September 26, 2001

Updated Copper Oxide Policy

Copper oxide is a legally defined feed ingredient in all feeds with the exception of dog and cat food. The AAFCO Dog and Cat Nutrient Profiles stipulate that “because of very poor bioavailability, copper from oxide sources that are added to the diet should not be considered in determining the minimum nutrient level”. On this basis, Kentucky refuses to register dog and cat foods that list copper oxide as the only source of copper for products that claim nutritional adequacy based on meeting the AAFCO Nutrient Profiles.

For livestock feeds, we have no alternative other than to accept the registration of feeds that contain copper oxide. However, for cattle feeds and mineral products we are advising feed manufacturers about the limited bioavailability of copper supplied by copper oxide and suggest that they may want to consider an alternative form of copper.

With regard to swine, poultry, and other animal diets, we will monitor labels for the copper source. If copper oxide is listed as a source of copper, then it will be our practice to advise the manufacturer of this and request their review to see if they wish to switch to a more available form of copper. If a company wants to continue using copper oxide, then we request they provide us with an affidavit declaring nutritionally suitable for its intended purpose. This is based on scientific information that copper oxide has 0 and 30% bioavailability for poultry and swine, respectively. Thus, the Division of Regulatory Services policy is to require manufacturer to certify that their feeds are suitable for their intended purpose.

This policy was updated from the March 15, 1999 policy. The policy was updated by Steve Traylor, Feed Coordinator