

White Paper
Background on AAFCO Process Control
5-2-02

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) recognizes the importance of providing guidance on feed related issues, including feed/food safety, public health and environmental issues. With the continued public concern for the safety of the human food supply, the role of animal feeds in food and increased exposure to world markets, AAFCO's Feed Manufacturing Committee (FMC), as part of the Association's Feed/Food Safety Initiative has developed the "Guidance/Framework for Best Management Practices for Manufacturing, Packaging and Distributing Animal Feeds and Feed Ingredients" guidance document. This guidance document provides a framework upon which industry-specific voluntary quality assurance/quality control programs can be developed and implemented. The guidance document is intentionally generic and performance-oriented so that it is applicable to all sectors of the feed industry. The FMC is currently developing a checklist that can be used by industry and feed regulators to evaluate a firm's implementation of these best management practices.

AAFCO's Strategic Plan for 2000-2004 states that developing strategies that will incorporate process control for feed regulatory programs is the top priority of the Association to promote feed/food safety and public health. A number of feed related issues (anti-microbial resistance, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), dioxin, microbial & mineral contaminants, mycotoxins and transportation issues) have recently occurred in this country and around the world that have emphasized the importance of effective feed regulatory programs. The feed industry and state feed control officials are very familiar with federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs) regulations for medicated feeds. The CGMP concept is one type of process control, but is limited only to the production of medicated feed. FDA has implemented Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles in a number of food regulatory programs and is exploring applying this regulatory process control principle to the oilseed producers and the rendering industry sectors of the feed industry.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) was originally formed in 1962 by two United Nations organizations, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Codex (160 nations) promotes consumer protection and facilitates world trade in foods through the development of food standards, codes of practice, and other guidelines. Recognizing the importance of animal feeds in the human food supply; Codex has drafted a Practice on Good Animal Feeding to ensure a safe food supply from farm to fork utilizing both GMP and HACCP principles. If adopted, these principles will impact all sectors of animal agriculture in the United States, including the feed industry.

At AAFCO's January mid-year meeting in Austin, TX, the AAFCO membership supported the Association's efforts to move forward in adopting regulatory process controls for manufacturing, packaging and distributing animal feeds and feed ingredients.

The FMC with the assistance of the feed industry will explore two potential options to adopt process control: develop proposed federal regulation or amend the AAFCO Model Bill and Regulations. The form and content have not been decided. However, since industry and regulators understand GMP concepts, this would be the likely starting point to begin developing a minimum standard. Most industry quality assurance/quality control programs already exceed medicated feed CGMP's and would likely exceed any CGMPs developed for all feed and feed ingredients. It is important for industry and AAFCO to take advantage of this opportunity and work together to establish these process controls for all aspects of feed manufacturing to help ensure the continued safety of feed for animals and food products of animal origin, thereby preserving human/animal health and retaining consumer confidence.