
ALPHA UNIT

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Working Group on Oyster mortality
Held on 27-28 01 2015, Parma
(Agreed on 28 01 2015)¹

Participants

- **Working Group Experts²:**
 - Howard BROWMAN
 - Céline GARCIA
 - Ron LEE
 - Stein MORTENSEN
 - Fabrice PERNET
 - Ana ROQUE
 - Anne THEBAULT

- **EFSA:**
 - ALPHA Unit: Per Have

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes³ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy regarding

¹ The publication of the minutes shall be made without delay in compliance with the Founding Regulation and no later than 15 working days following the day of their agreement.

² Indicate first full name and them surname(John Smith) all throughout the document

Declarations of Interests⁴, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of interest and the Specific Declaration of interest filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests 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 3rd Working Group meeting held on 13-14 11 2014, Parma.

The minutes were agreed on 27 01 2015.

5. Oyster mortality ([EFSA-Q-2014-00188](#))

Substantial contributions had been received for TOR1-4 and these were discussed in detail and additional writing tasks identified and assigned.

6. Next meeting:

Tentative 31 March 2015 in Parma (alternative 9 April 2015).

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

ALPHA UNIT

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Working Group on Oyster mortality
Held on 13-14 11 2014, Parma
(Agreed on 27 01 2015)¹

Participants

- **Working Group Experts²:**
 - Howard BROWMAN
 - Céline GARCIA
 - Ron LEE
 - Stein MORTENSEN
 - Fabrice PERNET
 - Ana ROQUE
 - Anne THEBAULT

- **EFSA:**
 - ALPHA Unit: Per Have

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

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4. Agreement of the minutes of the 2nd Working Group meeting held on 04 09 2014, Parma.

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 19 09 2014 and published on the EFSA website 30 09 2014.

5. Oyster mortality ([EFSA-Q-2014-00188](#))

Substantial contributions had been received for TOR1-3 and these were discussed in detail and additional writing tasks identified and assigned.

The approach to TOR4 on control options was discussed and topics to be included proposed.

6. Next meeting:

27-28 January 2015 in Parma

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

ALPHA UNIT

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on Oyster mortality
Held on 04 09 2014, Parma
(Agreed on 19 09 2014)¹

Participants

- **Working Group Experts²:**
 - Howard BROWMAN
 - Céline GARCIA
 - Ron LEE
 - Stein MORTENSEN
 - Fabrice PERNET
 - Ana ROQUE
 - Anne THEBAULT

- **EFSA:**
 - ALPHA Unit: Per Have

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes³ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy regarding

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Declarations of Interests⁴, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of interest and the Specific Declaration of interest filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests 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 1st Working Group meeting held on 06 06 2014, Parma.

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 23 06 2014 and published on the EFSA website 24 06 2014.

5. Oyster mortality ([EFSA-Q-2014-00188](#))

Initially, the development of oyster mortality in various age groups since 2008 will be considered based on monitoring data obtained from MS. If a continued increased mortality can be confirmed, then TOR 1, 2 and 4 will be addressed. The question on effectiveness of water treatment (TOR 3) will be evaluated in the context of an over-all review of current practices in shellfish depuration plants.

Surveillance for increased oyster mortality is in most MS based on passive surveillance by reporting specific events of mortality. This type of surveillance is influenced by reporting bias and differences in interpretation of what constitutes a significant increase in mortality. The WG agreed that a systematic active surveillance using defined sentinel oyster stocks allows for a more precise assessment of mortality over time. In France, active surveillance is been carried out in the REMORA/RESCO projects and the WG considered that these data would provide the best estimate for the overall mortality since 2008.

Based on these data, a significant increase of mortality has been observed since 2008 in France, in particular in oyster spat, and this trend continues today. Mortality events in spat are usually associated with the presence of high levels of OsHV-1 μ Var. Significant mortality events have also been recorded in Ireland and several other MS, including UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Italy with concomitant identification of OsHV-1 μ Var. Since 2008, the number of bays in Ireland testing positive for OsHV-1 μ Var has risen from 3 in 2008 to 32 in 2013.

Since 2012, an increased mortality in adult oysters has also been recorded in France in association with an increased frequency of detection of *Vibrio aestuarianus*. The role of *V. aestuarianus* in mortality events outside France remains to be clarified.

The WG concluded that there is ample evidence of persistently high oyster mortality during the latest 5-year period and proposes, therefore, to perform an update of all the TORs requested in the mandate.

