

Date: 26.06.2015

Status: draft v02

Venue: Hotel Holiday Inn Westside – Riedbachstrasse 96, Bern

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**Present:** Rod Ainsworth (UK), Janis Altenburgs (Latvia, co-chair), Frank Andriessen (FVO), Luca Battistini (CION), Michael Beer (Switzerland, chair), Kari Bryhni (Norway), Ana Canals (Spain), Vit Obenrauch (Czech Republic), Herman Diricks (Belgium), Ray Ellard (Ireland), Annelise Fenger (Denmark), Stéphanie Flauto (France), Carmen Garau (CION), Pedro Gaspar (Portugal), Andreas Hensel (Germany), Karin Hulliger (Switzerland), Ákos Józwiak (Hungary), Olev Kalda (Estonia), Milagros Nieto (Spain), Wim Ooms (Netherlands, HoA Secretariat), Stig Orustfjord (Sweden), Marek Posobkiewicz (Poland), Leena Räsänen (Finland), Giuseppe Ruocco (Italy), Camille Strottner (Luxembourg), Helmut Tschiersky (Germany), Pirjo Vastamäki (Finland), Freek van Zoeren (Netherlands).

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## Welcome and Opening remarks

Welcome, opening and a few housekeeping rules by chair Michael Beer and co-chair Janis Altenburgs.

A minor change in the agenda after lunch is announced: The discussion on the HoA website will be right after lunch, followed by a progress report of the Working Group Food and Feed Incidents. This allows Ana Canals to attend the website discussion and present the WG progress report before she has to leave for the airport.

## Introduction of Participants

A brief tour de table to allow everybody to introduce themselves.

## Minutes of meeting in Venice, 26.09.2014; action points

Wim Ooms asks if there are any additional last comments on the draft minutes of last meeting. A few typos will be corrected including one text adjustment provided by Kari Bryhni, after which the minutes are to be regarded as final.

## Update on progress of FSA (UK) *Campylobacter* campaign

Rod Ainsworth provides an update:

*Campylobacter* is the #1 priority in food safety in the UK, with contamination of fresh poultry the single highest contributor to human campylobacteriosis. Despite this knowledge, the efforts to reduce this food safety risk had made little difference. FSA started thinking together with FBOs on how a real change could be achieved. And the new approach seems to deliver results, and it illustrates how Competent Authorities can find different ways to achieve relevant outcome – less human disease.

The initial idea was to make the major food retailers (MFR) more concerned with *Campylobacter*. And FSA started to sample fresh poultry sold in the businesses. The MFR were not very happy with this. It became necessary to gain the support of politicians for the FSA approach. FSA published the sample results. The outcome so far: they see significant improvement (reduction of campylobacter contamination of fresh poultry meat) due to pressure of MFR on producers, and without enforcement action on 'positive' cases.

In summary, FSA achieved the results by: (1) publishing the results – and not with legislative measures; (2) other types of communication to create awareness (e.g. not washing fresh poultry in the kitchen, trying to influence celebrity chefs (not very successful so far)); and (3) seeking technical improvements, like other ways of chilling.

### Discussion outcome:

- FSA tries to influence the national curriculum, teaching on basic principles and rules on kitchen hygiene, as part of the consumer education process;
- FSA focussed on MFRs who were told that they were responsible and should solve the problem, which required sometimes major alterations at producer facilities/slaughterhouses;

