



feedback

English Internet edition of the Product Board Animal Feed newsletter – October 2003

Inquiry report Second Chamber GMP+ assessed as (very) good

The GMP-system has been predominantly assessed as (very) good and is still developing. On paper it's a watertight system that harmonises well with other quality systems such as IKB and KKM. These findings are contained in 'Food for thought – Safety risks in animal feed chains', a report commissioned by the Second Chamber.

The joint reaction of the Product Board Animal Feed (PDV) and the Product Boards Livestock, Meat and Eggs endorses the positive assessment awarded the HACCP-strengthened GMP-system. The report refers to 'a solid and professional system, which should be compulsory for all animal feed companies'. The report also



concludes by stating that the system identifies and intercepts many food safety risks. The report's opinion is

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Reaction Veerman

In his reaction to the report, minister Veerman (Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality) states that the Product Board Animal Feed and the branch organisations must continue their efforts to promote professionalism and provide information to the sector. In his opinion all links in the animal feed chain must realize that "the sector only has a guaranteed future if it employs socially acceptable production methods." According to the minister, the findings contained in the report validate how important it is to continue preparing implementation of the Enabling Legislation Animal Feed. He welcomes the initiative of the sector to intensify GMP regulations so that from 2004 GMP certified companies may only use feedstuffs with a risk assessment included in the Product Board's special databank.

Harmonise EurepGap and GMP+

"Retail can jump aboard a running train"

The biennial EurepGap conference was recently held in Madrid, Spain. One of the speakers was Johan den Hartog, secretary-general of the Product Board Animal Feed (PDV). He advocated harmonising EurepGap with the GMP+ system.

Den Hartog gave several reasons why EurepGap, the quality assurance system of the major European supermarket chains, should harmonise with the GMP+ system. "EurepGap has developed standards for a certain number of agricultural sectors, but not yet for the animal feed industry. However, the goals of this still to be developed standard, are very similar

to standards contained in the GMP+ system. The PDV aims to achieve information exchange and an internationally accepted standard using this system. And, quite significantly, we have been involved in this process for years. With good results! We have formed extensive mutual agreements with national and international stakeholders. Plus, our quality assurance system for raw materials is being adopted all over the world."

Running train

According to Johan den Hartog fusing the two standards is also a logical step for other reasons. "We have been involved with quality and safety within the animal feed sector for years. In

doing so we have built up valuable experience and competence in this field. The GMP+ system is a train that's on the rails and running - the retail sector simply has to jump aboard. This step would also be financially advantageous for animal feed companies. A new quality standard in addition to the GMP+ system means complying with two packages of regulations - and costs double the time and effort. If EurepGap for feed harmonises with our current system, it will entail no extra expense", according to Den Hartog. The PDV hopes that the lobbying in Madrid will be contribute to persuading EurepGap to take this opportunity. The PDV will continue to promote the cause in the future.

Self-regulation and quality assurance animal feed

Veerman: "The Netherlands leads the way"

"The Netherlands leads the way regarding self-regulation in the animal feed sector and systematic quality assurance of animal feed." These are the words of Minister Veerman of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in a letter to the Second Chamber on July 7th this year.

The minister had commissioned a report into how the Netherlands implements European legislation in comparison to other member states.

This report also investigated the animal feed sector. The Dutch animal feed industry is among the leaders concerning quality assurance and safety.



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GMP+ assessed as (very) good

that pressure on food safety does not come from the animal feed chain. Both boards also support the conclusion that 'the majority of animal feed companies have a highly professional approach to quality and safety'. They mention investments by the animal feed sector that includes GMP and HACCP training.

Recommendations

The report also contains recommendations, including some concerning implementation. In reaction to this, both boards stress that their capacity to inspect compliance with GMP-regulations has improved dramatically since last summer. In addition, the audit frequency has risen to twice yearly. One of these inspections in unannounced and inspection and certification is now in the hands of independent bodies.

Regarding the mentality mentioned in the report, the boards state that the animal feed sector is making good progress, helped by the prescribed director's declaration. This declaration confirms the personal responsibility of the director(s) of an animal feed company in safeguarding product safety. Finally, the investigators

advised increasing transparency in the raw material market. The PDV has already taken several steps in this direction, such as reducing the number of blending points in the flow of moisture-rich feedstuffs. From now on, only certified compound feed manufacturers or farmers are allowed to carry out this activity.

