

# Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Lead Ammunition Group meeting/teleconference – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016

2pm-4pm

## Attendees

Mr John Swift (JS)(Chair)  
Ms Kate Fouracre (KF) (Defra)  
Prof. Rhys Green (RG) (RSPB)  
Prof. Len Levy (LL) (Institute of Environment and Health)  
Dr James Kirkwood (JK) (Universities Federation for Animal Welfare)(retired)  
Dr Debbie Pain (DP) (WWT)  
Mr Gavin Shears (GS) (FSA)  
Mr Mark Willis (MW) (FSA)

## Secretariat

Dr Ruth Cromie (RC) (WWT)

## 1. Welcome and apologies

None.

## 2. Minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016

2.1 There was one comment made on the published minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting/teleconference - addition of a few words under 3.5 in the 5<sup>th</sup> sentence to clarify a point.

## 3 Matters arising

**Action Point 12.2** To request FSA to review their guidance on consumption of game and venison in the light of the LAG risk assessments.

Action carried forward until FSA have considered the LAG report (and see agenda point 17: 3.4 – 3.8).

Covered later in agenda under agenda point 5.

**Action Point 13.3** LL to contact Public Health England to help identify most appropriate contacts (in relation to FSA communication experts). It was felt that this was a task for FSA once the report had been accepted, rather than the LAG, but would be carried forward.

Considered to be a task for FSA if appropriate. Not carried forward.

**Action Point 15.3** Defra/FSA to inform LAG of progress on consideration of LAG report. Carried forward and under agenda point 5.

**Action Point 16.1** LL to inform the LAG of the current CLP and REACH processes involving metallic lead. Carried forward and under agenda point 4.5.

**Action Point 16.2** RC to investigate which of these new pieces of evidence could be posted on the LAG website (due to copyright issues etc.) and it was agreed to post those listed above where copyright permits. On-going and under agenda point 6.2.

**Action Point 17.1** Sarah Hardy (FSA) to ask FSA if they should undertake a formal review of the 'shooting resigners' report'.

GS confirmed that the 'shooting resigners' report' has been looked at internally. There were no plans for a formal review process as it had not been officially presented (unlike the LAG report).

RG noted that the Minister of State, George Eustice MP, at the Westminster Hall debate had described 'conflicting evidence' in the two reports. If there was scientific evidence present in the shooting resigners' report perhaps a Committee on Toxicology review would be appropriate as had been undertaken for the LAG report.

GS confirmed that there is no significant conflict of opinion in relation to the risk from lead that FSA is aware of – indeed there was scientific consensus on the human health risks from lead in food and there was no debate to be had.

**Action Point 17.2** Sarah Hardy to arrange a meeting of LAG members and FSA in relation to current consumption of lead in game meat and current FSA advice. Covered later in agenda under agenda point 5.2.

**Action Point 17.3** Sarah Hardy to enquire about who in HSE and Defra are involved in the REACH processes from a UK perspective.

KF was asked for the Defra contact for the REACH process and she will forward contact details.

**Action Point 18.1** KF to forward contact details of Defra person responsible for REACH processes from UK perspective to LAG.

#### 4. To receive Chairman's report

4.1 The Chair commented on the meeting marking the 6<sup>th</sup> year of LAG's work and thanked the LAG members and, where appropriate, their supporting organisations, for their substantial contributions of work and time dedicated to the LAG process (as illustrated by the substantive risk assessments and mitigation considerations) which had been undertaken gratis without a cost to the taxpayer.

Reflecting on the remit of the LAG, the Chair highlighted the value of bringing together stakeholders, creating a forum for dialogue, and advising Defra and FSA on risks and mitigation measures for both wildlife and human health in relation to exposure to lead ammunition. It had been unfortunate that the shooting stakeholders (bar one) had resigned

following completion of the LAG report with their comments considered and included where appropriate (one had resigned prior to that).

He described the continuing role of the Group. Until such time as the Government has completed its considerations and responded formally to the Group's report, including risk assessments and mitigation analysis, the Group's role is to keep two key questions under dispassionate review: firstly, have the nature and scale of the risks identified in the report changed in the light of any new evidence published since the report and risk assessments were submitted; and secondly, are there grounds for changing the Group's advice on the mitigation options? In his view the new evidence and information received by the Group in the past year tended to confirm and clarify the risks identified as well as the insufficiency of mitigations in place e.g. existing regulations for wetlands and FSA's more general advice to consumers. There had been no evidence or information to suggest that the risks had changed or that vulnerable groups, both human and wildlife, were less at risk than they had been.

4.2 Following from that, and aware that there were a range of stakeholders interested in the outputs of the LAG, there followed a range of options for making these available. As an example, the LAG could continue with its outputs unpublished, or with its outputs given targeted distribution on a need-to-know confidential basis.

As has happened before, there was discussion about the possibility of publishing the risk assessments and the agreed conclusions of the wildlife risks. *If* this was to be done, Defra and FSA would be given due notice of this intention.

Publishing the risk assessments as soon as they were available (2013) was the initial intention of the LAG. However, doing so without the mitigation measures had previously been advised against as they then were out of context and had no risk management options flowing from the stated risks. A previous Defra representative noted that Ministers like to be presented with solutions to problems. There was a frustration that the process was taking so long and a desire for the report to be signed off and published.

It was agreed that the Minister should be asked of his intentions and the probable timeframe for completion of the Government's considerations.