Date: 26.06.2015

Status: draft v02

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- FSA supports the introduction of a EU wide standard, such as microbiological criteria and process hygiene criteria;
- In Switzerland (8000 registered campy cases/year) they started a public consultation on the use of process hygiene criteria; Industry is ok with this, and it will be introduced in Swiss legislation next year. Michael Beer offers to circulate the results of the Swiss project. Progress to be reported next year.
- Due to lack of legislation the FVO just looks at who is doing what and what is achieved;
- In Hungary they started a campy project this year to find out if there are interventions that could be cost-effective (and yes, there could be some) – more information available with Ákos Józwiak;
- Carmen Garau offers (if there's interest and relevance) that CION could present an update of the views on *Campylobacter* of CION;
- FSA took samples at the 6 MFRs that 'feed' the vast majority of UK consumers;
- So far the FSA succeeded in keeping the pressure where it should be: on the FBOs and MFRs, avoiding attacks on FSA;
- FSA is awaiting data to show whether its communications are influencing consumer behaviour; and whether there's a reduction of the campy diseases level;
- Such an approach, as FSA implemented, looks simple but it isn't; it could even be regarded as courageous because it addresses other bodies (FBOs, MFRs and the consumers) who should feel more responsible and not blame the authorities when things go wrong.

Action point: *Campylobacter* Risk Management to be scheduled for the agenda of next meeting in Luxembourg (Camille Strottner, Wim Ooms)

Action point: Circulate results of recent Swiss *Campylobacter* project (Michael Beer)

Action point: Carmen Garau offers on behalf of CION that CION could give an update of the views of CION regarding *Campylobacter* as a food safety risk; if relevant and fits into the agenda of next meeting.

## REFIT, fitness check General Food Law – Regulation 178/2002

Carmen Garau presents the process and current state of affairs of the fitness check (presentation available):

REFITs (or fitness checks) are helping to achieve to become smarter, better and leaner (less regulation). To answer the question if the regulation is fit-for-purpose there are several criteria taken into account – effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, EU added value and coherence. So, the consistency with other EU policy goals is looked at as well. Two parts of the work are outsourced, (1) the general part (articles 1-21) and (2) the crisis/emergency management including RASFF. Instruments used: surveys (CAs and SMEs), interviews, cases studies. A public consultation will be launched last trimester of 2015, to be finalised first trimester 2016. Although there was an opportunity for MSs to do case studies themselves, none was provided.

Initial findings: Overall satisfaction with no major problems with the general principles of the GFL. Just a few differences between MSs regarding implementation of some principles; e.g. divergent practices with transparency and traceability.

### Discussion outcome:

- The HoA group is considered very relevant in the process, because they have the broadest perspective on all that is ongoing;
- It is clear that RASFF function should be addressed as well (upgraded?), considering the possible interaction with other IT tools under development, such as the Administrative Assistance system and IMSOC; important not to duplicate activities;
- EFSA's work is not part of the REFIT total package but an update of the 2012 evaluation will be performed;

Date: 26.06.2015

Status: draft v02

Venue: Hotel Holiday Inn Westside – Riedbachstrasse 96, Bern

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- It is too early to say whether the general principles will be revisited and revised (leading to regulatory changes).

## State of affairs Official Control Regulation

Carmen Garau provides an update (presentation available):

Carmen Garau starts with the announcement that the Luxembourg presidency is actively engaging in the progress, and already 2 additional Attache meetings are scheduled for beginning of July, and a first Coreper meeting on 15 July (meanwhile changed to 22/7 [Wim Ooms]). A mandate is expected early September, and a trilog discussion is expected in September. The responsible committee of the European Parliament is COMENVI, with rapporteur MEP Karen Kadenbach (S&D – AUT).

The main outstanding issues are (1) role of the official veterinarian, and (2) the extension of the mandatory fees. With both of the most recent texts on these matters the CION is “not happy”. Regarding the official vets it means that there is absolutely less flexibility, and vets need to be present to perform checks that not necessarily requires their competence, or for which they are not trained for as a vet (document checks). Current text on mandatory fees does not lead to a level playing field in EU in the eyes of CION.

Another topic Carmen Garau addresses was the failure of a new hygiene proposal to materialise during the reviewing process of the hygiene package. The Food Business Operator registration procedures was incorporated in the OC Regulation under the Latvian presidency, but to derogate it when it appeared to high a burden. This means that again FBOs could escape the attention of CAs and can operate under the radar. A situation we do not wish for.

