

Date of poster presentation: 12 April 2022

Time for a TSE road map 3?

Van Raamsdonk L.W.D, Meijer, N., Appel, M.J., Gerrits, E.W.J.

Wageningen Food Safety Research, The Netherlands

In the 1990s, outbreaks of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) such as mad cow disease (bovine SE; BSE) resulted in major reform of feed legislation in the EU. These diseases were associated with the use of processed animal proteins (PAPs) in animal feed. The use of PAPs in animal feed was therefore largely prohibited, with only a few well-defined exemptions. In 2005, the European Commission published a Road Map with future steps towards relaxations of the temporary feed ban. An updated document for the period 2010-2015 was published in 2010. In this TSE Road Map 2, the Commission outlined future possible relaxations of the measures. One strategic goal was to review certain measures of the total feed ban, when certain conditions were met.

The global demand for protein is steadily increasing with an increasing world population to feed. At the same time, counteracting climate change requires a vast reduction in GHG emissions – also from agriculture. Therefore, circular production of both conventional and alternative proteins is necessary to feed the world and halt global warming. However, EU legislation acts as a barrier in some cases. For instance, a range of highly valuable residual streams from food production containing animal products are currently prohibited as feed ingredient, blocking utilisation for circular livestock breeding. Insects reared on PAP-containing waste would present new opportunities in valorising these residual streams. However, relaxation of EU legislation to enable these opportunities is a time-consuming process. Although the ban on non-ruminant inter-species recycling has been lifted in 2021 for conventional PAPs, feeding residual streams containing PAPs will remain prohibited. Allowing the use of 'catering waste', surplus food or even organic food waste from households as feed could be conceivable, provided that risks will be controlled at agreed levels. In any case: the time is now to seriously start considering the associated benefits as opposed to the risks of relaxing legislation in favour of recycling residual streams in the feed system.

These issues warrant an urgent and comprehensive response. To this end, we will present our view on current barriers in the TSE legal framework that block or slow the implementation of a more circular agronomy, which would enable optimal use of resources for animal feed. Attention is paid to the safety of easing restrictions, as well as scientific breakthroughs that may still need to be made.

Keywords: Animal proteins, legislation, feed ban, protein transition