



feedback

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Independent certification a success

Under the motto 'the market can do its work' accrediting certification for compliance with GMP regulations for the animal feed sector was passed over from the Product Board Animal Feed to independent bodies as per the 1st of July 2003. In the meantime numerous agencies and auditors have been accepted - both at home and abroad.

Last year the animal feed sector decided to pass responsibility for certification and inspection to certification bodies (CB). The sector wanted a clear demarcation line between policy and implementation of animal feed certification and inspection. The Product Board Animal Feed (PDV) is responsible for policy. Via the Co-ordinating Office for Animal Feed Certification

and Monitoring (BCD), the PDV retains responsibility for co-ordinating, harmonising, accepting and steering the certification bodies. Independent certification via the CB is proceeding according to plan. In the Netherlands 14 independent certification bodies have currently been accepted. Foreign certification bodies must also comply with BCD regulations. In Germany 13 certifying bodies have been accepted. Other accepted bodies can be found in Denmark, France, Ireland, Finland and Indonesia. The BCD trains CB auditors in the specific aspects requiring attention for GMP compliance. These auditors are already experienced with awarding certification required in other quality assurance systems. Thanks to this independent certification system, GMP-certification can be combined with other quality assurance systems. The Netherlands has close to 100 accredited auditors, Germany 65, North and South America 25 and Asia 15.



Product Board offers education plan

Knowledge is quality

GMP+ regulations also contain a chapter on schooling and training employees. The aim is to raise the knowledge and skills of employees to a level high enough to allow activities to be performed optimally, thereby improving animal feed quality. The PDV offers companies assistance in charting the need for the training.



According to GMP+ regulations certified companies are responsible for making their own personnel aware of the quality and safety of animal feed.

PDV-website rates high

The revised Product Board Animal Feed website (www.pdv.nl) has been well received, according to a quality survey into digital governmental sites, the Kwaliteitsmonitor Overheidswebsites 2003. The PDV site ended in second place in the category public-law organizations. This position makes it the most highly rated of all the product boards.



The quality monitor examined aspects such as user friendliness, general information and interactivity, information at board level and service providing. The site scored particularly well on general information and interactivity and board-related information. This is probably due to the fact that the website offers up to date, comprehensive information. For instance, in May 2003, the complete GMP-regulations were published on the site. The PDV site attracted an average of 800 hits a day in 2003.

In addition, personnel must be qualified enough to apply safety measures in practice. Companies are also expected to register experience, skills and (any necessary) training of employees

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GMP-standard beneficial for pet food industry

At the end of last year the GMP standard was determined for companies producing or trading in pet foods. John Williams, of the Dutch Pet Food Industry association (NVG) explains why the industry has chosen this quality assurance system.

John Williams is quality manager at Nestlé-Purina and a member of the Dutch Pet Food Industry association (NVG). He represents the NVG at FEDIAF, the European branch organisation for pet food manufacturers. According to him, the choice for the GMP+ system was linked to implementation of the FEDIAF code, the European standard to safeguard pet food safety and quality. The white paper on food safety issued by the EU at the time was the motivation behind drafting this code. The actual details were left to national branch organisations in the member states. National standards however, must not deviate too greatly from prevailing European standards. The FEDIAF code will continue to act as an umbrella standard. As GMP+ has built up such a solid image within the pet food sector and has many overlaps with the FEDIAF-code, it was a logical step to seek association of the codes. "The great advantage is that certification for the FEDIAF-



John Williams

code is possible via GMP+. This is lacking at the moment in the European pet food code. I also expect the opportunities for certification to provide other benefits with the monitoring agencies and that it will give a boost to the image of the Dutch pet food sector in general", says Williams.

sector with GMP+. The board gave advice and ensured contextual harmonisation between the FEDIAF-code and GMP+. Without the PDV, certifiable and controllable quality and safety within pet food would not have been achieved so rapidly. They certainly deserve to be complimented on the results of their concerted efforts."

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Knowledge is quality

and ensure expertise is kept up to date. The certifying bodies will check if this is put into practice. Non-compliance with GMP regulations for training and education may result in suspension. The Product Board Animal Feed can support companies with a training programme to help improve the scope of employee knowledge and awareness. The instruments used include a training consultant and a company training plan. Karline Timmermans was appointed as the new training consultant on the 1st of July 2003. Her job is to assist companies in identifying which skills and knowledge levels are required per employee. Based on the findings, she then sources or develops a suitable training course or further education plan. The training plan is an overview of the skills required, with suggestions for suitable solutions. The training check list also contains suitable training suggestions. For more information, visit www.pdv.nl under the button work/education.