### Discussion outcome:

- The CION's point of view is shared by several members around the table, with specific focus on the importance of flexibility concerning using the right people for the right job – meaning those who have the relevant competences (by proper training) should do the job.
- Frank Andriessen of FVO shares the observation that having employed official veterinarians within this domain since 1964 (Directive 64/433/EC) did not lead to better hygiene in slaughterhouses; while at the same time we should practice what we preach also in what we demand from third countries – this could lead to possible confrontations.
- The original text from CION already provides the opportunity/flexibility for some countries when they export meat and meat products to third countries that require an official veterinarian to be present.

## Overview recent developments at FVO of interest to the HoA

Frank Andriessen presents FVO developments:

The audit programmes of the FVO have developed into work programmes that have a broader perspective than just audits. The objective is to check if regulation is delivering what it should, use a more integrated approach and develop other tools than ‘old school’ audit reports. Besides addressing new topics such as organic farming, medical devices and geographical origin of products, the FVO focuses on overview reports. These reports provide a kind of benchmark, but should help to improve regulation as well. It fits into the ‘better regulation’ objective of the Juncker agenda. The work programme is currently being presented in Grange by the FVO to the CVOs and the HoA representatives. Frank Andriessen stresses that feedback on the FVO work programme by the HoA group is welcomed and helpful to improve its effectiveness. The same counts for feedback on audits that have been conducted. In addition he says it would be helpful to be upfront with problems MSs have with legislation and not wait until audits prove that the MSs have a problem.

### Discussion outcome:

- To be honest, upfront and open about your problems (with some regulation) is not something that will be easily achieved; this requires a trustworthy environment; a better integration of FVO and HoA meetings will be helpful here;
- There's a plea for transparency from the FVO on their own guidelines, for instance make them publicly available;
- It is clear that the FVO/CION wants better insight on the consequences of implementation of new regulation. Impact assessments are one thing, but HoAs being early with signalling

Date: 26.06.2015

Status: draft v02

Venue: Hotel Holiday Inn Westside – Riedbachstrasse 96, Bern

---

their problems is really important. Because it's a fact that things can turn out very differently, when new regulation is implemented, from what is intended to achieve.

## Terms of Reference for the FLEP

Ray Ellard guides us through the adjusted ToR:

After a brief introduction and apologies by Ray Ellard for the late arrival of the document the discussion focuses on the following:

- The necessity to state the difference between FLEP and HoA, and how they relate to each other;
- One of the questions was: Can we live without FLEP?, which by the way was answered by the questioner himself: When the FLEP exploit their practical competencies and experiences they are a group that are very well suited for supporting the HoA group;
- With HoA focusing on strategic managerial issues and tasking the FLEP;
- Nevertheless it was suggested that FLEP needs some independency for self-tasking as well;
- Most of this is more or less part of the revised draft ToR of FLEP; therefore it is decided that all send their comments on the revised ToR asap.

Action point: Send comments/suggestions on the FLEP ToR to the Secretariat by 31 August. HoA Secretariat will forward all received comments to Ray Ellard. (All, Wim Ooms)

Action point: Ray Ellard will update the FLEP ToR, to be shared for any last thoughts during next meeting, 29 September. (Ray Ellard)

Action point: Ray Ellard will send the List of FLEP Contact Points to Secretariat asap; Secretariat will circulate this list. (Ray Ellard, Wim Ooms)

## Lunch

### Terms of Reference for a WG on a Unified Strategy for the use of self-monitoring data – current status

Andreas Hensel shares his ideas:

Due to time constraints before lunch this discussion was postponed until directly after lunch.

Andreas Hensel explains why he thinks that the use of data generated by FBOs should be considered by CAs to be incorporated in their food safety assessment of these FBOs. Besides the advantages (quality of assessments increase with an increase of available data), he does see several constraints that should be tackled. Many methodologies are being used for detecting the same substance, at the moment; this includes not only the different analytical tests, but various sampling plans as well. Setting standards would absolutely increase the usefulness of FBO lab data, but this requires a strategic high level decision together with industry. The whole process will take 4-5 year, certainly.

