

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Working Group 1 - Finfish meeting

24 Oct 2023 (9:30-12:55)

On-site meeting at Stanhope Hotel Brussels - Interpretation available in EN – ES – IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

WG1 MEMBERS

Andrea Fabris (API, Chair)	Douglas Waley (Eurogroup for Animals)
Phil Brooke (CIWF, Vice-Chair)	James Hinchcliffe (EFFOP)
	Catherine Pons (FEAP)
Giulia Malerbi (Aquatic Life institute)	Javier Ojeda (FEAP)
Marine Levadoux (CIPA)	Ole Christensen (FEFAC)
Florian Guillou (CNPMEM)	Alain Schonbrodt (FVE)
Bernhard Feneis (COGECA)	Yannis Pelekanakis (HAPO)
Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA)	Teresa Morrissey (IFA)
Brian Thomsen (Danish Aquaculture)	Anna Pyć (Polish Trout Breeders Association)
David Bassett (EATIP)	Catalin Platon (ROMFISH)
Ana Granados (EFFAB)	Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK)
Gaiagla Kaya (EFFAB)	Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming)
Anne Mette Baek Jespersen (EFFOP)	

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Invited: Fiona Geogheghan (DG SANTE), Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE), Dries Minne (DG SANTE), Prof. Michalis Pavlidis (University of Crete), Sigbjorn Lien (Norwegian university of Life Sciences – NMBU).

Secretariat: Cécile Fouquet (AAC Secretariat), Charlotte Musquar (AAC Secretariat), Hélène Hajek (AAC Secretariat).

Observers: João Rito (BlueBio Alliance), Christian Kirchmayer (Fischzucht Thorhof), Stefanos Ntimas (Posidonia Aquaculture LLC), Nuno Januário de Figueiredo Leite (SEAentia), Sabina Atodiresei (SC Rompescares S.R.L.), Nistor George (SC Piscicola SA), Léo-Paul Mayé (Young Aquaculture), David Märkl-Bilger (Water-proved GmbH).



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MEETING MINUTES

Welcome words by the Chair

Andrea Fabris (Chair) welcomed the present participants.

1. Adoption of the agenda and approval of the Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved. The agenda was approved with an additional update on Point VI (ii) on the European Fish Welfare Centre by Prof. Pavlidis.

2. Fish Health

i. Animal Health Law

- Update by Fiona Geogheghan (DG SANTE)

Fiona Geogheghan (DG SANTE) updated¹ the AAC about two main topics:

- Fish and shellfish diseases (different categories & eradication programmes)
- Movements of aquatic life in the EU

¹ Available on the AAC members' Intranet.



- Exchange of views with the Working Group members.

The presentation was followed by an exchange of views with the WG1 members. **Andrea Fabris (Chair)** underlined the low use of category 3 (active surveillance) in disease listed in category C for aquatic animals. There is an issue of harmonisation at the MS level on this point. The members underlined some problems on the harmonisation especially on the matter of defining a disease-free status and in the movement of live aquatic animals between farms and towards slaughterhouses.

Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA) suggested that during the trainings to educate vets on fish health, local farmers representatives shall be invited.

Alain Schonbrodt (FVE) underlined the need to accelerate the programmes as the situation is worsening fast.

The WG will continue to work on the topic.

ii. EU Regulation 2019/06 on veterinary medicine products on Aquaculture

- Update from **Dries Minne (DG SANTE)** and **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)**²

Dries Minne (DG SANTE) and **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)** updated the FG on the Delegated Act (DA) related to the effective and safe use of veterinary medicinal products prescribed for oral administration. He clarified the fact that the expert group consultation on the draft DA was coming to an end. Members can follow the progress of this process here³.

- Exchange of views with the Working Group members

Andrea Fabris (WG1 Chair) informed that the AAC will prepare a list of candidates of substances related to Article 114.3. Five “good” candidates of substances (type of use, specie, pathology, dosages and some bibliography) have already been identified. He added that the FG is currently working on these and that there was currently an open consultation regarding this list of VMPs authorized for terrestrial animals to be used under the “cascade principle”.

The Chair will circulate this list again and suggested that the FG should work on this very fast.

iii. Health management of farmed fish

- Update by **Andrea Fabris (WG1 Chair)**

Andrea Fabris (Chair) updated the members on the final adoption stage of the Recommendation on this matter. The team of experts that had been contracted has not completed their work. Another team could be requested for this work, the Focus Group will have to reflect on that.