Advantages

The quality manager expects these advantages will persuade many of the 47 pet food companies to adopt the GMP+ standard. Williams: "There are just a few Dutch companies currently operating according to the GMP+ standard for the compound feed industry. These companies can switch to GMP+ for pet food. If the NVG emphasises the advantages, numbers are sure to rise. The pet food industry has already been active for quite a while to safeguard quality via a system. They process many identical raw materials to the compound feed industry, but market the products through channels used by the food industry, which meant implementing the same system." In the words of Williams, the industry is making excellent progress with quality assurance. "The animal feed industry has now reached at least the same level as the food industry. The sector has been actively engaged in a massive manoeuvre to catch up in this respect. Partly thanks to the effort of the Product Board Animal Feed, which assisted in associating the pet food

Towards a Eu

The impact of recent food scares further emphasises the vital role the animal sector plays in food safety. The priority for all food chain partners is food safety, with traceability playing a key role. A first step was for feed manufacturers to explain to their suppliers the need to meet the market and legislative driven demands regarding feed & food safety. There is now a greater level of consensus that the implementation of quality assurance systems throughout the supply chain for feed and animal products is a fundamental requirement for all food chain partners. This approach is the key driver for the feed industry's action plan to assure feed safety. FEFAC and its member associations invested heavily in risk analysis of its raw materials and the adoption of HACCP principles throughout all areas of the feed manufacturing and distribution process. The European Commission has confirmed

Hugo Stam, director Cefetra:

“International quality assurance at high level”

Nowadays, quality assurance of feed takes place the world over. 15 years ago, the situation was somewhat different. Quality systems abroad are being increasingly better organised. Logically, as calls for quality and food safety assurance systems are becoming louder, at home and abroad.

Hugo Stam has been actively and closely involved in the rise of international quality assurance systems. Stam is general director of Cefetra, a company active at European level as a supplier of raw materials for animal feed to the compound feed industry. “It started back in 1988. At that time many companies traded in animal feed raw materials. The only references to quality were on the paperwork, which stated that the quality complied with nutritional standards. Monitoring, however, rarely took place. There was

absolutely no question of any form of certification and food safety.” Within Cefetra a need arose to be more stringent regarding the original product. Other companies quickly began to follow this lead, so the foundations were laid for quality assurance further along the chain. Both raw materials and logistic processes must now comply with the prevailing standards. Tracking and tracing also gradually increased in importance and now trading can only be done with producers who can



Hugo Stam

prove the origin of their produce and document production methods.

Impulse

The term food safety started receiving more attention within the international raw material trade from 1999 onwards as a result of social debates surrounding subjects such as BSE, dioxin and MPA. According to Stam, the whole concept of safety was given a huge impulse by the introduction of GMP regulations and their later extension with HACCP. This included the raw material business. Quality awareness in the various regions was not always on the same line. North and South

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Worldwide adoption of GMP

From Finland to Argentina and from America to Pakistan. Over the globe, the quality of animal feed supplied to the Netherlands is closely monitored. An inventory carried out by the Product Board Animal Feed in mid-2003 showed that, distributed over 37 countries, more than 4,000 production locations were GMP certified or used a system equivalent to GMP.

The Netherlands tops the charts with 2,043 locations. This is followed by Germany (1,232), Belgium (258), the United States (142) and Brazil (91). Countries including Indonesia, Thailand, Bolivia, China and the Ukraine also apply GMP standards. Within the European Union, GMP certified companies are mainly found among (compound)feed producers. Outside the EU, these are mainly raw material suppliers.

European Standard

this approach in the new text on feed hygiene, which it adopted in April 2003. This text will lay down the general legal framework on traceability in the feed chain in line with the EU food hygiene legislation. It is also reflected in the draft CODEX code of practice for animal feed. The Commission will also encourage the development of a voluntary Code of Good Practice in the feed chain – an initiative welcomed by FEFAC.