6. Next meeting:

Possible teleconf. 2nd half of October after receiving contributions

13-14 November 2014 in Parma (19-20 Nov kept as alternative)

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on Oyster mortality
Held on 06 06 2014, Parma
(Agreed on DD MM YYYY)

Participants

- **Working Group Experts:**
 - Howard Browman
 - Céline Garcia
 - Ron Lee
 - Stein Mortensen
 - Ana Roque
 - Anne Thebault

- **European Commission and/or Member States representatives:**
 - none

- **EFSA:**
 - ALPHA Unit: Per Have

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes¹ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy regarding Declarations of Interests², EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of interest and the

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Specific Declaration of interest) filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests 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. **Scientific topic(s) for discussion:** Oyster mortality

5. It was agreed to assess first the scientific evidence available of increased oyster mortality during the period 2010-2014 by looking into the scientific literature and collected field data from MS. The WG will define the information required (e.g. case definition of oyster mortality, estimation of baseline mortality) in order to decide whether a statistical analysis will be performed. After the summer, the WG will undertake the assessment of the 'increased mortality'. If it is concluded that there is scientific evidence for increased mortality, then all TORs will be assessed. If there is insufficient scientific evidence, or if there is a lack of sufficient data upon which to base a well-founded conclusion, then only TOR3 will be assessed. The WG will present its conclusion to the EC before proceeding with all TORs or only TOR3.

Member states have been contacted to provide information available on mortality during the last 5 years. Responses have already been received from several MS and additional data is expected to arrive before the proposed September WG meeting. Various protocols for both passive and active monitoring of oyster mortality are in place in some MS. Furthermore, several controlled field or experimental studies on mortality factors have been published over the last 5 years. Once all of the data available has been collected, they will be compiled and forwarded to the WG for consideration.

TOR1:

It was proposed to initially prepare an overview of OsHV-1 strains, grouped according to the current definition OsHV-1 μ var. In particular, the global evolution of strains since 2008 should be considered.

Published scientific evidence will be scanned by an extensive literature search and data will be extracted into evidence tables. In addition, reports on field mortality will be included when they contain specific data on OsHV-1. When evaluating the significance of OsHV-1 in mortality events it should be kept in mind that the currently applied PCR methods may not always have sufficient sensitivity to correctly determine absence of the virus.

TOR2:

V. aesturianus has been isolated with increasing frequency from mortality events since 2012 in France. *V. splendidus* has been isolated regularly from several mollusc species with or without mortality events.

Published scientific evidence for *Vibrio aesturianus* will be scanned by an extensive literature search and data will be extracted into evidence tables. In addition, reports on field mortality will be included when they contain specific data on *Vibrio aesturianus*.

TOR3:

Current practices of immersion of bivalves may occur at other points in the production chain than just in depuration plants. The WG concluded that a review of current practices is needed to identify all critical points where pathogens may be released into the surrounding waters prior to a specific assessment of the effectiveness of depuration water treatment against the specified pathogens.

Normal practices in depuration plants should be described and it should be defined where the critical points are in relation to spread of pathogens. This will depend on the system in place, i.e. whether flow through or recirculating and other aspects of movements and immersion applied. It was mentioned that most purification plants do not apply effluent water treatment. For those who do apply such treatment, the purpose, method of inactivation and validation should be described.

It is anticipated that only limited scientific information is available about the effectiveness of water treatment methods against OsHV-1 and *V. Aesturianus*. and that the evidence would be available to the working group already or can be obtained via a simple information request. It may be necessary to include evidence from similar organisms, e.g. other enveloped ds DNA viruses and *Vibrio* spp. The WG therefore concluded that there was not a need for an outsourced systematic review of scientific literature.

The French food safety agency (ANSES) has a WG on water treatment in relation to protection of human health (incoming water). It should be checked if this information is relevant for this WG. The FP7 Bivalife project included a section on effectiveness of UV treatment. It may also be relevant to consider evidence from ballast water treatment.

6. Next meeting

If needed, the next working group meeting will be held on September 4 in Parma.

Action points

Task	who	by
Compile Member State information and circulate to WG	Per Have	July 11 Comments from WG by July 18
Describe normal practices in depuration plants and highlight where the critical points are in relation to spread of pathogens	Ron Lee	July 11

AGENDA

- Welcome and presentation of Working Group
- Presentation of the mandate and terms of reference
- Assessment of scientific evidence for increased mortality
 - Define criteria for mortality
 - Scientific evidence
 - Presentation of information provided by MS
 - Decision on evidence required to conclude on increased mortality
- Discussion on approach to TOR1: description of role of OsHV-1 in mortality
 - Assign writing task
- Discussion on approach to TOR2: description of role of Vibrio spp. in mortality
 - Assign writing task
- Discussion on approach to TOR3: description of effectiveness of water treatment methods
 - Scope of systematic review
- Actions to take
- Next meeting dates