



European Food Safety Authority

EFSA PROGRESS REPORT Management Board 15 December 2005

Science Department

Scientific Committee

1. Since the last Management Board meeting on 27 October, the Scientific Committee organized an international Conference together with WHO and ILSI Europe on the risk assessment of genotoxic carcinogens on 1-2 December, one plenary meeting and 6 working group meetings (Transparency, Exposure, Botanicals, Emerging risks, QPS Bacillus and QPS GPNS).

AFC

2. Since the last Management Board meeting the AFC Panel had one plenary meeting in December dealing with draft opinions on two food additives (nisin and polyvinyl alcohol), one nutrient source (ferrous bisglycinate), two flavouring group evaluations covering 53 substances and a draft opinion on pulegone and menthofuran. Furthermore the Panel adopted an opinion on the occurrence in food of isopropylthioxanthone (ITX) and dimethylaminobenzoate (EHA) deriving from printing ink on food contact materials. as also discussed a draft opinion on treatment of poultry carcasses with the antimicrobials chlorine dioxide, acidified sodium chlorite, peroxy acids and trisodium phosphate. In the period there were meetings in the additives, food contact material and FLAVIS (chemically defined flavouring substances) working groups.

AHAW Panel

3. On 14 November the AHAW Panel adopted the scientific opinion on pain and suffering in laboratory animals by written procedure. On 14-15 December the AHAW Panel will discuss – and possibly adopt - three opinions on FMD, IBR (infectious bovine rhinotracheitis) and dairy by-products. On 7 November EFSA received a new mandate on Avian Influenza (AI) about the specific risks posed by migratory birds, and for an update on the latest scientific developments. The first Working Group (WG) meeting on AI took place on 15 November. Since October Management Board meeting the AHAW had 10 WG meetings on Brucellosis, welfare of calves, dairy by products, Foot and Mouth Disease, IBR, AI and Stunning. The AHAW scientific staff attended to international meetings on AI, supported the Commission on the CAHP policy and CRL selection procedures

BIOHAZ Panel

4. The BIOHAZ Panel had one plenary in October and adopted two opinions: on the classification and description of classical and atypical scrapie and on the feasibility of establishing *Trichinella* free areas. Since beginning of October, 6 Working Groups

meeting were held: *Salmonella* in pigs, baseline study for *Salmonella* in pigs, microbiological criteria and food Safety Objectives, Animal-By-Products dairy milk products, on milk goat and on the GBR update methodology.

In the coming December plenary, several draft opinions will be tabled for possible adoption: the QRA for gelatin and Di and Tri Calcium phosphate, an opinion on the usefulness of somatic cell count in milk of goats in terms of BSE, decontamination on peroxyacids as well as a reaction from an urgent request from the European commission on *Campylobacter* in poultry meat.

CONTAM Panel

5. Since the last Management Board meeting the CONTAM Panel had one plenary meeting and 3 working group meetings (USAF-POPS (undesirable substances in animal feed - *section* persistent organic pollutants), PFOS (perfluorooctanyl sulfonate), OTA (ochratoxin A)). The CONTAM Panel adopted at their last meeting one opinion on the presence of non dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (NDL-PCBs) in feed and food. This was a major task and is the first international risk assessment on NDL-PCBs. Besides the opinion on NDL-PCBs also two opinions on aldrin/dieldrin as well as endrin as undesirable substances in animal feed have been adopted.

FEEDAP Panel

6. A two-day plenary session was held in November at which 5 opinions were adopted: one micro-organism product and one zootechnical additive under the Regulation (EC) 1831/2003. In addition, one opinion on colouring compounds, one trace elements products and one enzyme product were also adopted. An extraordinary one day plenary was scheduled on 14 November with the aim of discussing the guidelines and guidance documents for the establishment of the dossiers submitted with applications for authorisation of additives for use in animal nutrition. These documents were sent to the European Commission as an outcome of the consultation.

Seven WG meetings were scheduled during this period on generic issues dealing mainly with the guidelines/guidance documents, as well as guidelines for silage additives. Furthermore, working groups on specific products were also held (*i.e.* coccidiostats, microorganisms).

