

EU law must adapt to allow insects in livestock production

There is growing global interest in the use of insects as an alternative source of protein in animal feed. PROteINSECT an EU-funded project co-ordinated in the UK by FERA (The Food and Environment Research Agency) is working hard to make changes within the current legislation.



Current European legislation however represents a barrier to the development of large-scale production processes.

Food security concerns have highlighted a need to find more sustainable sources of protein for use in animal feed. Insects are increasingly being recognised as an excellent alternative. Many species are highly nutritious and the production of insects has less environmental impact compared with traditional sources of animal feed protein.

Additional major advantages of insects as a protein source are that they can be reared successfully and quickly on a range of organic waste materials, such as vegetable, domestic and organic waste, reducing the volume of that waste in the process by up to 60%. The residue can also be recycled as fertiliser.

At present, EU law prohibits the inclusion of protein derived from insects in animal feed, with the exception of feed intended for fish or shellfish. As evidence of efficacy and safety of insect protein increases, through research delivered by the EU-funded PROteINSECT and other research projects, it is hoped that insect protein will also be permitted in pig and poultry feed in the future, particularly as these animals already consume insects as part of their natural diet.

Elaine Fitches, Co-ordinator of the PROteINSECT project at **FERA** says: "To enable protein from insects to become a significant component of animal feed, European legislation must be changed if we want to allow it to be fed to pigs and poultry as well as fish. Our work in PROteINSECT is establishing the evidence base that this is a

sustainable, safe and economic source of protein, delivering quality food for human consumption as well as significant environmental benefits."

Attention will also need to be paid to legislation covering the safe use of substrates, such as vegetable and domestic waste and manure, on which insects can be reared most economically.

Elaine Fitches continues: "The views of the public about the production and use of insect protein for animal feed are of great interest to our project. A short survey is available now on our website and I do urge everyone to please complete it."

PROteINSECT survey on production and use of insect protein for animal feed can be accessed [here](#).

by AllAboutFeed 18 Oct 2013