

Melamine in animal feed: notification sent to stakeholders on 5 December 2008 (includes list of some laboratories that may analyse for melamine feeding stuffs)

URGENT ACTION: Update on the melamine situation

Dear Colleague

1. I am writing in follow-up to our previous stakeholder notifications of 28 November and 2 December to provide some additional information about the finding of melamine in organic soya expeller from the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). This follow-up covers the following issues:

- the possible contamination of feed with "melamine-related substances";
- laboratories with facilities for the analysis of melamine and/or ammeline, ammelide and cyanuric acid;
- a draft amendment to European Commission Decision 2008/798/EC;
- the analysis of milk for melamine etc; and
- advice for farmers with livestock that has consumed contaminated feed.

A summary of the Food Standards Agency's advice is given at the end of this e-mail.

Possible contamination with "melamine-related substances"

2. We have received an indication from the competent authority of another EU Member State that it has found significant levels of the melamine-related substances ammeline, ammelide and cyanuric acid in organic soya expeller from the PRC. Therefore, a chemical analysis of feed or food which indicates an apparent absence of melamine does not necessarily mean that the sample does not contain these other adulterants. The Agency is therefore asking stakeholders to sample and analyse feed and food for all four substances. In addition, the Agency is working with UK enforcement authorities to generate further analytical data on melamine and melamine-related substances.

Laboratories

3. I attach information on laboratories (Annex 1) which we understand have facilities for the determination of melamine and/or ammeline, ammelide and cyanuric acid in feed. Please be advised that not all of these laboratories are able to conduct analyses for all four substances, and that it is expected that a high demand could lead to delays in the reporting of results.

Draft amendment to European Commission Decision 2008/798/EC

4. On 2 December, the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) voted to adopt an amendment to Commission Decision 2008/798/EC of 14 October 2008 concerning feed and food products containing milk or milk products from China. The amendment will now bring soya-containing feeds and food within the scope of a requirement for Member States to perform checks (including laboratory analysis) on all consignments imported from the PRC.

5. In addition, feed and food business operators will be required to give prior notification to the control authorities of imports of any consignments originating from the PRC. The requirement for the destruction of feed or food product containing melamine in excess of 2.5 mg/kg is unaltered. The amending Decision has yet to be published in the Official Journal. We expect the UK to implement the amending Decision by means of a Declaration on 10 December. We will inform interested stakeholders when this has taken place.

Analysis of milk

6. We have been informed of the result of an analysis of milk from a bulk sample taken from a tanker that included (we understand) milk from animals that had recently consumed melamine-contaminated feed. The level was reported as less than 0.8 mg melamine/kg milk. Although this single analytical result does provide a limited level of reassurance, information on the potential levels of ammeline, ammeline and cyanuric acid that might be present is lacking. In addition, the fact that the sample was taken from a bulk tanker would almost certainly mean that the milk from the affected farms was significantly diluted. Stakeholders are kindly requested to provide the Agency with any analytical results for both feed and food (including negative results) as requested in our previous letter to stakeholders.

Advice for farmers

7. Colleagues in Animal Health, an agency of Defra, have provided the following advice for farmers who may be concerned about the health of animals that have consumed contaminated feed:

- the risk to animal health from low levels of melamine in the finished feeds received from feed compounders is low;
- the consumption of melamine contaminated feed can give rise to kidney and/or bladder stones, particularly in very young animals and male animals;
- plentiful consumption of water will aid the flushing of the urinary system, so farmers should ensure that a plentiful supply of clean water is available and encourage frequent uptake of it;
- animals should therefore be observed closely for any signs of ill health, particularly those that may indicate difficulty in passing urine, e.g. abdominal pain, kicking at the belly or blood-stained urine; and

- consult your private veterinary surgeon for further advice

8. Any further questions relating to animal health issues should be directed to the Defra helpline, 0845 933 5577, open Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 6.00pm. The Defra helpline has been advised and has been briefed.

Summary of the Agency's advice

9. In summary, the Agency's advice is as follows:

- any consignment of organic soya expeller from the PRC, or any finished compound feed which is suspected to contain this material, should not be fed and should be quarantined and sampled for the presence of melamine and the melamine-related substances ammeline, ammelide and cyanuric acid;
- reports of the sampling, including negative results, should be reported to the Agency using the online report form available on our website;
- in cases where it is known or suspected that animals have received higher levels of the soya expeller in their diets, the milk should be quarantined and tested for the presence of melamine and melamine-related substances (and these results also reported to the Agency); and
- it would be prudent for processors of organic milk to monitor incoming supplies of milk for the potential presence of melamine and melamine-related substances

Commission advice is that any food or feed product found to contain melamine at levels higher than 2.5 mg/kg should be destroyed.

Yours faithfully

K MILLAR
Head of Animal Feed Unit

Annex 1:

Melamine Analytical Capability as at 1 October 2008

Public Analysts

Organisation	Contact	Contact details	Able to test for....
Lancashire	Peter Mayes	County Laboratory Riversway Dock Estate Preston PR2 2TX 01772 721660 Out of Hours 07811260066 Peter.Mayes@lancashire.gov.uk	Melamine and cyanuric acid.
Eurofins	Jeremy Wootten	Eurofins Laboratories Ltd 28-32 Brunel Road, Westway Estate, Acton, W3 7XR Tel: (0)20 8222 6072 JeremyWootten@eurofins.co.uk	Melamine, cyanuric acid, ammeline and ammelide.
Hampshire Scientific Service	Glenn Taylor.	Hampshire County Council - Property Business & Regulatory Services Scientific Service Hyde Park Road Southsea, PO5 4LL Tel. 023 92 829 501 glenn.taylor@hants.gov.uk	Melamine only

Industry/commercial

Central Science Laboratory	Simon Baty	Sand Hutton York YO41 1LZ UK Tel. 01904 462531 s.baty@csl.gov.uk	Melamine and cyanuric acid only
LFRA	Antony Bagshaw Tony Hines Peter Wilson	01372 822 291 Abagshaw@leatherheadfood.com 01372 822245 (TH) thines@leatherheadfood.com 01372 822285 (PW) pwilson@leatherheadfood.com	Melamine only

LGC	Ian Lumley or Pete Colwell	Tel 020 8943 7342 (IL) Ian.Lumley@lgc.co.uk Tel 020 8943 7443 (PC) Pete.Colwell@lgc.co.uk	Melamine, cyanuric acid, ammeline and ammelide
AFBI	Glenn Kennedy	AFBI Stormont Stoney Road	Melamine only

	or Robert McCracken	Belfast BT4 3SD Tel: 02890 525651 or 02890 525636 Glenn.kennedy@afbini.gov.uk Robert.mccracken@afbini.gov.uk	
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Note:

The Food Standards Agency cannot recommend any particular laboratory for melamine testing, however we are aware that the above list of laboratories may analyse for melamine in feedingstuffs.

This is for guidance purposes only and is not an exhaustive list of all UK laboratories who can perform melamine testing