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FEFAC welcomes Commission decision to extend testing requirements on melamine to soybean products from China

Manufacturers of organic feed in France, The Netherlands and the UK have discovered the presence of melamine in organic soybean expellers imported from China in October and November 2008, most likely resulting from fraudulent admixture of melamine. These results were communicated to the competent authorities who notified them to the EU RASFF system. All contaminated feed have been recalled from farms by operators under the supervision of national authorities.

Melamine alone is considered a low toxicity chemical but in combination with related compounds (Cyanuric acid, ammelide, ammeline) it can lead to kidney toxicity.

According to risk assessments conducted by EFSA and national Food Safety Agencies, it is highly unlikely that the levels found in feed products could give rise to harmful levels of residues in animal products.

FEFAC, however, fully supports the decision of the European Commission taken on 3 December 2008 to extend the melamine testing requirements to soy-containing feed and food products originating in China as a proportionate risk management decision. EU feed compounders are systematically asking suppliers to provide negative testing results for melamine and related compounds. Feed manufacturers and suppliers do carry out monitoring checks and testing on all high-protein imported feed materials from China, even if not containing soya or dairy products, and on final products marketed in Europe.

FEFAC has recently encouraged the European Commission to consider resuming work under the EU Feed Hygiene Regulation by drawing up a list of Third countries which can export feedstuffs to the European Union. The industry experts also welcome the cooperation between EU and Chinese authorities to obtain official certificates of analysis which should accompany the export goods to ensure that only feed compliant with the EU legislation is exported from China.

The organic feed sector imports app. 30,000 tons of organic soybean expellers annually from China, This represents less than 0.1% of the total soybean meal requirement in the EU (app. 35 mio. tons).