Guidance

S9.34 - Antibiotic-free feed FAQ

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1. What is the reason a specific document about the use of antibiotics is created?

Antibiotics are used in livestock farms in order to prevent or combat infection in farm animals. Livestock farmers – in consultation with their vet – have various options for administering antibiotics. One of these options is dosing the feed as so-called medicated feed.

During the production process of medicated feed, a small amount of residue (including the antibiotics) in the production line is inevitable. Due to carry-over to other animal feed produced subsequently on the same production line, farm animals are unintentionally exposed to antibiotics residue. Feed is subject to legal residue levels for antibiotics that may not be exceeded. The GMP+ FC scheme includes strict rules in order to control these legally required residue limits.

The general public is increasingly interested in the use of antibiotics in livestock farms and the consequent antibiotics resistance. On 18 November 2010, the Bureau Risicobeoordeling en Onderzoeksprogrammering (Risk Assessment and Research Programming) of the Dutch NVWA (Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) issued an advice to the Minister of Economy, Agriculture and Innovation and the Minister of Public Health, Wellbeing and Sports relating to increased resistance as a result of very low concentrations of antibiotics due to carry-over. One of the conclusions is that with a carry-over percentage of 2.5% or less, the resistance development of the E. Coli bacteria is very limited (based on tests with 3 different antibiotics). The advice reports that without any supplementary tests, it is not possible to establish whether or not a carry-over percentage of 2.5% or less causes resistance development in other combinations of bacteria and antibiotics.

As antibiotics may be administered to animals in a different manner, another option is to decide on a full stop of processing antibiotics in feed. The Dutch animal feed industry and livestock farms wish to increase their quality image and preventatively chose to stop processing any antibiotics in animal feedstuffs.

If a feed manufacturer does not process any antibiotics in feed or use antibiotic-free production lines, the company may apply this Country Note. The certification for this Country Note suffices for the feed manufacturer to demonstrate the company's production facilities are free of antibiotics or uses antibiotic-free production lines and that residue of antibiotics therefore is not present in the feed.

2. Is certification for the Country Note TS 2.2 mandatory?

No, supplementary certification for the Country Note TS 2.2 is not mandatory. However, it is an excellent way to show your customers that you do not use any antibiotics in the production of your feedstuffs. Your customer may request supplementary certification.

3. I supply to the Dutch market, but I am not located in the Netherlands. Can I get our company certified?

The Country Note is not intended in particular for Dutch companies, it is intended for the Dutch market. If your company is located outside the Netherlands and you would like to demonstrate that you do not use any antibiotics (for example to supply Dutch customers), you may naturally request supplementary certification.

Supplementary is also possible if you have no connection whatsoever with the Dutch market. However, the expectation is that the Country Note will mainly be used by Dutch companies and companies supplying the Dutch market, as this concerns a request of Dutch market parties.

4. I am certified for a certification scheme that is accepted as equivalent by GMP+ International. Can I request supplementary certification for this Country Note?

It is also possible to request supplementary certification for the Country Note Antibiotic-free feed to a standard other than GMP+. For example, if you are certified for Ovocom or QS for the production of feed. This is subject to the condition that this concerns one of the standards accepted in the GMP+ FC scheme. For details, please refer to the GMP+ TS 1.2 Purchase.

This would require for a supplementary audit to be conducted by a GMP+ accepted Certification Body. This may be your regular auditor for the certificate you currently hold, but you may have to use a different Certification Body.

We enable every company in the feed chain to take responsibility for safe and sustainable feed.

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