The History of the American Feed Control Officials

AAFCO - How It All Began

Since its birth in early September 1909, the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) has actively shaped the feed laws and regulations. The first U.S. statute on feed regulation appeared in Connecticut in 1895. The 1895 act stated, “The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station shall make analysis of food products on sale in Connecticut suspected of being adulterated...”, (Public Acts, January 1895, CGS, Chapter CCXXXV, 1895). Massachusetts passed a law the following year. By 1909, several states and Canada had enacted their own feed laws with a number of remaining states considering the enactment of similar legislation. In September of that year, several state feed control officials, along with representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, came to Washington, D.C. to participate in a gathering of the feed industry.

It was at a meeting in Chicago on March 26, 1909, that representatives of feed manufacturers, retailers, and distributors of feedstuffs formed the American Feed Manufacturers Association (AFMA). AFMA organized a second meeting in Washington, D.C. for September 1909 in part to discuss inspection laws and enforcement, and invited feed control officials to participate. A committee of control officials and industry representatives was appointed to study inspection and enforcement matters and report back to AFMA.

As the meeting adjourned, there were a number of control officials that were interested in continuing discussions about feed control matters. Dr. E. B. Voorhees of the New Jersey Agriculture Experiment Station requested that the control officials remain for a follow-up meeting. Some of the control officials departed, unaware of this request, while others stayed to discuss feed regulation. The control officials present in this discussion group were Dr. Voorhees (NJ), Dr. E. H. Jenkins (CT), N. B. Critchfield (PA), B. L. Purcell (VA), P. H. Smith (MA), J. D. Turner (KY), L. F. Brown (NY) and Prof. E. H. Webster (KS). This gathering marked the birth of the feed control association.

The original name was the Association of Feed Control Officials, followed by the American Feed Control Officials of the United States. Later, to accommodate other nations of the Western Hemisphere the name was changed to the Association of American Feed Control Officials, the name that remains today. Canada and Costa Rica are now a part of the Association along with the 50 states and Puerto Rico. In 1935, the Association was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia.

At this first meeting of control officials, Dr. Voorhees, acting as chair, urged that control officials continue their individual work. He also noted that the industry had an organization and that control officials needed a way to prepare and provide industry with a general consensus of the regulatory community. This is noteworthy because it was the first declared mission of the association. Dr. Voorhees offered two paths: 1) set up an association at once, or 2) appoint a committee to study the situation and arrange for another meeting to form the control association. Those present discussed the needs and requested Dr. Voorhees to appoint a committee to create the new association. As Dr. Voorhees could not continue as chair, he appointed B. L. Purcell to the position. Other members of the committee were J. D. Turner (secretary) L. F. Brown, E. H. Jenkins and E. H. Webster. Dr. Voorhees continued as a member of the committee for as long as he was able and soon after was succeeded by Dr. R. E. Stallings of Georgia.
At the next meeting in 1910, the organization moved forward with discussion of the constitution and by-laws. In all, 15 states and the federal government were represented along with industry. Several speakers expressed the need for the organization. Topics under discussion included "A Uniform Commercial Feeding Stuffs Law." Officers were elected at the conclusion of the session: B. L. Purcell, President; E. H. Webster, Vice-president; J. D. Turner, Secretary, with an Executive Committee of L. F. Brown, Chairman; W. J. Jones, Jr., and P. H. Smith.

The first order of business for the newly formed association was the preparation of the "Proposed Uniform Concentrated Commercial Feeding Stuffs Law;" which eventually became the Model Bill. Members agreed that the formulation of fair and equitable definitions, regulations and resolutions, acceptance of new feed ingredients and establishment of proper labeling procedures were needed as well.

AAFCO struggled to remain financially stable during its first several years. Industry publications provided a means for distribution of the annual meeting minutes. Leaflets were sold with feed definitions. The first AAFCO publication was prepared in 1920 and sold to industry and others. This 48 page document was the start of the AAFCO Official Publication which is now published annually and contains the proceedings from meetings and feed definitions.

Although AAFCO is not an enforcement agency, it provides a forum whereby control officials and industry meet in partnership to address problems in administering and enforcing state feed laws, identify emerging issues, study problems, develop strategies, as well as provide guidance and outreach. This enhances the quality and safety of feed produced and/or sold. AAFCO also develops standards and promotes uniformity of laws, regulations and enforcement.

As the feed industry has evolved and expanded over the years, so too has AAFCO. AAFCO has developed and revised regulatory provisions as warranted to incorporate the latest scientific data and to address innovations in manufacturing techniques, technology and products. Among those changes have been the ongoing revision of feed labeling requirements and feed definitions, the encouragement of good manufacturing practices, the development of comprehensive feeding protocols to assess nutritional adequacy, the adoption of pet food and specialty pet food regulations, and the establishment of a check sample program. Throughout its history, AAFCO has worked with stakeholders such as the Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, universities, industry and industry associations including the American Feed Industry Association (formerly AFMA), National Grain and Feed Association, and Pet Food Institute. AAFCO fulfills an influential role in feed regulations throughout the Americas. The Official Publication is recognized around the world as an important source of feed regulatory information. As AAFCO completes this 100th year of cooperative efforts in the regulation of the feed industry, it will engage future developments by building upon the solid foundation laid by the men and women who have carried out the mission of the organization.

John E. Schueler, "Association of American Feed Control Officials, Historical Sketch, 1909-1955"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MIDYEAR MEETING
Association of American Feed Control Officials
January 20-22, 2009
Tucson, Arizona

44TH ANNUAL FEED ADMINISTRATOR'S SEMINAR
May 2009
Bass Lake, California

AAFCO'S 100TH CELEBRATION
July 31-August 3, 2009
Washington, D.C.

FUTURE ANNUAL MEETINGS
2010 - Portland, Oregon

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Sharon Krebs, Editor