Discussion outcome:

- There is a lot of support for the idea and further development in a working group; it is even regarded by some as inevitable because of ongoing governmental budget cuts;
- It will a complex process, which requires a step by step approach; working towards similar testing methodologies, harmonisation of private and public activities before even considering to exploit any results; In other words careful strategic planning is necessary;
- But in the animal health sector it already has been done, and it works!
- Sweden and UK already say they want to be involved in the working group.

Date: 26.06.2015

Status: draft v02

Venue: Hotel Holiday Inn Westside – Riedbachstrasse 96, Bern

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Action point: Terms of Reference to be drafted and presented/discussed during next meeting in Luxembourg, 29 September; It should start with a strategic working group. (Andreas Hensel)

Action point: Volunteers for WG will make themselves known to Andreas Hensel and the Secretariat (All)

## HoA website

Rod Ainsworth led the discussion on website developments:

He explained that the website should be regarded as an instrument for HoA members to exchange views and work together on a more regular basis than just the two meetings per year. In addition, a public part on the website can be used to create exposure for what the HoA group is doing and want to achieve, but this is secondary. A list of requirements has been drafted by a small voluntary group of the HoA, which has been circulated beforehand.

### Discussion outcome:

- One of the main issues is how and where we could/should host the website; Would this be possible in DG SANTE environment?;
- Is it acceptable for the CION that non-EU members are part of the HoA, regarding the decision either to host the website or financially support the development and/or maintenance?;
- Should the HoA group be totally independent of the CION and do not want CION web-extensions?; and other similar questions were posed;
- It was agreed that we should focus on a collaborative online platform first, and postpone further ideas on public exposure;
- First action now should be to look into possibilities, barriers and practicalities of what the CION could offer for the HoA online platform development; (meeting scheduled on 15 July in Brussel [Wim Ooms])

Action point: Develop detailed descriptions of the two options discussed: [a] website hosted by CION and [b] website independent from CION environment but financially supported by CION; the small WG will meet in Brussels around mid-July and will invite IT-experts of the CION - names to be provided by Carmen Garau. (Meeting to be organised by Herman Diricks)

## Progress of the active Working Groups

### ***WG – Food and Feed Incidents***

Ana Canals present where the outcome of the WG has been used for and possible progress: The report, the guidelines with its recommendations, has been addressed during the CION expert group meeting in November last year. It was positively received, and the recommendations in the HoA working group report were appreciated, such as the problematic use of the word crisis, regular update of plans and the need for cross-border exercises. Other contributions by using the HoA WG outcome are (a) in the GFL fitness check regarding the activities in the emergency management framework, incl RASFF, and (b) in the EFSA developments on specific communication guidelines during food/feed emergency situations. Another issue that is acknowledged is the need for a specific website/platform for exchange of information during emergencies.

### Discussion outcome:

- It is recognised that we need to trial the proposed guidelines, but not by an expensive large scale many-MSs simulation exercise;
- Germany as well as Portugal want to be involved in such a small scale simulation exercise;

Date: 26.06.2015

Status: draft v02

Venue: Hotel Holiday Inn Westside – Riedbachstrasse 96, Bern

---

Action point: Volunteers for taking part in the foreseen small scale incident simulation exercise make themselves known to Ana Canals and the Secretariat. (All)

### **WG - The value of private assurance schemes for food safety**

Freek van Zoeren presents briefly current state of affairs:

He gives an overview of the process and results up till now. For instance about the differences between current and envisaged use of private assurance schemes as part of governmental supervision in different European countries. This was the outcome of a questionnaire circulated amongst the HoA members. Freek van Zoeren announces that a more extensive presentation, including inter alia the position paper, will be given at the Luxembourg meeting. Furthermore, he indicates that not all the deliverables will be ready by September, and that a request for an extension of the mandate is expected.

