



PRESS RELEASE

EU grains, oilseeds and feed value chain partners call on the Commission to take urgent steps to avoid disruption of food and feed supply in Europe

Brussels, 17 March 2020 – Given the dramatic consequences of the spread of COVID-19, the priority of the whole food and feed supply chain is obviously to strictly comply with EU and national instructions to prevent further dissemination of the virus among its employees, suppliers and customers.

At the same time, we are taking all the actions required to avoid disruptions in the food and feed supply chain, so as to be able to continue supplying farmers, the food industry and feed processors with the agricultural raw materials and ingredients they need.

The situation is critical because the more these restrictions persist, the more the risk of shortage for food companies is likely to materialize at any level of the food, feed and livestock chain, thus challenging the European population access to regular supplies of food.

For that reason, we are calling for the inclusion of feed next to food in the list of essential goods mentioned in the EU Commission Guidelines on Border Management published yesterday. Farm animals must be fed every day in order to provide key food products consumed by the population and to ensure animal health and welfare. Some Member States, like Spain, Italy and Belgium, have already included feed supplies on their list of essential goods, but we need a harmonised approach at EU level.

In addition, we call on EU and national authorities to take swift action to ensure that all food and feed, even if not perishable, can be transported across the EU unhindered as long as all required health safety measures are respected. Agricultural raw materials, although not perishable, are essential to the supply of farms and the food industry – and thus the provision of animal health and welfare to farm animals and food to the European population

At the same time, the decision to close the EU outside borders that was taken yesterday to contain the propagation of the virus should not apply to vessels bringing in the food & feed raw materials that are in short supply in the EU – again, as long as they take every necessary health measure to ensure the health of all actors in the food and feed supply chain.

“As traders of agri commodities, our mission is to ensure the supply of the raw materials and ingredients that are needed by farmers, the food sector and the feed industry for direct use and further processing. We source from European producers, moving agri goods across the EU and exporting the surplus, but we also import the raw materials for which the EU is in deficit. We have been watching disruptions in the food and feed supply chain increasing in the last few days, and are very concerned about future developments as the COVID-19 virus continues to spread. The EU needs to protect the health of all operators in the chain so that

they continue to ensure the uninterrupted supply of food and feed”. **COCERAL President, Philippe Mitko**

“For our processing plants to continue providing consumers with vegetable oils and livestock with protein meals, essential goods need to continue arriving to our facilities, which requires imperatively essential agricultural raw materials to be transported to and across the EU.” **FEDIOL President, John Grossmann**

“The EU feed industry fully accepts the need for strict containment policies at EU and Member States level to slow down the infectious COVID-19 cycle. Our priority and key mission is to protect animal health and welfare of farm animals and food supply chains for milk, meat, eggs to consumers during the COVID-19 crisis. We therefore urge the EU Commission to recognise the status of feed as essential goods in the EU COVID-19 guidelines, which is crucial to uphold the functioning of the single market for feedstuffs to prevent supply chain disruptions and shortages of essential nutrients to the EU farm animal population”. **FEFAC President, Nick Major**

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About the EU grains, oilseeds and feed value chain partners

COCERAL is the **European association of trade in cereals, rice, feedstuffs oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply**. It represents the interest of the European collectors, traders, importers, exporters and port silo storekeepers of the above-mentioned agricultural products. COCERAL's direct members are located in 14 EU countries, with one European association, Unistock representing the professional portside storekeepers for agribulk commodities within the EU and one associated member in Switzerland. With about 3000 companies as part of COCERAL national members, the sector trades agricultural raw materials destined to the supply of the food and feed chains, as well as for technical and energy uses. Gafta is an extraordinary member of COCERAL.

FEDIOL, the **EU vegetable oil and proteinmeal industry association**, represents the interests of the European oilseed crushers, vegetable oil refiners and bottlers. FEDIOL members are 10 national associations and associated company members in 7 other EU countries. With about 180 facilities in Europe, the sector provides 20,000 direct employments. Its members process approximately 55 million tonnes of basic products a year, both of EU origin and imported from third country markets. The sector processes notably rapeseed, sunflower seed, soybeans and linseed into oils and meals for food, feed, technical and energy uses essentially on the European market.

FEFAC, the **European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation**, represents 23 national Associations in 23 EU Member States as well as Associations in Switzerland, Turkey, Serbia, Russia and Norway with observer/associate member status. The European compound feed industry employs over 100,000 persons on app. 3,500 production sites often in rural areas, which offer few employment opportunities.