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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AAFCO CALLS FOR HEMP INDUSTRY ACTION ON HEMP PRODUCTS IN ANIMAL FOOD

Animal nutrition group urges more research on hemp safety and efficacy.

CHAMPAIGN, Ill., (September 20, 2021) The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), the independent organization that provides ingredient definitions, label standards and laboratory guidance for state, federal and international feed regulators, has issued a position paper and call to action on hemp and its byproducts in livestock feed and companion animal pet food.

AAFCO wants to encourage the hemp and feed industries to continue researching the proposed hemp and hemp byproducts as nutritional ingredients to gather data on the products' safety and efficacy. The products to be evaluated include whole hemp plants, hemp seed oil, CBD, and other cannabinoids.

When the data gathering is complete, AAFCO can formally define the various ingredients and provide standards for safer pet and livestock feed with that information. The AAFCO Guide to Submitting New Ingredient Definitions (Chapter 6) can be downloaded [here](#).

Susan M. Hays, AAFCO executive director, said, "We understand the hemp industry is eager to enter the animal food market, but we are concerned that not enough research has been completed on these products. That's why we are urging the hemp industry to conduct appropriate research and submit their results to us for review as a normal step in our ingredient approval process."

The 2018 Farm Bill legalized growing hemp, but any feed ingredient, including hemp products, falls under the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is not yet known whether hemp products are safe to feed to all animal species. Research is needed to address the levels of THC in hemp and what effects the content will have on the intended uses and species.

For any ingredient to be used in animal food, thorough scientific research must be completed to ensure nutritional and safety benefits. "Allowing hemp byproducts to be used for animal nutrition before rigorous research and legal approval processes have been completed could have adverse impacts on ranchers' access to markets, on animal health, and ultimately on human health when hemp-fed animal products enter the human food chain," Hays emphasized.

Recently, proponents of hemp in feed have focused on passing state legislation to allow in-state use of hemp as a feed ingredient, despite the lack of a national approval based on a comprehensive scientific review of its safety.

AAFCO is concerned that bringing hemp products to market through a state-by-state patchwork of laws, without the backing of in-depth research and a formal review process, will lead to inconsistent manufacturing methods, unsupported marketing claims across the country, and restriction of interstate and international markets.

AAFCO encourages lawmakers to work with key stakeholders like the FDA, United States Department of Agriculture, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, livestock and dairy associations, consumer advocacy groups, and AAFCO itself to expedite the formal review and approval of hemp and its byproducts for animal nutrition. AAFCO can help guide hemp producers through the submission and review process.

AAFCO's Hemp and Hemp Byproducts in Animal Food position paper is presented [here](#). Current (2020) AAFCO Guidelines on Hemp in Animal Food can be found [here](#). For further information or inquiries, email aafco@aafco.org.

ABOUT AAFCO

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) is a 501(c)(5) membership organization of state, federal and international animal feed control officials who adhere to state and federal laws as they regulate animal feed products in the advancement of animal and public health and safety. For more than 110 years, AAFCO members have cooperated on promulgating definitions for animal food ingredients that are scientifically proven to be safe for their specific animal species and intended use of an ingredient in an animal nutrition product. AAFCO develops and publishes ingredient definitions, label standards and laboratory guidance, and its annual *Official Publication* is relied on globally by animal food regulators and the animal nutrition industry as the authoritative guide to animal feeding ingredients approved for use in the United States. For more information, visit AAFCO.org.

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