

Opening speech of the EMFEMA President B. Courtin

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As President of EMFEMA it is my great pleasure to welcome you here in Brussels to celebrate with us the 10th anniversary of our association.

Further to discussions I had with Mr. Thibeaux (former EU, DG VI) in 1996 it was agreed that there was a need to find a platform to discuss mineral feed ingredients and their legislation. Following several meetings with the industry, thirteen manufacturers of various mineral feed ingredients volunteered to become founding members of EMFEMA, in full wording “International Association of the European (EU) Manufactures of Major, Trace and Specific Feed Mineral Materials”. Our organisation is ruled by the Belgian law and consequently the statutes were published in the Belgian Official Journal of June 20th 1996. The first board had 7 members, who appointed two vice presidents (Mr. Léon Germain and Mr. Santiago Campaña). Dr. H. Liekens became the first Secretary General.

According to article 3 of the statutes, EMFEMA’s objectives are:

1. To promote the scientific study and the development of feed mineral materials.
2. To improve the understanding of the public and particularly the users of these products, of all questions related to the use of feed mineral materials.
3. To promote the relations of the European Industry of feed mineral materials with the European and international authorities.
4. To cooperate with other organisations having similar or related interests.

It was in 2000 that Dr. H. Liekens wanted to resign after a very hectic initial period and that the General Meeting decided to appoint Mr. Theo Dubois as Dr. Liekens’ successor as Secretary General, effective as from the first of January of 2001. This was also the time that EMFEMA broadened the number of members with 5 associated members active in the field of mineral feed mixes.

During the last 3 years our members have had to deal with numerous challenges since the European authorities decided to introduce a new safe feed and food guideline, laid down in the White Paper and progressively put this guideline into practice. In parallel to the White Paper, FAO started a working group to establish a Codex Alimentarius. EMFEMA felt the necessity to participate in this through IFIF, an international federation representing the animal feed industry. After 4 yearly meetings, FAO adopted the proposal and will implement

and promote this all over the world. Initiatives have been taken within IFIF to make the Codex Alimentarius more widely known in collaboration with FAO. Already in July 2005 a world conference has been organised in Sao Paulo (Brazil) to discuss, inform and promote the Codex Alimentarius all over the world, the purpose being to achieve a worldwide Good Manufacturing Practice, to guarantee safe feed and food. I have the pleasure to be actively engaged in IFIF as one of the Vice Presidents of this globally active organization.

What has been achieved?

- In the area of undesirable substances, we were able to give a quick answer to the dioxin levels in minerals when needed. Regarding heavy metals, from the beginning, our members' attitude was to reduce the maximum levels in the finished feeds as much as practically achievable. All our members invested heavily in their production facilities to come up with as "clean" products as possible. We therefore plead to the Commission to accept our recommended maximum levels as we laid down in our proposal and this for the sake of consumer safety.
- EMFEMA also conceived a Good Management Guideline and was closely involved in updating the list of mineral feed materials.
- We have commissioned a bioavailability study, entitled BIOAVAILABILITY OF MAJOR AND TRACE MINERALS, that was compiled by 3 renowned researchers, Dr. A.W. Jongbloed (ID TNO Animal Nutrition, Lelystad, The Netherlands), Dr. G. De Groote (now retired) and Dr. M. Lippens (CLO Gent, Belgium) and Dr. F. Meschy (INRA, France) and well edited by Prof. Vanbelle. This publication was very popular in the E.U. and attracted the attention of people of all over the world and several hundreds of copies were sent to many different countries as far as India, South America, Australia, etc.
- Our Buyers' Guide is a standard work for all nutritionists and purchasers to inform them on the use and characteristics of feed minerals.
- EMFEMA played an active role during the BSE-crisis with regard to the bone dicalcium phosphate (DCP), which had to be considered as being of mineral origin and WITHOUT RISK.
- Our web site was launched about 1 year ago and enjoyed many visitors. The complete versions of the 2 publications I just mentioned are now available to anyone on our web site.

- The common platform for the notification of feed additives that was organized in collaboration with FEFANA, FEFAC, IMA and FEDIAF. We will be active when it comes to the authorization of mineral feed additives. We encouraged our members to notify their products, as our industry was afraid that some products and especially some trace elements could be left behind as so-called “orphan additives”
- Recently we have acquired the so-called LIAISON STATUS with CEN/TC 327 which will allow us to participate in the elaboration of analytical methods and to be kept informed about any new developments in this field.
- EMFEMA also maintains very close contacts with the EU organisations DG SANCO and EFSA and together with the related associations such as FEFAC, FEFANA, IMA, IFIF and others, EMFEMA is committed to fully collaborate in the concept of safer food and feed.
- During our half-yearly meetings, the members are informed about new developments on scientific and legislative items. This is an important aspect, since most of our members are only for a minor part active in the field of animal nutrition and, as such, have sometimes difficulties to adapt to changing EU regulations and to follow new developments, influencing their business on European level.

What will have our attention in the future?

- The legislation with regard to undesirable substances in feed additives will have our full attention.
- EMFEMA supported totally the idea of Rapid Alert System, but in the past several mistakes were made by local authorities due to wrong analytical methods or applications. This had important economical consequences. We urge the Commission to come up with a better procedure that, in relation with rapid and reliable analytical methods, will prevent most of the accidents we have known in the past and even today.
- In addition, a correct procedure to control the traceability should be discussed for local producers as well as for imported materials.
- One of our major concerns nowadays is the new member states in Central and East Europe. We are intensively active to identify and locate those companies involved in minerals in order to recruit them to EMFEMA. We will then be able to fully inform them about what rules to respect to assure their customers that they too are striving to a

complete fulfilment of one of our major objectives: safer food and feed through well controlled and safe mineral feed materials and additives.

I want to end now this short introduction, as we still have a rather full programme ahead of us. I am sure you will find it a very interesting meeting particularly when I look at the names of our distinguished speakers and panel members, whom I want to thank in advance.

I have also great pleasure to welcome Professor Dr. Vanbelle, who was kind enough to agree to be our moderator for today. I am convinced that I have no need to introduce Professor Dr. Vanbelle, as his reputation not only as scientist but also as man of practical experience is widely known in the world of animal nutrition.

I wish all of you a very interesting symposium and I now leave the floor to our moderator and speakers.

COURTIN Benoît
EMFEMA President

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