² <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2.2.-Dries-Minne-presentation-AAC-final-1.pdf>

³ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-health/vet-meds-med-feed/implementation_en



3. Fish Feed

- Presentation on new and sustainable marine raw materials by **Ole Christensen (FEFAC)**, on the possible potential in zooplanktonic / krill utilisation for fish feed by Focus Group leader.

Ole Christensen (FEFAC) gave a presentation⁴ on new and sustainable marine raw materials.

- Exchange of views with the WG Members and next steps

The WG members welcomed this presentation with great interest.

Andrea Fabris (Chair) underlined the need to know how the WG wanted to work and the timeline for this recommendation.

The Chair encouraged any interested members to join the Focus Group on fish feed.

4. Octopus Farming

- Update by **Paul Denekamp (Vissenbesherming)**

The last Focus Group meeting took place in June to exchange views on the meeting with the octopus farm representatives.

The FG will need to plan the next steps, meet and keep working on the topic in the meantime.

5. Domestication of aquaculture

- Update from **Ana Granados (EFFAB)**

Ana Granados (EFFAB) provided an update on the ongoing work and the previous meetings which were held in July and October 2023. She explained that the Focus Group is working on the basis of a document based on the five levels of domestication and has agreed on this document's structure (objective, background for scientific knowledge, definition of domestication etc).

- Exchange of views with the Working Group members

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) suggested that the young representatives are invited to the next meeting.

Ana Granados (EFFAB) agreed that they will consider the suggestion that the young representatives should be invited to the next meeting and will work further on the document.

6. Fish welfare

- i. [European Parliament report on fish welfare](#)

⁴ <http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/3.-Ole-AAC-alternative-raw-amterials-from-the-sea-20231017.pdf>



- Presentation of PECH Committee report on 'Animal welfare' by **Prof Michalis Pavlidis**

Prof Michalis Pavlidis presented and gave clarifications on the PECH Committee Report on 'Animal welfare', underlining the main objectives, methodology, key findings, and policy recommendations of the Report.

ii. [Fish Welfare Reference Centre](#)

- Presentation on the priorities set by the winning consortium by **Prof. Michalis Pavlidis**

Prof. Michalis Pavlidis also briefly presented the four set of activities (coordination, research, science development, education and training) of his Consortium's Fish Welfare Reference Centre.

- Exchange of views with the Working Group members & next steps

Andrea Fabris (Chair) communicated that the AAC will be preparing a recommendation on the Centre's working priorities by October 2024.

Alain Schonbrodt (FVE) suggested that wild fish welfare should also be considered.

The Fish Welfare FG needs to decide whether to conduct a seminar on this topic and shall be actively working on a Recommendation.

7. Eels

- Update on Focus Group activities and seminar conclusion by **Andrea Fabris (Chair)**

Andrea Fabris (Chairman) reminded that the Working Group has organised a seminar on the future of eel farming in the EU on 3 October.

The conclusion was that more research and activities to restore wild eels' ecosystems are needed. **He mentioned that the FG will meet before January to start drafting a Recommendation.**

8. Finfish Research results: Moving towards Precision breeding in European aquaculture: AQUA-FAANG results & their impact.

- Presentation of the project's results by the Coordinator **Sigbjorn Lien (Norwegian University of Life Sciences – NMBU)**

Sigbjorn Lien (Norwegian University of Life Sciences – NMBU) presented the overall objectives of the AQUA FAANG project (to generate genome-wide functional annotation Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNPs) for the six most important fish species within EU aquaculture, or also improve their resistance to diseases).

He underlined the fact that the EU aquaculture sector was benefiting from genomics-led breeding and that this could improve diseases resistance. He mentioned that the project was coming to an end but that the same methods and technologies could be used for other animals. He also underlined the existence a Euro FAANG research infrastructure.



- Exchange of views with the WG members

Sigbjorn Lien (Norwegian University of Life Sciences – NMBU) gave further clarifications on the risk assessments and reminded that these were advanced tools which were done by breeding companies.

The WG members agreed on the importance of using the AQUAFAANG project's results in their future work.

9. AOB & Conclusions

Andrea Fabris (Chair) thanked the members for their participation and work done.

He reminded that the **next meeting of this Working Group will take place online on the 30.01.24.**