Regarding the study on the “Assessment of plants/herbs” which is currently under development to support one selftask, the intermediate report is currently being evaluated by EFSA.

The process established in the Regulation (EC) 1831/2003 to notify the feed additives which are currently on the market has now been finalised. As a result the Community register was published on the 8th November 2005, at the following address: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/food/animalnutrition/feedadditives/comm_register_07112005.pdf.

GMO Panel

7. The GMO Panel adopted opinions on genetically modified maize (NK603 x MON810) for food and feed uses and on a starch potato (EH92) for industrial uses. The Panel also concluded its guidance on post market environmental monitoring (PMEM).

In total 10 WG meetings took place: 5 Working group meetings on applications (2 food/feed WG, 2 molecular characterisation, 1 environment) and 5 WG meetings on guidance documents/selftasks (post market environmental monitoring, GM

microorganisms, GM plants that produce non-food products, animal feeding trials, statistical approaches). In addition some experts were involved in a meeting with representatives of the European Commission the interplay between GMO and pesticide legislation. For one application, covering cultivation of GM maize, a meeting was organised with the Competent Authority of Spain, to whom the environmental risk assessment has been delegated.

NDA Panel

8. Since the last Management Board meeting the NDA Panel had one plenary meeting dealing with draft opinions on novel food ingredients, i.e. vegetable oils rich in unsaponifiable matter; as well as a draft opinion on the evaluation of the allergenicity of lupin for labelling purposes. In addition, an NDA Panel working group is continuing its work on Population Reference Intakes for macronutrients.

PPR Panel

9. The PPR Panel held its last plenary meeting on 9th November. A new question in self-tasking from PRAPeR and 2 from the Panel (summary of adopted opinions in toxicology and in environment) were formally accepted. Three Working Groups meetings took place on 24-25th November (in Denmark and Parma) on Ecotoxicology and Fate/Environment and Toxicology, three more WGs from 13 to 15 November to finalise the four opinions to be adopted on 15/16th December at the next Plenary meeting (3 questions in self-tasking from PRAPeR) on aquatic ecotoxicology; on the active substance cyprodinil, on the Q10 transformation factor in soil and on the guidance document from the Commission on FOCUS degradation kinetics.

Plant Health (PH) Panel

10. On November 22nd, the call for expression of interest to become member of the Scientific Panels and Scientific Committee has been launched. This call is also meant for experts who wish to apply for membership of the Scientific Panel on Plant Health.

PRAPeR Expert Group

11. Following the discussion of EFSA, conclusions on the peer review of 8 active substances used in plant protection products (clopyralid, cyprodinil, dichlorprop-P, dimethenamid, fosetyl, thiodicarb, triclopyr and trinexapac), the finalized conclusions were forwarded to the EU Commission and made available via the EFSA website. In the meeting of 28-30 November with Member State's experts, the peer review of another 6 existing active substances (fenamiphos, fenitrothion, malathion, metconazole, pyrimethanil and phosalone) of the 2nd stage of review program as well as for one new active substance (metrafenone) were concluded and the respective draft EFSA conclusions were discussed. A finalization of the conclusions and provision to the EU Commission is expected before the end of the year. In addition, the outstanding issues to be addressed by the notifiers and/or the respective rapporteur Member State were discussed and agreed on for another 3 new active substances (FEN 560, acequinocyl and spiromesifen).

Zoonosis

12. Since 27 October, the draft Community Summary Report on zoonoses was launched for consultation, which covered all the Member States and relevant Community institutions. A wide variety of substantial comments were received which are currently under consideration. In November the first joint meeting between human health, veterinary and food experts on data collection on zoonoses and foodborne

outbreaks was organised in collaboration with the ECDC. The meeting was fruitful and provided a good start for continuous cooperation between the sectors. The zoonoses Task Force had one meeting where a report on revision of the zoonoses reports and harmonisation of data collection was endorsed. One working group meeting on revision of the reporting manual took place.

Scientific Expert Services (SES)

13. On 1-2 December 2005 EFSA organised a colloquium on principles of risk assessment of food producing animals: current and future approaches. This 4th colloquium was held in Parma and brought together over 90 experts to have an open scientific debate on the conduct and components of risk assessment for animal diseases and animal welfare. One of the overall conclusions was that EFSA should consider to set up a working group to develop a guidance document on the risk assessment for animal welfare based on the general risk assessment principles.

