

### **The Hemp Feed Coalitions Response to Concern over Hemp in Animal Feed**

To Agricultural Leaders, State Policy Makers, AAFCO Officials and Supporting AAFCO Members,

This letter is in response to the February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, release from the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) to agricultural leaders and state policy makers.

Established in 2018, the Hemp Feed Coalition (HFC) is a non-profit organization composed of industry professionals across animal feed, animal supplements, feed analytics, veterinary science, and hemp industries. The organization's mission is to bring safe, healthy, hemp derived, nutritional ingredients to the feed production system, which simultaneously brings value back to the farm. We do this by supporting and submitting applications to FDA and AAFCO for use of hemp grain in feed. Since the inception of the organization, HFC has worked within the federal and state guidelines to collect data, lead research, and submit feed applications to AAFCO and subsequently the FDA-CVM through the well-defined process of approval.

HFC has focused its efforts in evaluating products derived from hemp seed, also known as hemp grain. Hemp grain is incredibly nutritious ingredient – composed of fiber, protein, and a unique lipid profile. Hemp grain products abound and are generally recognized as safe (GRAS) by FDA for human consumption. It is well established that the grain does not produce any cannabinoids (organic compounds developed within the flower). There is significant research that supports the safety and efficacy of hemp grain for both humans and animals, but due to historic regulatory restrictions within the US, most of these studies were completed outside of the country. Unfortunately, FDA-CVM discounts research generated outside the US and requires US produced research for evaluation. Due to the nascent legal status of hemp in the US, this bureaucratic inflexibility has greatly delayed the market development and inclusion of this highly nutritious protein and lipid source into our animal feed. Despite no negative health impacts, the FDA-CVM has focused its concern on the small potential presence of cannabinoids, which many times is well below detectable limits.

Prior to the effective prohibition of hemp production, grain was a well-recognized feed stock and agricultural commodity in the United States. Product labels for production animal feeds from the early 1900's show many included hemp seed and hemp seed products. In addition, multiple international countries have consumed this highly nutritious seed for generations. It stands to argue that hemp seed ingredients should be grandfathered into the approved animal feed ingredients list since it is proven to have been commercially used and safe well before 1958. (Grandfathered – any feed ingredients already recognized as safe before the passing of Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act in 1958). AAFCO feed applications cost roughly \$250,000 each, require at least 12 – 24 months, and are specific to the ingredient and the species. At the current rate of approval and with those statistics in mind, it will be millions of dollars and decades before the hemp industry even has a chance to compete in the greater feed market.

HFC understands many of the concerns that AAFCO presented in the letter published on February 9<sup>th</sup>. We too believe that the safety data and research on the presence of added or concentrated cannabinoids or the use of hemp flower in feed is inconclusive at this time. We strongly support the efforts of other colleagues in the industry who are undertaking this costly and time-consuming evaluation and urge regulators to work with these groups. HFC has pointed AAFCO and FDA-CVM to several existing livestock studies from the US, Canada, and other foreign countries. These studies found that cannabinoid transference even when fed in high concentrations is negligible, and many times undetectable in the animals and their by-products.

In 2020, HFC coordinated with others to collect and analyze samples and execute a feed study to submit their first animal feed ingredient application with "Hemp Seed Meal, for Laying Hens." Hemp seed meal is the by-product of the seed after the oil has been extruded and is a highly nutritious protein supplement. Currently, this application is in FDA-CVM's hands for their second review. The study HFC presented established that the eggs of the laying hens

showed multiple nutritional benefits. It also showed no cannabinoid transference, safety concerns, or impact on the hens or the eggs. The regulators sent the application back to HFC and requested that the laboratory analysis be rerun at even lower levels of cannabinoid detection, regardless of the successful hen and egg study. *This request for lower levels of detection of compounds that are physiologically NOT produced in the ingredient is why HFC and the industry at large continues to be frustrated with regulators. Their lack of knowledge and refusal to acknowledge positive results from studies like this one is an example of the incredibly onerous and unnecessary concern over hemp seed ingredients.*

In early 2021, the State of Montana passed House Bill 396, which allowed hemp ingredients to be fed to pets, specialty pets, and horses. Although HFC was not involved in this lobbying effort, we commend the state of Montana for recognizing the value and allowing feed for species that have no human food concern. The Montana state plan did this with care and concern for the safety of these animals. Their Department of Agriculture does not allow any “added CBD, THC, or Cannabis derived products” into the grain-based feed for these animals. In one easy swoop, the passage of this bill provided a safe, healthy ingredient for this class of animals and created an entirely new revenue stream and marketplace for producers and manufacturers in the state. It’s not surprising then, that Montana led the nation last year in harvested grain acres and utilized production, according to the recently published USDA National Hemp Report.

Like our colleagues in AAFCO and FDA-CVM, HFC values animal health and safety first. We look to these regulators for their expertise in animal feed and we in turn hope they look to us as the experts in hemp and its products. In December 2021, HFC asked AAFCO to be included in their Hemp Committee, so as to share the research, data, and expertise we have acquired in our years in the industry. This request was denied, then was followed by the Feb 9<sup>th</sup> letter to State Leaders and Policy Makers. *This letter deliberately conflates hemp grain with cannabinoids, greatly setting back the years of progress the industry has made educating our colleagues in the traditional agricultural world on how the parts of the plant differ and the highly nutritious value grain brings.*

HFC will not be dissuaded by this lack of regard and collaboration. While AAFCO still remains highly regarded and trusted they do not have regulatory authority – they simply recommend policy. We pledge to continue to provide data-based studies and applications to our regulators. We ask in return they allow a representative from the Hemp Feed Coalition to participate and collaborate on their Hemp Committee. We also ask that they consider combining related species and multiple ingredients when possible. And finally, we ask that they would value the Generally Recognized as Safe status these ingredients possess for human food and reasonably respond to the organizations like HFC that continue to provide the data.

HFC encourages states to support local investigations and conversations with industry experts, to review the all the data and decide for themselves. Please consider HFC a resource of information and guidance. You can contact us at the email below.

Thank you for your consideration,



Morgan Tweet  
Hemp Feed Coalition - Executive Director  
HempFeedCoalition@gmail.com