

Aquafeed participation in GMP+ FSA on the rise

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Aquaculture is the world's fastest growing food production sector. At the same time, the debate about the sector's sustainability challenges – either real or perceived – continues. In this rapidly changing environment, more and more companies in aquaculture are looking to place safe bets. As a result, aquafeed producers place strong emphasis on feed sustainability, including feed safety. With its “one-stop-shop” approach (safety and sustainability), the GMP+ Feed Certification scheme is gaining a foothold in international aquafeed.

The recent growth of aquafeed in GMP+ Feed Safety Assurance (GMP+ FSA) is remarkable since aquaculture participation in this scheme has traditionally lagged behind agricultural sectors like poultry, pig and dairy feed production. This discrepancy, which still exists, can be traced back to our origin in 1992. After some high-profile feed contamination incidents, companies from the animal feed production sector (dairy cows, pigs and poultry) in the Netherlands came together to formulate best practices for safe production of feed. Since aquaculture has a relatively small market share in the Netherlands, it was not involved in this initiative.

Snowball effect

To this day, poultry, pig and dairy feed producing companies are the majority of GMP+ FSA certified companies. Their supply chain, which includes collection, feed material production, trade and transport, receives most of the remaining GMP+ FSA

certifications. But times are changing. The number of participating aquafeed companies has risen steadily over the last few years.

During recent visits to Turkey and France, it was heartening to hear that several market aquaculture leaders started asking their feed suppliers to become GMP+ FSA certified. Because of our chain approach, these requests often lead to a snowball effect.

We are very encouraged by these developments, since aquafeed producers and GMP+ International have not had a close relationship. We have always had companies in aquafeed within our scheme, but because aquaculture has not been involved from the start, GMP+ FSA has not always been their minds. Yet, I believe the all-important issue of feed safety binds us all together.

Many aquafeed producers also have pig and poultry feed production in the same production facility. A GMP+ FSA certificate can cover all feed types with one feed safety management system which complies with the world's highest standards.

Chain approach

Since our founding almost three decades ago, GMP+ FSA has developed into the world's most recognizable feed safety scheme. Over 18,000 companies in more than 85 countries are GMP+ FSA certified. One of the things that makes GMP+ FSA unique among peers is our chain approach. This allows certified companies to trade exclusively with businesses that are GMP+ FSA

(or equally) certified as well. That way, feed safety is ensured from start to finish.

We see feed safety as a shared responsibility for the entire feed chain. Every company needs to keep feed safe, all the way from collection and storage, through transport and final production. Because a chain is as strong as its weakest link, this is also true for the aquafeed sector.

Besides a feed safety framework based on the principles of GMP (prerequisites), ISO and HACCP to prevent contamination, we also provide certified companies with additional tooling and support, like tracking and tracing, crisis communication guidance, and an early warning system to reduce the impact (“damage control”) if contamination occurs. Because GMP+ FSA covers all of these aspects, separate certification for GMP, ISO and/or HACCP can be skipped, which will save companies money.

Sustainability

One aspect that is especially appealing to companies in aquaculture looking to improve sustainability, is an additional module called GMP+ Feed Responsibility Assurance (GMP+ FRA). This certificate allows companies to demonstrate that they meet market requirements with regard to people and the environment. So far, we included standards for the use of responsible soybean products and non-GMO feed materials in mixed feed. The assurance of these aspects can easily be managed (or implemented) in the same management system as for feed safety assurance. Whether it is perceived habitat destruction, overfishing, marine ingredients in feed or use of antibiotics, aquaculture companies are increasingly confronted with sustainability demands from business partners, stricter regulations and critical end consumers. GMP+ International is willing to integrate these aspects in the GMP+ FRA module to ensure aquafeed companies work responsibly, while opening new doors for them at the same time. We hereby invite aquafeed companies, as well as the scheme holders active in aquaculture and retail, to collaborate in defining the required feed responsibility parameters.

One-stop shop

GMP+ International is a “one-stop shop” for feed certification. GMP+ FSA and GMP+ FRA certificates

(the two modules in the GMP+ Feed Certification scheme) can be awarded with just one audit.

There are companies that work with more than one scheme because they are active in, for example, both poultry and aquaculture. Or they have one certificate for feed safety here, and another for sustainability there. With GMP+ FSA plus FRA all activities are covered under the same scheme, which saves companies a lot of time and hassle.

Our GMP+ FSA module, which is set to undergo a complete renewal in 2020, actively involves certified companies when it comes to the contents of the scheme. Although we are a privately owned non-profit organization, participants in the scheme still have a lot of influence – just like back in 1992. We invite companies to participate in several expert committees that advise us about the standards of GMP+ FSA. GMP+ FSA is not ours – it’s yours!

Multi-stakeholder participation

When other companies participate, we both increase our engagement and ensure our scheme is workable in practice. We will always continue this open dialogue with our industry partners, because we are convinced this multi-stakeholder approach is the safest road to achieving *Feed Safety Worldwide*.

Yet this cannot be achieved without all parts of the feed chain participating – aquaculture included. Although we’re heading in the right direction, we would love to see more aquafeed companies participating. This becomes even more essential, considering new ingredients in the feed supply chain are gaining a foothold in aqua feed, like algae, seaweeds, insects and single cell proteins. We will continue to do our part and invest in building long-term relationships in aquafeed and aquaculture. Because we believe strongly that GMP+ FSA provides you with all tools needed to produce safe feed, and to thrive in these challenging and promising times.

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