

August 2015
(15) PR 25

FEFAC POSITION ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The European Commission aims to publish a proposal on the circular economy by the end of 2015, with a view to stimulate the development of a more resource efficient EU. When it comes to the circular economy in the food chain, the compound feed industry plays a crucial, pivotal role in terms of sustainability and makes many primary raw material markets viable by offering a guaranteed secondary raw material market. Because of its ability to annually upgrade 90 million tonnes of co- and by-products resulting from primary food and biofuels processing, the compound feed industry effectively retains them in the food chain and prevents significant amounts of waste from occurring.

Trustworthy partner as an outlet for co-products

In many primary processing operations, co-products unsuitable for human consumption are an inevitable outcome. However, these materials still have a high nutritional value in animal feed manufacturing. In the Feed Catalogue¹ there are over 600 materials listed which are used in feed manufacturing, with many products derived from the processing of grains, oil seeds/fruits, legumes seeds, tubers & roots, forages & roughage, milk products and land & aquatic animals. The feed industry valorizes the co-products that result from the many primary processing activities that aim to fulfil the needs of human food and bioenergy consumption, such as the following:

- Oil crushing (soybean meal, rapeseed meal, sunflower meal, palm kernel meal)
- Grain milling (bran, hulls, middlings (also known as wheatfeed))
- Starch production (gluten feed, gluten meal)
- Sugar production (sugar beet pulp, molasses)
- Fruit processing (citrus pulp)
- Ethanol production (dried distillers grains and solubles)
- Beer production (brewer's grain)
- Dairy processing (whey, skimmed milk powder)
- Clothes manufacturing (cottonseed hulls, cottonseed meal)

By valorizing a wide variety of agricultural co-products to the highest degree of sustainability (i.e. feed outlet is the most sustainable outlet after food), the compound feed industry reduces its need for primary raw materials in the production of feeds for

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) No 68/2013](#) on the Catalogue of Feed Materials

livestock. In addition, the compound feed industry has contributed to a significant improvement in feed conversion rates over the last decades, thereby ensuring a responsible environmental footprint of animal products produced using industrial compound feed. This means that increasingly fewer feed ingredients have been used in animal feed formulations, without a negative effect on animal health, welfare and performance.

Feed valorization of former foodstuffs - the new frontier

Also at a later stage of the food chain, the industrial manufacturing of food products, animal feed provides a solution to redirecting by-products back into the food chain and reducing food waste. Incorrectly produced, energy-rich “former foodstuffs” (e.g. bread, biscuits, chocolates, crisps, breakfast cereals) are no longer considered suitable for the human consumption market (including food banks), but they still retain their nutritional raw material value when used in animal feed as they can be used as an alternative to grains in compound feed manufacturing. Former foodstuffs are also listed in the Feed Catalogue, thereby underlining their common use in animal feed manufacturing.

The European Former Foodstuff Processors Association (EFFPA) estimates that approximately 3.5 million tonnes of former foodstuffs are annually converted into animal feed for food producing animals, thereby keeping a great amount of food losses in the food chain via the feed pathway. Considering the sector is still in development and innovation in how to valorize more types of former foodstuffs is ongoing, expansion of this sector in the years to come is likely. FEFAC urges the EU to support this sector as an integral part of the food chain, as well as lifting it out of the scope of waste processing indefinitely to ensure undisrupted application of General Food Law.

Feed safety the bottom line

FEFAC takes pride in the inherent sustainability of the compound feed and premix industry, however it stresses that environmental gains can never be made at the cost of feed safety. Under no circumstances should the feed chain become a means to dispose of degraded or highly contaminated resources. In particular, new or unconventional feed resources often have an underexplored risk profile, thereby making it important to have HACCP risk management strategies implemented along the supply chain. Most importantly, any resource that is used in compound feed manufacturing needs to comply with regulations on the market placement² of feed and the Directive on undesirable substances in animal feed³, in addition to the need for feed business operators to comply with the requirements on feed hygiene⁴.

² [Regulation \(EC\) No 767/2009](#) on the placement of the market of feed

³ [Directive 2002/32/EC](#) on undesirable substances in animal feed

⁴ [Regulation \(EC\) No 183/2005](#) on feed hygiene requirements