Returning to the FEFAC Safety Action Plan. In 1998, FEFAC produced its first set of guidelines for the implementation of a national code of practice for the manufacture of compound feed. The HACCP principles, as the basis of this Quality Assurance system were introduced in 2001. At the present time, 9 member associations have developed national codes of practice with three more codes in the pipeline. This development gave rise for the need to carry out an independent benchmark study, to obtain a snapshot view on the current status of Quality Assurance in the compound feed sector in Europe. The objective of this exercise was to facilitate mutual recognition of the national codes, as a first step towards the creation, with other chain partners, of the European Feed Standard of the future. The benchmarking study was carried out by SGS at the end of 2002 and the

results were submitted to the FEFAC board in February 2003. The Board's mandate was to set a working calendar, which identified the steps towards the harmonizing of the national codes with regard to key safety criteria. The objective is for the whole of the European feed industry to be prepared, before the deadline of 1 January 2005, for the EU's General Food Law and its implementation. This law confers major responsibilities for food & feed safety upon the relevant business operators. FEFAC has also started discussions with the immediate downstream partners in the value chain for animal products to exchange views on the implementation of Quality Assurance systems at European level. This is a further example of FEFAC wishing to collaborate with its food chain partners. These discussions are designed to achieve the objective of having a seamless system of sector quality assurance systems throughout the whole animal production chain at European level.



Bob Armstrong,

FEFAC Deputy President and leader of the FEFAC benchmark initiative

Dr. Hittel of Muskator-Werke on GMP and Q&S: "Single international standard necessary"

In the wake of the Netherlands, many thousands of animal feed companies worldwide are implementing GMP or equivalent quality assurance systems. Within the European Union this chiefly concerns (compound) feed producers. Elsewhere in the world it relates to suppliers of raw materials to GMP-certified traders and producers in the Netherlands, Belgium en Germany. One of these German producers is Muskator-Werke.

Why did you opt for GMP+?

"GMP+ is vital for us. It is a pre-condition to supplying Dutch pig farming companies with feed! GMP+ differs to

the German quality system Qualität & Sicherheit in that Q&S contains more concrete self-inspection procedures for undesirable substances and covers

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"International quality assurance at high level"

America were quick to align to the concept and the larger enterprises especially saw the necessity and value of quality assurance. This process took a while longer in the Far East. There was and in fact still is a differen-

ce between industrial products and grains, seeds and pulses in respect to risks and risk analysis. With industrial products the supplier is responsible for assuring the quality of incoming and outgoing flows. The supplier monitors the entire process at critical control points and thereby complies with the demands contained in GMP and HACCP.

Dynamic

The situation for grains, seeds and pulses was and remains different. Stam: "Take East Europe for example - not all companies there are GMP certified and it's difficult to form a picture of the path already followed by the produce. Grain from the Ukraine can't always be assured for quality back to the farmer. This means it has to be inspected at GMP+ level some-

where in the intermediate process. This happens by analysing and scanning the raw materials according to prearranged protocols in the Ukraine, in the export harbour."

In the intervening period, international assurance of feed has reached a high level - something Stam is very satisfied with. "Demands applying to assurance of raw material quality are dynamic, and new developments must continually be closely monitored. Trust is good but solid safeguards are better. Despite this, international assurance of raw material is on the right track. We have already reached a very high and therefore acceptable level."

Dr. Jürgen Hittel is head of product development and shipping at Muskator-Werke GmbH in Düsseldorf. Muskator-Werke is one of the top-10 compound feed producers in Germany. The company has an annual production of approximately 550, 000 tons of animal feed. 250 people are employed in the factories in Mannheim, Riesa, Deggendorf and Bamberg and in the head office in Düsseldorf.



the whole chain of value creation. We have been producing feed for more than 90 years and until now have managed to escape embroilment in any animal feed scandals. Something we are justifiably proud of. We carry out annual checks on 25,000 different substances in raw materials. For example, we test for animal elements in the raw materials and substances such as mycotoxin. We also test for PCB and dioxin. All raw materials imported via Rotterdam are analysed on arrival by an independent laboratory. Suppliers in the EU are checked using the quality management systems in force on their production facilities."

How do you view international cooperation in quality matters?

"Negotiations with Q&S are in progress. Agreement on a single international standard is absolutely essential. This means compliance with certain principle criteria, such as self monitoring for relevant safety parameters, objective inspections, sanctions and uniform checklists. Criteria must be objectively calculated and assessed. Mutual recognition has the highest priority. The most important thing is to get all the risks under control."



**Safe Feed
Safe Food**

The Product Board Animal Feed uses the GMP+ system to facilitate an animal feed quality guarantee worthy of HACCP throughout the entire chain, from raw material to transport and livestock farming. Inspection and certification are carried out by independent organisations.

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