**Action Point 18.2** JS to enquire of the Minister publication intentions and timeframe.

4.3 As reported in the 15<sup>th</sup> LAG meeting agenda point 4.2, the Committee on Toxicology (COT) had been 'broadly content with both the approach taken and the conclusions drawn' in their review of the two human health risk assessments. Seeing their commentary on these would be valuable and the etiquette for responding to COT comments would need to be explored.

4.4 KF was asked if there had been specific comments on the wildlife risk assessments and she confirmed that the report as a whole (including the risk assessments) had been reviewed and would be responded to as such.

There was a general sense that prior to publication, the LAG members would value critical evaluation of the risk assessments. This had been discussed previously and a member of the Defra evidence team had reviewed the wildlife aspects but Defra had chosen not to undergo a formal peer review process.

When asked about any review undertaken by Natural England, KF confirmed that an NE ecotoxicologist had seen the report although no written response was yet available.

4.5 The current REACH call for evidence in relation to use of lead shot in wetlands was discussed.

It was considered that the LAG report was relevant and likely to be of value to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and should be made available to them as part of the current process which calls for evidence of the risks and evidence relating to mitigation measures and stakeholder impacts.

It was suggested that the Minister submit the report to ECHA; KF noted that this may not be appropriate as the Minister is still considering the reports' findings. Alternatively, the LAG might submit the report to ECHA in confidence having given due notice (which has a tight deadline of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016).

It was noted that ECHA/REACH is only one of the growing number of policy setting and delivery agencies that might value having sight of the LAG report.

**Action Point 18.3** JS to consider how to make LAG report available to REACH in the first instance.

## 5. To receive progress reports from FSA and Defra

5.1 The Chair and Profs Len Levy and Ian Newton had met the Minister, Rory Stewart MP, on 22<sup>nd</sup> March to discuss the LAG report. Mr Stewart had not raised any questions about the quality of the science contained within the report.

The Chair reported that he had written subsequently to Mr Stewart and received an appreciative response.

To ensure transparency, ministerial correspondence is ordinarily published on the LAG website hence there was a sense that recent correspondence between the Chair and the Minister should be published. The Chair requested KF to let him know if there was any reason for not doing this.

**Action Point 18.4** Post recent ministerial correspondence on the LAG website.

5.2 The LAG had recently met with the FSA on 25<sup>th</sup> April and had had a constructive meeting with the following actions and matters arising:

**Action Point 18.5** FSA requested to be kept up to date with new research on shot pheasant tomography and publication intentions.

Clarification was sought over whether the NSDS coding for duck and goose could confuse domestic and wild shot game.

It was pointed out that the NSDS questions had not been designed to specifically explore lead in game consumption so the possible classification of some domestic duck/goose as game duck/goose and vice versa might just have to be accepted. It was noted that the Taylor et al. (2014) paper had used these data too.

**Action Point 18.6** LAG to send proposal for refinement of wording of current advice to FSA with aim of reducing misinterpretation.

**Action Point 18.7** FSA would check with the Chair of the COT whether minutes relating to the LAG risk assessments could be shared with the LAG.

**Action Point 18.8** LAG and FSA to continue to communicate.

With respect to food labeling, MW requested that he would deal with any comments or issues and he would identify the appropriate contacts in Defra.

Once comments had been received on the notes from the LAG/FSA meeting, these would be forwarded to Defra.

**Action Point 18.9** RC to forward completed FSA meeting notes to KF.

## 6. LAG website: to review visitor data

6.1 The website was continuing to serve its purpose with a spike of activity in January possibly related to media articles.

6.2 With respect to publications of relevance to the LAG reports' conclusions, recent publications on non-toxic ammunition, human health risks from game consumption in New Zealand and a review of the issue of transition to non-toxic ammunition were discussed.

A list of recent publications would be circulated to the LAG to review and references for these then published on the website. Where there was no copyright to publish the whole text, the abstract and link to the full paper would be posted.

**Action Point 18.10** RC to circulate list of recent publications of relevance to LAG report's conclusions with view to these being posted on the LAG website.

## 7. AOB

7.1 RG described some recent research on lead shot ingestion rates and population trends of freshwater duck species in the UK and Europe.

RG would be able to provide the findings in confidence to Defra ahead of publication and would also send to the Chair.

**Action Point 18.11** RG to send recent pre-publication paper to the Chair in confidence pre-publication.

**Action Point 18.12** KF to check that pre-publication submitted scientific papers can be kept as confidential so as not to jeopardise publication plans.

## 8. Date of next meeting

Left open.

## 9. Action points carried forward

**Action Point 15.3** Defra/FSA to inform LAG of progress on consideration of LAG report.

Carried forward (*and under agenda point 5*).

**Action Point 16.1** LL to inform the LAG of the current CLP and REACH processes involving metallic lead. Carried forward (*and under agenda point 4.5*).

**Action Point 16.2** RC to investigate which of these new pieces of evidence could be posted on the LAG website (due to copyright issues etc.) and it was agreed to post those listed above where copyright permits. On-going (*and under agenda point 6.2*).

**Action Point 17.3** SH to enquire about who in HSE and Defra are involved in the REACH processes from a UK perspective.

**Action Point 18.1** KF to forward contact details of Defra person responsible for REACH processes from UK perspective to LAG.

**Action Point 18.2** JAS to enquire of the Minister publication intentions and timeframe.

**Action Point 18.3** JAS to consider making the LAG report available to REACH in the first instance.

**Action Point 18.4** Post recent ministerial correspondence on the LAG website.

**Action Point 18.5** FSA requested to be kept up to date with new research on shot pheasant tomography and publication intentions.

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