GMP compliance to 100%

Concerning the case for increasing the extent of compliance with GMP (currently 95%) the Second Chamber is reminded that the PDV has been urging the processing sector only to accept animals from protected chains (such as IKB) for years. The minister did not approve a recent proposal to introduce legalisation making the use of GMP-feed obligatory. If this proposal had been passed, the extent of compliance with GMP procedures in the animal feed sector would reach 100%.

Reaction PDV/PVE: www.pdv.nl/lmbinaries/reactie.pdf

Inquiry report: www.tweede-kamer.nl/images/22_24768.pdf

Reaction minister: www.minInv.nl/infomart/parlemnt/2003/par03276.htm

Compared to other member states, the Netherlands has little national legislation that supplements EU legislation. Dutch businesses, however, do implement additional, systematic quality assurance systems. The quality assurance system GMP+ means Dutch companies go beyond the intensified regulations imposed by the government and voluntarily opt for higher standards. Examples include standards for undesirable raw materials in animal feed, mycotoxins DON, ZEN and Ochratoxin A.

The report also shows that European guidelines have or will become national legislation in all investigated member states. This also happens in the Netherlands with Product Board Animal Feed regulations. From 2004 legislation will be laid down in Enabling Legislation Animal Feed.

Skills of a bridge

'So... a politician' was my first reaction when I heard that Theo Meijer had been appointed as chairman of the Product Board Animal Feed (PDV). Not that the appointment was such a strange choice, several (former) Chamber



members have occupied similar positions before. I was reminded of the particular conditions laid down during the search for a successor to Rob Tazelaar of the Product Board Meat and Eggs: please, anything but a politician.... They found someone from the business world.

The HPA and PDV need an individual who is familiar with the square kilometre surrounding the seat of parliament in the Netherlands, known as the Binnenhof in the Hague. A figure with the ability to span a bridge between the business world and the world of politics, precisely the point where a Product Board hinges between the two areas of interest.

Hinges sometimes creak. This immediately becomes apparent if the PDV even has the faintest suspicion of contamination in animal feed. Who is responsible for what? What is the extent of jurisdiction of the government, the product board and the feed sector? At that point the hinges aren't as well oiled as they seemed. Who could ever forget

Theo Meijer new chairman Product Board Animal Feed: "Great proponent of chain mentality"

The Product Board Animal Feed has a new chairman: Theo Meijer. His vision of the animal feed sector and the role of the product board is unmistakable. "GMP-plus should become: GMP-standard."

Since September 1st, Theo Meijer has taken over chairmanship of the PDV from Jan Kienhuis. The former politician calls this position "a marvellous job". He says: "Product boards are close to the sectors and therefore close to situations in practice. They know what's going on in the chain and can identify certain needs. Product boards are an extension of the chain, and create the right conditions for good operational management. Businesses can then produce as economically as possible."

Collective responsibility

When taking office, Meijer announced his ambition to join the links in the animal production chain. He is referring here to aspects such as certification, inspection and enforcing compliance. "I am a great proponent of a chain mentality. That embraces collective responsibility. What currently happens in a crisis in the animal production chain is that individuals look after their own interests first. There is no feeling of responsibility for what happens in other parts of the chain. But if hard and fast agreements are made for the entire chain, the collective responsibility must be shared. Only once that point has been reached can we be even more alert to quality and food safety. This is something I intend to fight for these coming years."



Theo Meijer

A question of mentality

How far is Meijer prepared to accept his own share of the responsibility? "I propose to hold a broad discussion within the animal feed sector about the subject of accepting responsibility. The value of the GMP+ certificate has become questionable due to the various affairs over recent years. I think that companies must critically examine

the standards they have to comply with. Mark my words: I'm not in favour of more rules and regulations, that belongs to the past. No, it's more a question of a shift in mentality. Everyone who operates according to GMP+ must be fully aware that there is no room for deception! Exceptions can no longer be tolerated. I think 'GMP-plus' should become: 'GMP-standard'. At the moment the plus stands for something extra, but in my opinion that 'extra' should be considered part of the standard package."

