert travel.