

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Working Group on stunning of rabbits
Web-conference, 07 05 2013
(Agreed on 14 05 2013)

Participants

- **Working Group Experts:**
 - Mohan Raj, Antonio Velarde
- **EFSA:**
 - AHAW Unit: Andrea Gervelmeyer

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Andrea Gervelmeyer welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Howard Browman.

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 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 topics for discussion ([EFSA-Q-2013-00236](#))

The discussions focussed on the criteria section, the assessment section and conclusions and recommendations of the draft opinion.

Topics were identified that required modifications in the draft opinion.

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

- **Tasks and deadlines**

Tasks were assigned and deadlines were agreed. The draft opinion will be discussed at the AHAW Panel plenary meeting on 21-22 May 2013.

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Working Group on stunning of rabbits
Parma, 23 04 2013
(Agreed on 03 05 2013)

Participants

- **Working Group Experts:**
 - Howard Browman, Mohan Raj, Antonio Velarde
- **Hearing Experts :**
 - Bert Lambooi, Michael Marahrens, Martin von Wenzlawowicz (via web conference), Annett O'Connor (via web conference)
- **EFSA:**
 - AHAW Unit: Ana Afonso, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Frank Verdonck

5. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

6. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

7. 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 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.

8. Scientific topics for discussion ([EFSA-Q-2013-00236](#))

4.1. Discussion with stunning experts

The following topics were discussed and agreed:

- Parameters and components to be provided when applying a stunning method based on high CO₂ concentrations

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

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

- The criteria to assess the onset of unconsciousness and insensibility : EEG characteristics and indicators that can be used under slaughterhouse conditions
- The criteria to assess the absence of distress related to pain until the onset of unconsciousness and insensibility: different response types and groups of animal based measures
- The criteria to assess the duration of unconsciousness and insensibility : EEG characteristics and indicators that can be used under slaughterhouse conditions

4.2. Discussion with study quality assessment experts

It was discussed and agreed that :

- Studies on alternative stunning methods should analyse as null hypothesis the equivalence to the requirements prescribed in Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009
- Intervention/experimental units should be described and true replication is required.
- Biases affecting internal validity, confounding, information and selection bias should be assessed in this opinion.
- A reference document for statistical analysis was provided.
- It is recommended that data are made available at individual animal level, at least in studies performed in a controlled environment.

4.3. Discussion with WG

Consequences of discussions with hearing experts for the draft opinion

Topics were identified that required modifications in the draft opinion or which needed further discussion within the WG and with AHAW panel.

Tasks and deadlines

Tasks were assigned and deadlines were agreed.

9. Next meetings

07 05 2013 (web conference)

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on stunning of rabbits
WEB-conference, 17 04 2013
(Agreed on 22 04 2013)

Participants

- **Working Group Experts:**
 - Howard Browman, Mohan Raj

- **EFSA:**
 - AHAW Unit: Ana Afonso, Frank Verdonck

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 Processes⁵ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy regarding Declarations of Interests⁶, 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. Discussion of the draft opinion document ([EFSA-Q-2013-00236](#))

Introduction :

- Only some changes in wording were proposed and accepted.

Approach :

- Only some changes in wording were proposed and accepted.

⁵ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

Reporting assessment :

- A checklist that could be applied to studies on stunning methods should be generated, taking into account the specificities related to the design of randomized control trials or observational studies. However, this cannot not be done within the time frame of this mandate. As preparatory work before generating such a checklist, all of the parameters from the checklist of the REFLECT and the STROBE statements are reviewed and relevant parameters for studies on alternative stunning methods are collated.

Eligibility criteria :

- The EEG patterns indicating unconsciousness and insensibility following stunning by high carbon dioxide concentrations were discussed.
- The various animal-based measures to detect pain induced by the stunning method upon the onset of unconsciousness/insensibility should be examined independently from each other and in all animals of the study population.
- The signs of recovery of consciousness after carbon dioxide stunning were discussed.

Quality assessment :

- It was agreed to focus in the current mandate on detection of potential types of bias in relation to internal validity.

5. Any Other Business

The list of hearing experts participating to the next meeting was provided to the working group.

6. Next meetings

23 April 2013 (physical meeting, Parma)

Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare
Minutes of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on stunning of rabbits
WEB-conference, 15 03 2013
(Agreed on 20 03 2013)

Participants

- **Working Group Experts:**
 - Howard Browman, Mohan Raj

- **EFSA:**
 - AHAW Unit: Andrea Gervelmeyer, Frank Verdonck

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 Processes⁷ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy regarding Declarations of Interests⁸, 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. Scientific topic for discussion

4.4. Discussion of the methodological approach ([EFSA-Q-2013-00236](#))

Introduction :

- The study assessment will only be done on the submitted document.
- It has to be mentioned in the opinion that CO₂ stunning is not foreseen in the EU legislation.

⁷ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

Approach :

- The submitted study will be assessed on reporting quality and study quality. In both sections, criteria will first be set as basis for the assessment and then applied to the submitted study.
- The quality assessment will be performed in two steps, first assessing against minimum quality criteria, and, if these are fulfilled, against additional criteria.
- The minimum criteria include three items related to the outcome of the stunning method ((1) immediate onset of unconsciousness OR (2) absence of pain until the onset of unconsciousness AND (3) duration of unconsciousness) and the key parameters of the intervention required to repeat the study.
- The additional quality criteria include an assessment of different types of bias, including aspects of internal and external validity.

Reporting assessment :

- This section was not discussed during the meeting. The WG members will review the first draft after the meeting.

Quality assessment :

- The description of EEG as the gold standard to ascertaining the success of a stun has to be more concise.
- Signs of recognition of a successful stunning with gas mixtures were discussed.
- The EFSA opinion on aspects of the biology and welfare of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes (2005) has to be consulted in regard to measuring pain.
- Signs of recovery of consciousness should be stratified per stunning method as the sequence of return of reflexes and behavioural signs differs depending on the stunning methods.
- The legal key parameters of the intervention will be listed and provided with explanation on how this information should be provided.

5. Any Other Business

5.1. Discussion of the roadmap

The roadmap was discussed and agreed.

5.2. Tasks and deadline

Tasks and deadlines were agreed.

6. Next meetings

17 April 2013 (web-conference)

22-23 April 2013 (physical meeting, Parma)