Lawsuits against company held responsible for MPA-affair

The Product Boards Animal Feed and Livestock and Meat have joined forces with Nevedi and other parties in the chain to initiate legal action against the Eire-based Wyeth. All parties involved view this pharmaceutical company as the primary cause and main responsible party for MPA contamination of animal feed in 2002. These organisations wish to start legal proceedings as

soon as possible. The government has already lent the funds needed to buy up the contaminated animals. This money has to be paid back no later than mid-2006. More over the complainants want to use these proceedings to underline that the sectors concerned find this kind of 'irresponsible behaviour' totally unacceptable.

keeper

Minister Veerman's public reprimand of the PDV, when the recall of MPA contaminated feed didn't go as smoothly as wished?

The minister later revoked his accusation - with excuses to Meijer's predecessor Jan Kienhuis - when he discovered that the authority to initiate a recall doesn't actually rest with the Product Board.

The inquiry carried out on behalf of the Second Chamber into risks in the animal feed chain also brought this split responsibility to light. The very fact of the Second Chamber initiating investigations shows the government recognizes that it has a role in safeguarding animal feed safety. Now the report has been submitted, it's up to the various parliamentary parties to assess the findings and take the necessary steps. At least, that's what I thought. But, they don't dare. Now the Chamber has asked for a memo from the government expressing their opinion of the findings. The chamber will only start to form its own judgment when the government has answered.

It's blatantly obvious that there is huge political interest for the animal feed chain. And it's good to have a chairman who is at home in both worlds. A bridge builder, as everyone says. That's true, but he also has to be a bridge keeper: someone with the talent to draw up the bridge in face of mounting pressure from the Binnenhof.

Henk Dokter

Political commentator 'Boerderij' magazine

Quality standard Investors in People for animal feed company

"Employees make your organisation"

Animal feed producer Nijsen/Granico has the première. In September they became the very first company in the animal feed sector to be awarded Investors in People certification. This is a quality standard for companies who are committed to a culture where the human element is central. Investment in people and an active quality strategy go hand in hand.

"We are a progressive company", says Jack Nijsen, Head of Purchasing food products at the animal feed producers in Veulen, Limburg. Nijsen: "In June 2002 we started taking part in this pilot project under an arrangement with the Labour Department of the Product Board Animal Feed. We believe investments in our employees are equally as important as investments in new equipment. Employees really make an organisation. Investing in them has implications for the quality of the entire company. Motivated and



To the right of the certificate: Jack Nijsen

committed personnel are structurally able to go just that little bit further. This ultimately leads to better results for the company. An excellent motivation to start applying Investors in People principles."

A world of difference

Investors in People doesn't only involve blue-collar workers - employees in managerial position are also expected to change. Nijsen: "In the past we often failed to make proper inventories and assessments of any training we gave. We didn't bother to ask what someone had learnt or wanted to learn." He expects that Investors in People will also contribute to food quality and food safety. "It's difficult to produce quality if you lack the necessary theoretical knowledge. Acquiring knowledge teaches you to recognise why certain procedures and regulations are so essential. Training will tell you for example how to press a better pellet or why not one but six procedures are required to make a safe product. Regulations, such as GMP+, are easier to comply with if you fully understand their importance."

Management through communication

According to Jack Nijsen the style of leadership was also due for a change. "Saying that everyone has to pass a fork-lift operators test otherwise the supplier won't allow us to load doesn't have any effect. It's much better to explain that someone needs an operator's diploma so we can continue to

offer a certain service and that this kind of certificate is also handy for other services. And, it adds to the employee's skills. Simply communicating in another way can make all the difference. We are naturally very proud of the certification for this quality standard. But, we will only be completely satisfied when we see more results. That stage is reached when all the employees realise that their commitment is essential for the success of the company as a whole and are prepared to say: "Let's go for our goals!"

The British Investors in People was developed in 1990 and introduced in the Netherlands in 1998 on initiative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. It is a certifiable, continuous process of improvement that affects both the organisational side and the personnel strategy of a company. Investors in People gives results such as: better labour relations and communication, coaching leadership, more job satisfaction, improved quality and productivity, less absenteeism and a better image.

For more information click: www.iipnl.nl (www.iipnl.uk) or phone the Labour Department of the Product Board Animal Feed, + 31 70 370 84 32



C O L O P H O N

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