### **WG – Transparency of Official Controls**

Leena Räsänen presents current state of affairs, including the ToR:

She explains what has been done and achieved so far with the questionnaire to inventory existing rating systems currently used in HoA member countries to classify their FBOs. It is obvious that further clarification is needed and this will be achieved by a 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire, of which the results will be discussed in the WG in October this year. Things that need further clarification are for instance (a) is national regulation laying down rules for rating systems and the symbols used for communicating the FBO ratings; (b) are there any implications for inspection frequencies and control measures; (c) what is the minimum level of information to make publicly available. The final deliverable is expected to be ready in 2016 and will be a guidance document about general principles for rating systems of FBOs and the communication thereof.

Action point: Freek van Zoeren to send details of WG member representing Netherlands to Leena Räsänen. (Wim Ooms)

### **WG – Influencing Behaviour**

Herman Diricks introduces the first ideas for this WG, including the ToR:

As the working group has just started he highlights what the WG intends to do. One of the ideas is to develop a toolkit of how FBO behaviour can be best influenced. For instance can the behaviour change when support is provided by general information on the CA website? Or will dedicated information provided by professionals be more effective; better to educate/train than to penalise? And which FBOs are influenced the best via which method is another question to be addressed. It is intended to develop criteria for classification of FBOs to support the divergence of approaches to apply. Because some entrepreneurs are just ignorant, while others are unwilling. As they are also thinking of how to measure the effect of the influencing tactics, interaction with the working group Measuring Outcome, is foreseen.

#### Discussion outcome:

- The ideas of how to measure the effect is considered very ambitious, and it is suggested that this will be a worthwhile second step, but focusing on building an evidence base of the toolkit instruments may be an easier first approach;
- In a general remark it is mentioned that following-up on the first steps is essential to create credibility.

Action point: Delegates who are interested to join the WG will make themselves known to Wim Ooms. (All)

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## **AOB**

### **FoodChain-Lab workshop**

Late autumn 2015 a workshop will be conducted on how to use the FoodChain-Lab software that has been developed by BfR – Germany. Although it originally coincided with the next HoA meeting, it has been decided to shift to a later date. The HoA group can delegate relevant experts to attend the workshop by the end of September at the Luxembourg meeting

Action point: More detailed information on the workshop to be provided to the Secretariat, who will circulate the information. (Andreas Hensel)

Action point: Delegates who are interested to take part in the workshop send contact details to the Secretariat. (All)

### **Black market horse meat slaughterhouse closed in Sweden**

Stig Orustfjord: Recently a slaughterhouse has been closed in Sweden because of illegal slaughter of horses. Besides the closure much effort has been taken to trace and recall the meat.

### **Opportunity for additional HoA meeting**

Camille Strottner asks the HoA group if they are interested in inviting their national “foodstuff attachés” from their permanent representation in Brussels and the Secretary General of the Council of the European Union to the meeting of September 2015 in LU. This could lead to an informal meeting of the HoA group which should be organised on invitation by the Secretary General of the Council of the European Union. An alternative would be to organise a first additional meeting for the HoA group with the SG of the EU Council during the Luxembourg presidency (eventually in Norway), and when continued during each consecutive presidency it would (a) increase the number of HoA meetings and collaboration opportunities, and (b) would possibly enhance the influence of the HoA group.

### **International Conference, Supervision in an Europe without frontiers/borders**

Freek van Zoeren: During the Dutch presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Inspection Council in the Netherlands will organise an international conference that will look at the challenges of international collaboration of Inspectorates. The Dutch Inspection Council is a collaboration of fourteen central government inspectorates together with Customs and Excise. The conference’s working title is Supervision in an Europe without borders. There will be plenary sessions and workshop session, of which one will address e-commerce. All HoA members will be invited, together with Heads of Inspectorates working in other domains. Date and place: 23 February 2016, Amsterdam.

## **Summary of new Action Points**

Wim Ooms summarises the new action points that have been decided upon during this meeting, see listing on next page.