International and Institutional Relations Department

Advisory Forum

14. On 25 November 2005 the 15th meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum meeting took place in London. The meeting was the last meeting with Geoffrey Podger as Chairman and Herman Koëter has now taken over the Chair ad interim. The meeting was hosted by the UK Food Standards Agency which provided the meeting with a stunning introduction to London by offering the Advisory Forum a tour on the London Eye – an enormous wheel offering travellers an unparalleled bird's eye view over London.

15. The meeting discussed important scientific dossiers such as Avian Influenza and aspartame which had recently been subject to discussions in the press. Herman Koëter explained that EFSA was keen to look at the safety of aspartame but was still awaiting the data from the Institute. This was becoming more and more urgent as the Ramazzini Institute had published an article in "Environmental Health Perspectives" on 10 November and held another press briefing recently on this.

16. The Forum had already received information about the recently issued call for expressions of interest in membership of the Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels via e-mail and was further updated and informed about the process. Forum members were asked to ensure wide distribution throughout their national scientific communities and in particular new Member States were asked to try and encourage scientists to apply.

17. A progress report on the mechanisms governing the implementation of the Article 36 was discussed at the meeting. The report from the Legal Department included a list of the Member States which had notified lists of competent organisations in the meaning of Article 36, to EFSA, and some Member States said that they would follow up notifications to see where they were in the process.

18. EFSA reported back on the outcomes of both the Stakeholder Platform meeting in October and the Stakeholder Colloquium held in Parma in November. Hans Peter Jensen (AF Member from Denmark) reported from the Colloquium on the part he had chaired and in particular highlighted the questions raised on the EP's new Scientific Panel on Food Safety and the possible interface of this with ESFA. The Colloquium had

recommended, amongst other things, that EFSA should play a more important role with regard to nutrition.

The next meeting of the Advisory Forum will take place in Prague on 2-3 March 2006.

INA Working Group

19. The Working Group on 'Input from National Authorities' – a subgroup of the Advisory Forum - reported back from their second meeting. The group foresees the need for two or three more meetings before it can bring a paper with recommendations to the Forum.

Meeting with the Chair of the Stakeholder Consultative Platform

20. Further to the election of Sue Davies (Chief Policy Adviser at Which ?, UK consumer organisation and member of BEUC) as Chair of EFSA's Stakeholder Consultative Platform, EFSA's secretariat met the Chair of the Platform in London on 23 November in order to further discuss how she intends to work within the platform and to interact with the Vice-Chairs, the assistance that EFSA can provide as secretariat of the Platform, as well as possible key areas of work during her mandate.

21. In this first initial exchange of ideas, Sue Davies stressed her willingness to work very closely with the Vice-Chairs (in process of election at the time of writing this note) and to involve them on any decisions or proposals she will put forward. The Platform wishes to have a good interaction with the Management Board and not work in isolation from it. Therefore a meeting between Stuart Slorach, Chair of the Management Board, and Sue Davies will take place early next year.

Open House

22. In order to forge close links with local entities and the local population EFSA organised two open house events, one for the public and one for schools. These were carried out in form of presentations of EFSA's work and mission as well of two real examples of EFSA studies carried out recently. The response was very good and EFSA is planning a repetition in 2006.

Conferences around the provinces in Emilia Romagna

23. In collaboration with the newly established Europass office that includes members of the provinces, region, chamber of commerce and university, EFSA has organised a series of conferences around the provinces in Emilia Romagna. The first conference took place in Piacenza on 7 December at the Università Cattolica and was attended by the media, academia, stakeholders and local people. Giorgio Calabrese also participated actively at the meeting to support EFSA. The aim is to open a dialogue with local concerned organisations, Universities or individuals to increase the awareness of EFSA's role in food safety in Europe.

