



EFSA
European Food Safety Authority

Brussels, 17th February 2004
EFSA/BG/MH/ac
EFSA/BIOHAZ/PLE/

**MINUTES OF THE 4th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS
Held in Brussels on 21-22 January 2004**

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Official requests to EFSA and organization of working groups
5. Discussion and possible adoption of the following opinion:
 A request for opinion on the safety vis-à-vis biological risk including TSEs of the application to pastureland of organic fertilizers and soil improvers.
6. Progress reports
7. Feed-back by the Chairman on subjects discussed in the SC of interest to the Panel
8. Brainstorming on possible issues for self-tasking
9. Emerging Risks: Preliminary considerations in relation to Biohazards
10. Format of opinions
11. Introduction to Document Management System (DMS)
12. Feedback on permanent EFSA seat in Parma
13. AOB
14. Closure of the meeting

**MINUTES OF THE 4th PLENARY MEETING OF
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Held in Brussels on 21-22 January 2004**

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Members:

Herbert Budka, Sava Buncic, Pierre Colin, John D. Collins, Christian Ducrot, James Hope, Mac Johnston, Günter Klein, Hilde Kruse, Ernst Lücker, Simone Magnino, Riitta Liisa Maijala, Antonio Martinez López, Birgit Noerrung, Servé Notermans, George-John Nychas, Maurice Pensaert, Terence Roberts, Ivar Vågsholm, Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch.

Apologies

21 and 22 January: Christophe Nguyen-The, Maurice Pensaert

EFSA

Bart Goossens, Marta Hugas, Pia Makela, Rozenn Saunier (22), (Scientific Staff)
Sylvie Daloze and Angela Cohen. (Administrative staff)

Commission

John Maher (21), Eric Poudelet (21), Taina Sateri and Robert Vanhoorde (21) (DG Health and Consumer Protection)

1. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everybody. Dr. Pia Makela and Dr Rozenn Saunier were welcomed in particular as new staff in the Biological Hazards area.

There were no specific interests declared.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Christophe Nguyen-The and Maurice Pensaert

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair proposed to re-order the agenda items. The agenda was adopted with the proposed re-arrangement of items.

4. OFFICIAL REQUESTS TO EFSA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORKING GROUPS

4.1. Request for a scientific opinion on *Bacillus cereus* and other *Bacillus* spp in foodstuffs

The Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards is asked to identify the categories of foodstuffs and the manufacturing and preparation processes where *Bacillus cereus* or other *Bacillus* spp may pose a risk for human health; the relationship between the number of bacteria in foodstuffs, the ability of

these foodstuffs to cause food-borne illness and to list and evaluate control measures. The terms of reference were discussed and it was agreed to have an opinion ideally adopted by January 2005.

4.2. Request for a scientific opinion on *Clostridium* spp in foodstuffs

The Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards is asked to identify the categories of foodstuffs and the manufacturing and preparation processes where *Clostridium* spp may pose a risk for human health; the relationship between the number of bacteria in foodstuffs and the ability of these foodstuffs to cause food-borne illness and to list and evaluate control measures. The terms of reference were discussed and it was agreed to have an opinion ideally adopted by January 2005.

4.3. Organization of Working Groups

The Chairs of the working groups for *Bacillus* and *Clostridium* were appointed. Due to the similarity of both mandates a core working group with the chairs of both working groups and a rapporteur to define a common outline for both opinions will be organised by the end of February.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING OPINION

A request for opinion on the safety vis-à-vis biological risk including TSEs of the application to pastureland of organic fertilizers and soil improvers.

The mandate on organic fertilizers as received by COM services was discussed. An additional clarifying note will be prepared. EFSA will complete the risk assessment and prepare the opinion which will be presented for adoption at the Panel's plenary meeting in March 2004. Relating to the wider mandate on animal by-products it was stated that, although documents may be submitted in any community language, it would be helpful if a full translation in English or at least an extended summary in English is provided. This would allow EFSA to finalize the mandates within the stated deadlines.

6. PROGRESS REPORTS

6.1. Revision of meat inspection for lambs and goats

A first advanced draft was presented to the Panel. The Chairman of the working group illustrated the general outline of the document. Discussion took place on parts of the draft which are to be moved to an annex. The working group will meet in February. A new revised version of the draft document will be presented for discussion and possible adoption at the next plenary meeting in March.

6.2. Antimicrobials to control *Salmonella*

The Chairman of the working group briefed the panel on the outcome of the discussion at the first working group meeting and the progress made. The second working group meeting is scheduled for mid-February. A first draft document may be presented for discussion at the next plenary meeting.

6.3. Vaccines to control *Salmonella*

The Chairman of the working group briefed the panel on the outcome of the discussion at the first working group meeting and on the general strategy agreed for the preparation of the document. The second working group meeting is scheduled for the end of February.

6.4. *Campylobacter* in animals and feedingstuffs

The Chairman of the working group briefly outlined the outcome of the discussion of the first working group meeting. The second working group meeting is scheduled for mid-April.

6.5. Microbiological risks in infant foods

The Chairman of the working group briefed the panel on the outcome of the discussion at the first working group meeting which had taken place the day before the meeting.

6.6. Chronic Wasting Disease

The first WG meeting for this mandate was held on 17 December 2003. The outline of the report and the opinion were drafted and tasks were distributed among the members of the group. The COM is to request some additional information from certain Member States in terms of estimation of numbers of deer species in the country, as available, and if any testing of these deer for any TSE is ongoing. Where testing is on-going, information on numbers tested and details on the test used will also be requested.