## **Dates of next meetings**

### **Luxembourg, 29 September 2015:**

The HoA meeting will be back to back with a conference on food contact materials on 30 Sept; invitation will be sent shortly; registration for the conference should be done via the invitation for the HoA meeting (ticking additional box); DO NOT register separately for the conference; Registration requires a photo upload; there will be a social programme on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Date: 26.06.2015

Status: draft v02

Venue: Hotel Holiday Inn Westside – Riedbachstrasse 96, Bern

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***Netherlands, 2 and 3 May 2016:***

The meeting will be organised in Amsterdam; On 2 may the CVOs and COPHs will also convene; In the morning of the second day a seminar will be organised, together with CVOs and COPHs, focussed on the new Regulation on Official Controls; the seminar programme will involve the CION, and depends on the current state of affairs; there will be a social programme on the evening of 2 May.

***Closure of meeting***

Around 15.30 hrs Michael Beer thanks everybody for their contribution and closes the meeting.

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## List of action points

##*	Action	Who	When
1	Develop detailed descriptions of the two options discussed: [a] website hosted by CION and [b] website independent from CION environment but financially supported by CION	Herman Diricks Wim Ooms	29 September 2015
4	Prepare presentation about developments of EFSA in area of data collection, reporting and data access	Greece	In preparation of a next meeting
11	Seek and provide additional expertise for the Food Fraud Network to ensure a multidisciplinary approach when situations appear that require such expertise [detail with Carmen Garau]	All HoA delegates	Q1 2015
12a	draft Terms of Reference for <b>WG Unified Strategy for the use of self-monitoring data</b> , use of industry laboratory data in governmental food safety controls; start with strategic WG	Andreas Hensel (Germany)	29 Sept 2015
12b	Volunteers for <b>WG Unified Strategy for the use of self-monitoring data</b> will make themselves known to Andreas Hensel and the Secretariat	All	September 2015
13	draft Terms of Reference for <b>WG Risk based programming</b>	Austria and Switzerland	Next meeting, 2015
15	draft Terms of Reference for <b>WG Measuring outcome</b>	Annelise Fenger (Denmark)	Next meeting, 2015
18a	<i>Campylobacter</i> Risk Management to be scheduled for the agenda of next meeting in Luxembourg	Camille Strottner, Wim Ooms	29 September 2015
18b	Circulate results of recent Swiss <i>Campylobacter</i> project	Michael Beer	September 2015
18c	CION could give an update of the views of CION regarding <i>Campylobacter</i> as a food safety risk, if relevant	Carmen Garau	29 September 2015
19a	Send comments/suggestions on the FLEP ToR to the Secretariat. HoA Secretariat will forward all received comments to Ray Ellard.	All, Wim Ooms	31 August 2015
19b	Update the FLEP ToR, to be shared for any last thoughts during next meeting, 29 September	Ray Ellard	29 September 2015
19c	Send the List of FLEP Contact Points to Secretariat asap; Secretariat will circulate this list. (Ray Ellard, Wim Ooms)	Ray Ellard Wim Ooms	August 2015
20	Volunteers for taking part in the foreseen small scale incident simulation exercise make themselves known to Ana Canals and the Secretariat.	All	September 2015
21	Send details of <b>WG Transparency of Official Controls</b> member representing Netherlands to Leena Räsänen.	Freek van Zoeren Wim Ooms	August 2015
22	Delegates who are interested to join the <b>WG Influencing Behaviour</b> will make themselves known to the Secretariat	All	September 2015
23	More detailed information on the workshop FoodChain Lab-software (autumn 2015) to be provided to the Secretariat, who will circulate the information	Andreas Hensel	August 2015
24	Delegates who are interested to take part in the workshop FoodChain Lab-software send contact details to the Secretariat	All	29 September 2015

## Long term actions

##*	Action	Who	When
1	Update list of participants of HoA meeting,	HoA Secretariat	Continuously
2	Assess interest in re-activating working group on benchmarking?	Organizer of meeting in 2016	First meeting of 2016

\* Action point numbering since September 2014 – Venice meeting