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## THE FEED CHAIN IN ACTION 1

### **The Soy Sourcing Guidelines as a Bridge Builder**

*With the 1<sup>st</sup> version of the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines published on 11 August 2015, it is now up to the owners of responsible soy programmes to verify their compliance with the Guidelines using the online benchmarking tool, which was launched on 14 September. In the week of 7 September, I spent a whole week in Argentina and Brazil, on behalf of FEFAC, to talk with our key partners in the soy supply chain, as well as governmental representatives, with our Soy Sourcing Guidelines as the starting point of the discussion.*

The Soy Sourcing Guidelines were an invaluable asset in my meetings representing the European Compound Feed Industry in South America, as they portray a clear, documented vision on how we think about the production of responsible soy. Just as much as FEFAC has emphasised in recent times that the Soy Sourcing Guidelines are not another certification programme, we have also been very clear that the real work has only just begun. In the space of only a couple of days I discussed the content of the Guidelines in a series of workshops and board meetings in Argentina and Brazil, with among others AAPRESID (the Argentinian farmers association), ABIOVE (the Brazilian oilseed crushers association), APROSOJA (the Brazilian soy farmers organisation) and Feed Latina (the Association of Industrial Compound Feed Manufacturers in Latin America).

At the same time, other FEFAC Council members were at the Global Trade Exchange conference in Minneapolis, USA, to discuss the Guidelines with USSEC (U.S. Soybean Export Council), thereby illustrating the bridge-building capacities of the Soy Sourcing Guidelines,

as they have kick-started a dialogue on the supply of responsible soy to Europe on several continents.



In Brasilia I met with the Deputy Minister of the Brazilian Environmental Ministry, Mr Francisco Gaetani, to discuss the issue of deforestation as well as the complex process to register all rural properties in a state-owned database (Cadastro Ambiental Rural) to ensure compliance with environmental legislation. It's a defying challenge that is not always well-understood or perhaps even underestimated by us Europeans, but I was happy to hear about the extraordinary financial commitments made by the Norwegian and German governments. These investments in the Amazon Fund (which will be expanded soon to the Cerrado and the Pampas Biomes) aim to help Brazil with reducing deforestation and support the completion of the CAR registration process (deadline 5 May 2016).

The Brazilian government is focussing on further developing the professionalization of their agricultural sector, with a focus on livestock farming, as studies show that a lack of

agricultural professionalism is strongly correlated with increasing agricultural production through area expansion, as opposed to increasing yields. Mr Gaetani explained the importance of first tackling illegal deforestation before being able to prioritise zero-net deforestation. The demanded compliance with national environmental legislation in the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines were therefore very well received.

Of course FEFAC has had contact with its key supply chain partners before on this very important topic, but it has become clear to me that, with the factual publication of our Soy Sourcing Guidelines, we have put a concrete set of requirements on the table which can make a real difference at farm level in countries supplying soy to Europe by assisting and recognising their efforts for a mainstream market transition. As this is the starting point of a long journey, and we are committed to the continuous improvement of the Soy Sourcing Guidelines, I urge all stakeholders, including NGOs, to stay on board and provide us with their insights to jointly realise a critical mass supply of responsible soy to Europe. We'll continue the discussion with our key soy supply chain partners at the FEFAC Congress in Antalya, Turkey, on 20-21 April 2016.

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