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THE FEED CHAIN IN ACTION 2

Presenting the Feed Safety Management Vision to EU Commissioner Andriukaitis

On 29 September 2015, FEFAC organised, together with our Belgian member BEMEFA, and the Belgian competent authorities (FAVV – The Belgian Food Safety Agency), a field visit for the European Commissioner of Health & Food Safety, Mr Vytenis Andriukaitis. Feed safety management and traceability was the theme of a day that started at the impressive 650.000 tonnes storage facility for feed grains of Euro-Silo in Ghent, was followed up with a visit to the state-of-the-art factory of the compound feed manufacturer Vanden Avenne and ended at a modern pig breeding farm in Ooigem.

It was a great privilege for me to have the time to explain the threefold [FEFAC Feed Safety Management Vision](#) to Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis and in addition have the possibility to illustrate my case with real-life examples that aid in understanding the complex

reality of commodity trade for feed grains, which provide the base of our competitive EU livestock industry. For an outsider, the challenge of guaranteeing feed safety along the chain is suddenly a lot more daunting when you are confronted with the physical quantities of diverse agri-bulk commodities that reach the European continent each year from the many different countries of origin. But to speak in the Commissioner's own words: "pro-active risk management is our mandate and commitment".



Commissioner Andriukaitis visiting Euro-Silo in Ghent

The part of the FEFAC Feed Safety Management Vision that received most attention is our **call for structured co-operation between feed manufacturers and competent authorities at national level**. With that in mind, it was very appropriate that the field visit for Commissioner Andriukaitis took place in Belgium. Competent authorities and the feed industry in Belgium learned the lessons from the dioxin crisis in 1999 and managed to build a trustworthy relationship, for the benefit of feed safety, while keeping the right distance to ensure the independence of official controls. Knowledge, data and results of risk assessments are exchanged on a regular basis, the creation of voluntary guides and sectoral sampling plans are rewarded and operators are not punished for detecting and reporting cases of non-compliance. I sincerely hope that competent authorities from the different EU Member States start to work on the willingness to share their experiences and best practices with each other. This would demonstrate the added value of strengthened cooperation with the feed industry, with improved risk assessment and risk management capacities along the whole feed chain as a result.

It is my conviction that the European feed industry is entitled to recognition for its achievements on feed safety management in the past decade and we should altogether

shift the mind-set from “lessons to be learned” to “showcasing best practices”. Over half of the feed-related RASFF notifications in the last two years resulted from feed operators’ own control systems, meaning we are at equal footing with competent authorities. We have shown that we play our part in keeping food of animal origin safe and we don’t burden the next operator in the chain with potential incidents. With the help of the competent authorities we should also be able to be structurally informed about contaminants that are detected in the upstream



FEFAC President Ruud Tijssens with Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis

part of the feed chain, through timely risk analyses. This is in line with our proposed “top of the pyramid” approach, which seeks to minimize risk of contamination by performing controls at the earliest possible stage when feed ingredients enter the feed chain. Calling for co-operation between industry and authorities does not mean we are looking for lower safety standards or any other way to ‘cheat the system’. We carry the high European safety standards with great pride and know they are one of the pillars of European agricultural exports. In the end, the European feed industry, the competent control authorities and European Commissioner Andriukaitis all share one key priority: “Safeguarding the integrity and safety of the feed chain”.

Ruud Tijssens is President of FEFAC, the European Compound Feed Industry Association