



Photo by Jelle Draper

WRO Successfully Advocates for Revised Protein Meals Classification

Without a doubt, the 91st General Session of the World Organization for Animal Health in Paris was a significant milestone for the global rendering sector.

First, it is important to explain that the chapters on foot and mouth disease (FMD) and African swine fever (ASF) of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code were under review. These chapters determine the minimum conditions for the international trade of animal-origin commodities, including protein meals and rendered fats.

The World Renderers Organization closely monitored the progress of these revisions, sending numerous technical and scientific arguments to the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission to classify protein meals as safe. In the latest report from February (there are two reports per year), WRO received confirmation the classification of these commodities would go to a vote by member states, where protein meals could be classified as safe trade commodities regardless of the country's disease status for both FMD and ASF.

During the voting session on the FMD chapter, China voiced its disagreement and requested removal of protein meals from the classification. EU countries along with the U.S., Brazil and others, however, expressed their support for approval as presented. It was particularly moving to see the president of TAHSC, Dr. Étienne Bonbon, articulate his technical understanding of the safety of protein meals, impeccably describing why the processing conditions are sufficient to eliminate the FMD virus for all WOA members.

In the end, protein meals were approved as safe trade commodities regardless of the country's disease status for both chapters. What does this mean practically for manufacturers? Each country now needs to update its bilateral sanitary certificates, removing any mandatory references to the absence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), FMD and ASF as prerequisites for exports. This will guarantee stability in the international trade of one of our main products — protein meals.

With this goal achieved, WRO will enter the second phase of the process to recognize the sanitary safety of our products — securing recognition for rendered fats as safe trade commodities regardless of the country’s disease status. WRO is currently working on a report to be presented to WOAHP on the manufacturing process and sanitary safety of rendered fats, with the goal for rendered fats to be recognized as safe trade commodities in the TAHC.

LEAP/FAO

The development of the circular bioeconomy guidance by the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance partnership — an initiative of the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization — is progressing as scheduled. WRO has reviewed the first draft and, as always, contributed a few necessary adjustments.

This LEAP/FAO guidance will clearly define what constitutes the circular bioeconomy and what, despite being sustainable, is not part of it. It is expected to be one of the first FAO documents to establish a basis for more accurate calculations of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from all industries and activities within the circular bioeconomy.

The guidance will include a specific chapter on the sustainable actions of the global rendering sector, highlighting the valuable and indispensable environmental work the sector has been doing for over a century. It truly operates within the circular bioeconomy, returning valuable nutrients to the system

that would otherwise be lost if not processed into nutritious and energetic ingredients.

It is very important to follow this material closely. For example, the report will address a long-discussed issue within our sector — do we process co-products, by-products, waste or rejects? FAO/LEAP standards will be applied for this determination. Despite discrepancies in the name of the raw materials we process among various countries’ regulatory environments, this FAO report could be the first international document to standardize the terminology.

Additionally, we are beginning planning discussions for the initiative’s next program of work called LEAP 5. WRO will seek ways to address some of our needs, such as greater standardization and understanding of our sector and its products among sanitary authorities in different countries.

Assograssi and EFPPA

WRO was invited to participate in two recent events: the General Assembly of Assograssi in Rome and the European Fat Processors and Renderers Association Congress 2024 in Amsterdam. I had the honor of representing the organization at both events, where I presented some of WRO’s actions — particularly those discussed above. This interaction and accountability to members are vital for WRO to understand its members, develop appropriate tools and seek improvements in the international environment for its members. **R**

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