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FEFAC reflections on the allocation method for the measurement of the environmental impact in the feed & food chain

Allocation of environmental impacts between products and co-products: the methodology has to be coherent with the challenges of a sustainable development

Over time, the animal feed producers have developed a knowhow enabling them to diversify their supply sources. The valorisation of co-products is part of this knowhow allowing:

- To limit the competition for resources that can be directly used for food.
- To contribute to the profitability of production chains.

It is therefore important that the allocation method of environmental impacts, chosen in the framework of the environmental labelling, reports the major assets as regards sustainability stemming from the valorisation of co-products and does not incite the animal feed industries to turn away from these. Tests realised for farm animals show indeed that, depending on the allocation method, the taking into account of the environmental impact in the feed formula can lead the industries to reduce the share of co-products in their receipts, which is an obvious nonsense.

In our opinion, methods based on a physical property such as the mass or the energy content have to be avoided. If a physical property allows sharing the impacts, this implies a common functionality between the product and the co-product. This iso-functionality is never noticed in the case of co-products entering in the composition of animal feed as they are the result of a separation process on the basis of different physical properties.

That is why the undersigning organisations recommend a method taking into account the economic value of raw materials, balanced by their mass yield. For certain raw materials, which have still to be determined, this method can be completed by proceeding to replacements. This economic criterion allows to well report the purpose of an industrial process. It is largely used at international level and especially by the FAO. Nevertheless, it could also lead to the fact that the animal feed producers reduce the share of co-products in compound feed.

When establishing a system allowing the consumer to clarify his choices on environmental criteria, there needs to be a collective investigation to avoid that methodological choices lead to a result that is contrary to the pursued purpose.