

**MINUTES OF THE 15TH PLENARY MEETING  
OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH  
HELD IN PARMA ON 10-11 SEPTEMBER 2008**

(ADOPTED ON 22 OCTOBER 2008)

	AGENDA	PAGE
1.	Welcome, apologies for absence	2
2.	Adoption of the agenda	2
3.	Declarations of interests	2
4.	Adoption of the minutes of 14 <sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting	2
5.	Discussion of the draft opinion on the guidance document for evaluation of pest risk assessments prepared by third parties to justify phytosanitary measures under the Council Directive 2000/29/EC (EFSA-Q-2008-259)	3
6.	Discussion of the draft opinion on the pest risk assessment and additional supporting evidence provided by South Africa on citrus black spot <i>Guignardia citricarpa</i> Kiely (EFSA-Q-2008-299)	3
7.	New Mandates	4
8.	Media Handling Guidelines	5
9.	Presentation by EFSA Director of Risk Assessment of EFSA Strategic Plan 2009-2013	6
10.	EFSA expert database	6
11.	Transparency in risk assessment – presentation of the opinion of the EFSA Scientific Committee	7
12.	Discussion of the paper on EFSA PLH role in protecting plant health in the European Community	7
13.	Miscellaneous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Renewal of the scientific panels</li> <li>- Update from the Scientific Committee</li> </ul>	7

## PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

### PARTICIPANTS

#### *Members of the PLH Panel*

Richard BAKER, David CAFFIER, James William CHOISEUL Patrick DE CLERCQ, Erzsébet DORMANNSNÉ SIMON, Bärbel GEROWITT, Oľia Evitimova KARADJOVA, Gábor LÖVEI, David MAKOWSKI, Charles MANCEAU, Luisa MANICI, Alfons OUDE LANSINK, Dionyssios PERDIKIS, Angelo PORTA PUGLIA, Jan SCHANS, Gritta SCHRADER, Anita STRÖMBERG, Kari TIILIKKALA, Johan Coert VAN LENTEREN, Irene VLOUTOGLOU

#### *Apologies*

Robert STEFFEK

#### *European Commission (DG SANCO)*

Harry ARIJS, Roman VAGNER

#### *EFSA*

PLH Unit: Anna CAMPANINI, Elzbieta CEGLARSKA, Sharon CHEEK, Doreen RUSSELL, Giuseppe STANCANELLI, Sara TRAMONTINI, Sybren VOS.

Other Units: Anne-Laure GASSIN (Communication Directorate), Riitta MAIJALA (Risk Assessment Directorate), Daniela MAURICI (Scientific Committee & Advisory Forum), Steve PAGANI (Press Office ), Sergio POTIER RODEIA (Scientific Cooperation.).

---

### 1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Panel Chair welcomed the Panel members and the Commission observers.

Apologies were received from Robert STEFFEK.

### 2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The agenda was adopted. The meeting agreed to amend the agenda, postponing agenda item 9 until the next plenary.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No conflicts of interest were reported.

The Secretariat informed the panel that most of their annual Declarations of Interest are approved.

### 4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF 14TH PLENARY MEETING

The minutes of the 14th Plenary were adopted.

**PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH**

**5. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT OPINION ON THE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR EVALUATION OF PEST RISK ASSESSMENTS PREPARED BY THIRD PARTIES TO JUSTIFY PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES UNDER THE COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/29/EC (EFSA-Q-2008-259)**

To ensure a transparent and consistent process for the evaluation of pest risk assessments by the Panel, a self-task activity was initiated to produce a guidance document on the evaluation of pest risk assessments. The mandate is registered in the Register of Questions as EFSA-Q-2008-259.

The rapporteur presented a progress report from the working group (WG). Economic, social and environmental impacts will be addressed separately in the guidance document. The first draft of a flow chart describing the evaluation process was presented to the panel, giving the stages to be followed. The draft indicates that at the initial stage an analysis of the impact must be undertaken followed by entry, establishment and spread. Based on this, a transparent synthesis based on the evaluation undertaken can be reached. The rapporteur further explained that at each step of the evaluation process uncertainties must be considered. It was also proposed to use different criteria for the various types of pest organisms and to employ a conclusion rules matrix for the analysis of a given pest risk assessment document. The matrix combines the likelihood of occurrence with the magnitude of impact, and the presentation showed how to insert the level of uncertainty and how this was likely to deviate the position within the table of the pest under consideration. Adhering to the IPPC standard the rapporteur sought feedback from the panel on the decision rules and rating types to be used for risk assessment in the document. The panel discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the various rating systems currently used worldwide and their merits in contributing to the decision making process. The panel also considered the difficulties presented in the combination of different rating systems.

