



Mr John Barnes,  
Head of Local Delivery,  
FSA,  
Aviation House,  
125 Kingsway,  
London WC2B 6NH

10 December 2013

**Subject: Consultation on The Feed Law Code of Practice**

Dear Mr Barnes,

Gafta is the association representing the trade in agricultural commodities and general produce, established in 1876. In the context of this consultation, Gafta is representing importers and traders of feed materials and we have focused on chapter 3 relating to competency of officers and 5 on the organisation of official controls in answer to this consultation.

**Question 1. Is Gafta supportive of country specific Codes rather than one GB?**

On specific country codes, Gafta members are not opposed to specific country codes but our preference would be to have one unique code. We would insist that there is consistency and alignment through the practice guidance which will be helpful for our members who are actively trading in all countries.

**Question 2 What subject areas or content in the proposed new Code or practice guidance requires greater clarification and why?** Gafta would like to see greater clarity in areas dealing with qualifications, competency requirements and training.

**Question 3 Do the competency requirements adequately cover the key tasks authorised officers would be expected to perform to deliver official controls? If not, please specify any additional tasks.**

**Question 4 Do the competency requirements give adequate flexibility in the use of officers to carry out certain less complex activities (such as the inspection of feed at primary production or checks at points of entry) or do you foresee any problems with this approach?**

From an importers perspective, Gafta members do not consider that the proposed competency requirements adequately cover the key tasks authorised officers would be expected to perform. If officials are determining whether a feed establishment or an importer is fully compliant with feed law requirements at point of entry and may be validating the earned recognition scheme, they must have a prescribed qualification which gives an independent standard or benchmark.

We do not agree that competency or training is adequate and practical experience should be required. The text needs to be strengthened on sample taking, underlining the importance of officers having on the ground experience carrying out x no of sampling procedures and signed off by someone with proven competency in the area.

**Question 5 Should a minimum number of hours be stated in the proposed new Code for on-going continuing professional development (CPD) requirements? If so what would be a suitable minimum number of hours?**

Legislation, like staff changes frequently, a minimum number of hours agreed is not helpful. Officers need to remain current and knowledgeable on all new or revised legislation and continuing professional development needs to reflect this. Training needs to be continuous and it also need to include practical experience. From Gafta's experience, in some cases, the trade is often training staff whose training would appear not to be sufficient to carry out the tasks assigned. We would propose officers are trained by certification bodies.

**Question 7 Will the proposed increased use of earned recognition and the amendments to the proposed new risk rating scheme enable LAs to focus on those businesses that require more regulatory activity? If not, what is needed?**

Gafta welcomes the FSA's proposal to introduce the principle of "earned recognition" into the feed law code and our members see it positively in reducing costs and the burden of inspections for those participating in assurance schemes such as GTAS. Many of our members have invested heavily in implementing systems to comply with food and feed legislation and we welcome the approach to recognise those with a good compliance record benefitting from the new provisions on earned recognition and at the same time giving greater recognition to assurance schemes.

The Gafta Trade Assurance Scheme has an online database which reflects the certificate status of each member whether they are a full member, have withdrawn or are suspended. We issue a notice to Gafta and GTAS members where a suspension is introduced. We agree with the principle of sharing data and providing information on scheme membership, last certification date, month of next audit etc and that various processes are in place to inform CAs and FSA on any immediate threat to public or animal health. Gafta would like to seek further clarification on para 5.3.6 in the "practice guidance document" relating specifically to "sharing of data".

Gafta is happy to continue discussions with you on any of the issues we have raised in our response or indeed the consultation.

Yours sincerely,



June Arnold  
Head of Policy