PHARE Programme implementation

24. The PHARE Steering Committee met on 29 November to discuss the programme implementation during 2005 and plan the implementation for 2006. So far, 29 experts from Romania and Bulgaria attended 15 EFSA working groups. Some 120 Romanians and Bulgarians attended an EFSA scientific cross-disciplinary conference organised in Bucharest in October, and some 80 participants attended the kick-off Conference in Sofia in September. For next year, the focus will be on in depth workshops and

seminars in the various areas of EFSA's expertise (see below). These seminars and workshops will be organised as a part of the programme, and the exchange of experts from Romania and Bulgaria to EFSA will continue as it does today, with Romanian and Bulgarian experts expected to attend some 40 EFSA expert group meetings during 2006.

CALENDAR PHARE MEETINGS 2006

February – Risk Communication 22 February 2006

February – Zoonosis 23 February 2006

March – BSE/TSE 22 March 2006

April – Stakeholder involvement in Romania and Bulgaria 5 April 2006

May – Legal framework of EFSA 17 May 2006

June – Crisis Communication 6 June 2006

September – GMOs specialist seminar 7 September 2006

October – Data Collection Methodology 5 October 2006

November – PHARE Programme Scientific Conference 7 November 2006

International delegations

25. The International and Institutional Relations Department organised several meetings for groups of international visitors to EFSA during the period. On 10 November, the Finnish Food Federation visited EFSA. Pia Makela invited the delegation and presentations were given by Herman Koeter, Torben Hallas Möller, Liisa Vahteristo and Ingela Söderlund.

26. On 14 November the Chinese State Administration for Industry and Commerce visited EFSA, and on 5 December the Chinese State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) came to Parma to speak to EFSA and to learn about its structure. The SFDA is a new Chinese body which dates from 2003 and a delegation was touring Europe to learn more about the European structures. On 23 November, the Australian Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran, visited EFSA and on November 30 a high level delegation from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), headed by Ron deHaven, paid EFSA a visit.

Communications Department

Media Relations

27. Since the last meeting of the Management Board, EFSA issued four press releases concerning the harmonisation of risk assessment methodology for substances which have both genotoxic and carcinogenic properties (proposed by EFSA's Scientific Committee); election of the Chair of EFSA's Stakeholder consultative platform; the call for expression of interest for EFSA's scientific panels and scientific

committee (in progress); and the request to the Ramazzini Institute to release data on aspartame.

28. A press statement was also issued concerning Isopropylthioxanthone (ITX) a substance utilised in printing inks for certain packaging materials and found in food, including babyfood.

Eurobarometer

29. Fieldwork on the risk perception survey is now complete. The research company, Gallup, will provide EFSA and DG SANCO with a draft report early December. A press briefing will be organised at launch (expected in January 2006).

Publications

30. Since the last meeting EFSA published a summary report of EFSA's 3rd scientific colloquium (A qualified presumption of safety of micro-organisms in food and feed - QPS) and the 9th Newsletter.

Human Resources

Staffing

31. Total staffing levels as of 01/12/05 were: 82 A posts (68 Temporary agents, 1 Official, 6 auxiliary agents and 7 ENDS), 35 B posts (25 Temporary agents and 10 auxiliary agents) and 43 C posts (28 Temporary agents and 15 auxiliary agents) which equals 161 agents.

Breakdown: active staff

Number of temporary agents and officials recruited

Grade	Staff Foreseen for 2005	Staff Recruited	Percentage
A	103	69	67 %
B	30	25	83 %
C	61	28	46 %
Sum	194	122	63 %

Staff distribution

Type of contract	number	percentage
Temporary Agents (AT)	122	76 %
Official (FT)	1	
Seconded National Experts (END)	7	4%
Auxiliary Agents (AX)	31	19 %
	161	

Arrivals in the next three months

Temporary Agents

	16-Dec	JAN	FEB	MAR
A		2	2	1
B		1	1	
C	2	7	4	2
sum	2	10	7	3

Auxiliary Agents: 4

ENDs: 2

Some recruitment procedures for scientific staff are either completed (1A AT) or close to be: ongoing interviews should lead to the recruitment of 5 A AT, and 3 procedures are at evaluation stage. They should lead to the recruitment of altogether 9 Scientific Officers at A*7, A*8 and A*9 levels.

Projection is that by 31 March 2006, the EFSA would count more than 150 Temporary Agents.