The rapporteur thanked the panel for their contributions and particularly acknowledged the strong arguments for maintaining the five level rating system.

**6. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT OPINION ON THE PEST RISK ASSESSMENT AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE PROVIDED BY SOUTH AFRICA ON CITRUS BLACK SPOT *GUIGNARDIA CITRICARPA* KIELY (EFSA-Q-2008-299)**

EFSA is requested to provide a scientific opinion on the pest risk assessment and additional supporting evidence provided by South Africa on citrus black spot (CBS) *Guignardia citricarpa* Kiely, with regard to the following issues:

- the suitability of the EU citrus fruit producing areas for establishment of CBS in terms of their climatic conditions,
- the likelihood of an introduction leading to an establishment of CBS

## PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

- the appropriateness of the level of protection under the existing management options listed in Annex IV, Part A, Section I point 16.4 of Council Directive 2000/29/EC.

EFSA was also requested to identify whether effective options, alternative to those already present in Council Directive 2000/29/EC could be suggested to prevent introduction of citrus black spot into the community.

For each of the sub WGs a presentation was given by the rapporteur.

### - Sub WG1 Climate

A presentation on the suitability of climatic conditions for establishment in the EU was presented whose main points were: the adopted methodology, the disease epidemiology, the environmental requirements, the European sensitive area, CLIMEX use and concerns and other possible statistical models. In particular, the application of the simple generic infection model for foliar fungal plant pathogen was tested for application and used to produce 2 model equations: one for ascospores and one for pycnidiospores.

### - Sub WG2 Fruit pathway

The subgroup on Fruit Pathway presented the assessment on the probability of entry and establishment in EU for *Guignardia citricarpa*. The panel commented on the presentation and explored if a distinction was necessary between analysing passenger or commercial trade means of entry but was not considered necessary as the pathway, the fruit, is the same in both instances

### - Sub WG3 Management options

The subgroup on pest management options showed its working paper using ISPM No. 11 and No. 14 as the basis. Detection efficiency was discussed, including consideration of long lag period, temperature, light and post harvest treatments as well as the symptoms of the disease.

The Commission representative offered the Panel the opportunity to request a time extension to deliver the CBS mandate as the data to be obtained through liaison with Ispra would be useful to EFSA as a whole. The meeting thanked the commission for this offer which it would consider.

## 7. NEW MANDATES

The details of a new mandate were presented to the Panel. The mandate seeks to improve the EU plant health regime by providing a guidance document for making pest risk assessments. The request derives from evidence of the absence of a satisfactory EU system to enable risk managers in member states to decide upon the management measures

## **PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH**

necessary to make decisions. This is exacerbated by the fact that only a few member states are creating risk assessments and these often do not address the EU as a whole.

Initial consideration of the organisation of the WG would be to divide it in at least 2 subgroups: one dealing with entry, establishment and spread analysis, and a second one focused on the economic consequences and the facilitation of risk management measures for the EC. The deadline for producing the draft guidance document for consultation is fairly onerous, the end of May 2009, which coincides with the ending of the mandate of the first PLH Panel and the beginning of the second one; factors that reinforce the need to respect the deadline.

The secretariat also informed the panel that it would like to launch several Article 36 calls for the creation of pest risk assessments at a European level.

An important contribution to the discussion was if it is advisable for the Panel to work on the analysis of the economic consequences and economic impact. The position of the EU representative was to offer a pragmatic position on this point while emphasising the centrality of the independence of the Panel. The general notion will be a “learning by doing” approach.

Consideration of the PRATIQUE project in the context of the discussion was also emphasised.

Analysis of risk management options is considered as a weak feature of pest risk assessments requiring development and improvement through adequate guidelines.

Rather than make a superficial document, time should be dedicated to each of the points and the narrow timeframe should be considered as the limiting factor to decide if to focus on the assessment only and explore the possibilities for risk management options. This was considered by the Panel as a compromise.

The background document was modified in accordance with the results of the discussion, adding to point iv the phrase “including the evaluation of the effect of risk management options on the level of the risk”.

## **8. MEDIA HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR EXPERTS**

EFSA Communication Directorate and Press Office gave a presentation on their role, goals and activities in 2007 and 2008. The presentation gave advice to the Panel on dealing with press enquiries relating to EFSA activities

The Panel members were presented with a proposal for improved collaboration with EFSA communication activities through the suggestion of media training which was well received.

## PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

### **9. PRESENTATION BY EFSA DIRECTOR OF RISK ASSESSMENT ON EFSA STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2013**

A presentation was given by the Director of Risk Assessment outlining achievements to date and the improvements envisaged for the next five years in EFSA activities. Five core challenges have been identified which were outlined in the presentation. The panel discussed the paper and the identified improvements were proposed for the 5 key challenges namely the increase incidence of allergies and the effect of increased immigration; the new methodologies of risk assessment (not only technologies), biodiversity, climate change, sustainability, biofuels, food availability, emerging risks and global population. Other suggestions included the integration of these activities with other similar agencies, particularly with other biosecurity agencies for a more efficient approach to assessing risk. A further contribution related to data collection for a pan-European database, for emerging risks data to be made available not only for the EU member states but for all the European States. This contribution concurred with and supported further proposals and suggestions by the experts.

### **10. EFSA EXPERT DATABASE**

A presentation on the EFSA's database of scientific experts was given by the liaison officer of the Scientific Cooperation Unit. EFSA's policy on selecting experts was described and an updated overview on progresses so far given. A flexible approach has been adopted, which specifies the obligation to provide minimal detail to fulfill the eligibility criteria.

The speaker advised on the level of detail to complete the expert database form: how to deal with this information and with the quality of it in order to discriminate between different application forms, recognising that the impact of the same information can vary considerably from expert to expert. The Panel suggested the need for additional guidance for applicant experts not familiar with the DoI.

The Expert Database accepts applications from experts from outside EU and from private industry. A flexible approach to assessing applicants has been adopted based on the submission and validation of a set of mandatory data identified in the application form. This approach will increase eligibility and supports the notion that scientific excellence is improved by increasing the numbers of experts who can be selected for a specific task/project.

The Expert Database will become a community in Extranet to create a reliable network of experts. To determine the distribution of relevant expertise, a check for the missing expertise is proposed by the end of October (before which time the Expert Database will be further improved).

## **11. TRANSPARENCY IN RISK ASSESSMENT**

A presentation on the scientific aspects of the transparency in risk assessment was given, describing the state of the art on the preparation of the final document.

## **12. DISCUSSION OF THE PAPER ON EFSA PLH ROLE IN PROTECTING PLANT HEALTH IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY**

A presentation based on the remarks and observations sent by the Panel during the last months on the EFSA role in protecting plant health was given. New amendments and improvements were proposed for the text presented to the Panel members. This included modifications to the text such including: “In Europe the diversity of food has increased with this increasing a multitude of potential problems; invasion problems, with the related environmental effects, should be highlighted”. The focus on food was considered too limited and could be substituted by the definition of “plant products and plant productions”. Globalisation should be also an issue addressed within the paper. Another observation was that frequently some components of food come from forests and not just fields so forests should be another reality to consider. The audience of the PLH Panel is composed also of food producers and not only food consumers. Also the trend of increasing/reducing of pesticides and pests presence should be included in the papers and the term “stakeholders” should be substituted.

A small group was suggested and tasked with finalising the document prior to the advisory forum meeting in October 2008.

## **13. MISCELLANEOUS**

- **Renewal of the scientific panels**

A presentation on the renewal of the scientific panels was given, including timescales and the selection process. The importance of the Annual DoI was highlighted within the procedure. A shortlist of possible candidates will be presented to and discussed by the management board and the selected candidates will be contacted from spring 2009.

Clarifications were requested on the number of experts to be replaced: if the 1/3 proportion is a fixed figure or if a decision will be taken by each Unit on this matter.

The Panel suggested that it would be more advisable to have people with experience in impact analysis and to have a virologist. It would be an important consideration also to have an idea about the next three-year mandates:

A list of advice/information for the “new” Panel members was proposed.



## PANEL ON PLANT HEALTH

- **Other proposals for the Panel activities**

Preparation of a specific topic for discussion every second plenary on issues directly related to the opinions in progress, and/or interesting and useful information for Panel members would represent a benefit to the work of the experts.

It was proposed to review the Panel experience also with respect to the *ad hoc* experts.

- **Update from Scientific Committee**

Definition of the EFSA Scientific Outputs: the document was handed out to the members of the Panel. The Panel will create a working group to look at the harmonisation of risk assessment in Europe as it has been identified that a harmonised approach is required in all member states. A working group on emerging risks has been established but is too large so a meeting in November will decide on how to make progress with this.

- **Report from the International Congress of Plant Pathology**

Attended by over 2000 participants representing over 100 international organisations. The EFSA session which presented EFSA's role in risk assessment and specific presentations relating to the work of the panel lead to a lively question and answer exchange.

The stand organised in conjunction with the Communications Directorate attracted great interest. The Panel was reminded to alert the secretariat about any forthcoming conferences or events it may be appropriate for the panel to be represented to raise our profile.

### **Date of Next Plenary Meeting**

22-23 October 2008, Parma