Companies with an approved BSE test in EU or an approved test for CWD in the USA were invited to submit a dossier on any test they may have for the diagnosis of CWD. The data submitted will be analysed by the WG. The next meeting is scheduled for 20 February 2004. Possible adoption is foreseen during the March or April plenary meeting of the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards.

6.7. The scientific justification for proposing amendments to the United Kingdom Date Based Export Scheme.

6.8. The application of the United Kingdom for moderate risk BSE status

These two mandates (6.7 and 6.8) are being addressed by one working group. The working group met for the second time on 14 January 2004. The two parts of the report were further discussed and some additional clarifications on the calculations were tabled. The general outline of the report was discussed and a draft opinion prepared. The final draft opinion will be presented at the plenary meeting of the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards in March 2004.

6.9. Quantitative Assessment of the residual BSE risk

This request by Commission to EFSA for technical assistance and a scientific opinion on the quantitative assessment of the residual BSE risk in certain bovine derived products was discussed at the first meeting of the WG created by EFSA on 14 November 2003. During this meeting the technical report (prepared by DNV Consulting) was discussed. Additional questions were raised together with requests for some clarifications. The technical report has been updated meanwhile and the questions were answered. Following this an update of the mandate was sent to EFSA. The next meeting is scheduled for 12th of February 2004 during which the WG will discuss and complete the assumptions leading to the calculations. Based on the outcome of these discussions, an further draft will be prepared and this will be the basis for a final technical report.

6.10. Tongue infectivity (BSE)

On 10 July 2003, the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the United Kingdom issued a statement on the BSE risk from bovine tonsil and the consumption of ox tongue. A working group was composed with Prof Lücker as Chairman to consider this matter. A date for a first meeting was set for 11 February 2004.

6.11. BSE related culling in cattle

This mandate will be discussed further at the first meeting on 11th February 2004.

7. FEED-BACK BY THE CHAIRMAN ON SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN THE SC OF INTEREST TO THE PANEL

The chair gave some feedback on items of interest and discussed during the 5th Plenary of the Scientific Committee. http://www.efsa.eu.int/pdf/minutes_sci_05_adopted_en.pdf

8. BRAINSTORMING ON POSSIBLE ISSUES FOR SELF-TASKING

For the first time, several possible issues on self-tasking based upon suggestions from panel members were discussed:

- (i) Evaluation of different methods for assessing the impact of HACCP application on public health.
- (ii) Development of databases of microbial growth and death responses under a range of environmental conditions and the integration of information from a range of databases.
- (iii) New preservation technologies and their possible impact on food safety: Do we need new methods for the assessment of growth, risk and detection of microorganisms?
- (iv) Scientific assessment of the Annual European Report on the Epidemiology of Zoonoses (Directive 2003/99/EC)

It was decided to continue the discussions at the next plenary meetings.

9. EMERGING RISKS: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS IN RELATION TO BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

The chair briefed the panel on the progress made to-date by the Working Group on Emerging Risks of the Scientific Committee.

10. FORMAT OF OPINIONS

A template for the format of the opinions was distributed to the panel members.

11. INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (DMS).

Mr Philippe Loopuyt, head of the IT Department of EFSA, gave a presentation on a Document Management System (DMS) using Livelink which is being developed by the EFSA information technologies department. The documents related to the requests sent to EFSA as well as the draft opinions. These will now be stored centrally and it will be possible to download them from the DMS by using a personalized password. To allow the fast and secure delivery of documents Panel members will automatically be alerted each time a new document or draft opinion is uploaded in the DMS. Training will be available to Panel members in a few months.

12. FEEDBACK ON PERMANENT EFSA SEAT IN PARMA

The panel members were informed about the decision of the Council on the permanent location for EFSA in Parma (Italy). A delegation of EFSA visited Parma on 15 and 16 January 2004 and met with local authorities. Feedback was given on the location and the building, current arrangements and future possibilities for travel to and from Parma. There is the possibility of starting to plan meetings (plenary and working groups) in Parma and the time schedule for the move to Parma. On the latter point, it was explained that EFSA staff may start to move and that EFSA become operational from Parma by late 2004. The move should be completed by mid 2005.

13. AOB

A point on interference between risk management and risk assessment based on timing and an apparent contradictory scientific background was discussed between DG Sanco representatives and the EFSA Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards. It was agreed that appropriate timing of the submission of mandates to EFSA with a clear background explanation together with a continuous and open dialogue are essential to ensure the smooth cooperation between risk assessors (EFSA) and risk managers (DG Sanco).

In the previous plenary, the panel members were informed about the possibility of organising the plenary meeting at another venue than Brussels after agreement by the Executive Director of EFSA. Prof Dan Collins suggested the possibility to organize the July plenary meeting in Dublin (IRL). Other members were invited to put forward proposals for future meeting in other venues than Brussels.

The AHAW Panel sent an invitation to the BIOHAZ Panel to participate in a WG on laying hens. A member of the Panel agreed to participate.

The emerging importance of the avian influenza epidemics in Asia was raised by a Panel member mentioning that the ACMSF (Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food) of the Food Standards Agency performed a risk assessment. The Secretariat informed that the Animal Health and Animal Welfare Panel (AHAW) was going to discuss the issue in its next plenary to be held in Barcelona on 29th and 30th January.

14. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The meeting was closed at 17.00 on Thursday 22 January 2004