



PRESS RELEASE

Presence of BT 63 Rice trait in imported Choline Chloride dry preparations

European feed industry has taken immediate action to prevent non-compliant products from further entering the EU market while investing root cause of the contamination

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During past weeks, several EU feed importers detected further to own-checks the presence of trace levels of BT63 GM rice in several consignments of choline-chloride preparations on plant based carrier imported from China. BT63 GM rice poses no health or safety concern. However, because it is not a registered GMO event in the European Union, it is not allowed in our feed or food products. Therefore, the feed importers notified immediately to the Competent Control Authorities in France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Spain and Germany the results of their own checks. The EU feed business operators involved have also alerted their suppliers in China and their certification bodies requesting increased monitoring & testing programmes.

All operators of the feed chain across the EU fully cooperated with authorities to ensure identification, full traceability and withdrawal of the non-compliant consignments of choline chloride. Since these consignments are raising no safety issue, the view of the industry is that recall of non-compliant products already distributed on the market should be limited to the preparations of choline chloride. Blocking and testing premixtures and/or compound feed containing choline-chloride is not warranted by the proportionality principle for such a non-conformity case with no implication for feed and food safety.

The European feed industry organisations (*FEFAC* & *FEFANA*), together with its supply chain partners are taking this issue very seriously and have immediately launched investigations to control the issue in the EU and to determine the root causes of this non-compliance. Results of first investigations with Chinese suppliers showed that the carrier made of corn cob contained a proportion of rice products used for technological purpose. Although not authorised for commercial cultivation in China, it seems that BT63 was present at low level in some consignments of rice products.

Investigations are going on in China at the level of the producing companies to confirm these findings and trigger corrective actions.

Notes to the editor:

1. FEFAC, the European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation, represents 22 national Associations in 21 EU Member States as well as Associations in Switzerland, Turkey, Croatia, Serbia, Russia and Norway with observer/associate member status. The European compound feed industry employs over 110,000 persons on app. 4,000 production sites often in rural areas, which offer few employment opportunities. For more information see our web site (www.fefac.eu) or please contact Alexander Döring, Secretary General Tel. +32-2-285.00.50, Fax +32-2-230.57.22, email: fefac@fefac.eu.
2. FEFANA - the EU Association of Specialty Feed Ingredients and their Mixtures - is the united voice of the specialty feed ingredients industry in the European Union. With more than 100 Members from 28 European countries, it is the organization representing the interests of the specialty ingredients industry that enter the food chain via feed, whether produced in Europe or imported from third countries. Manufacturers and traders of feed additives, functional feed ingredients, premixes and other mixtures of specialty ingredients are amongst our member companies. The association is the interface between the additives and functional ingredients industry and the European Union authorities, including Member States authorities, in order to promote, safeguard and defend common and general interests of its industry (in several topics like guidelines, register, labelling and definitions, analysis, feed hygiene and food chain safety or non-feed use of additives). For any additional information please contact the FEFANA Secretariat at info@fefana.org or visit our website at www.fefana.org.
3. Choline chloride preparation is a feed additive incorporated in compound feed at levels between 0.02 and 0.1% via premixtures. It is composed in the case of the choline chloride preparations at stake of 60% choline on a plant based carrier.
4. Since there has been no request for authorisation of BT63 rice in the EU, the event could not be risk assessed by EFSA. However, the new protein synthesised by BT63 is the same as Cotton MON 531, which was positively assessed by EFSA in 2011.
5. Results of first investigations with Chinese suppliers showed that the carrier made of corn cob contained between 5 and 10% of rice products used for technological purpose, less than 0.5% of it being BT63 rice. This means in practice that the proportion of BT63 rice in the final feed is undetectable and risk for animal or public health are null. However, since BT63 rice is not authorised in the EU, all consignments of choline chloride tested positive to BT63 shall be withdrawn from the market.
6. During the last three years, more than 100 notifications have been made to the RASFF in relation to imports in the EU of non-EU authorised GM rice products for food use. Feed was not perceived as a potential risk, due to the extremely limited imports of rice products from China for feed use.