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To whom it may concern

Re: Melamine contamination in feedstuffs from China

Meat & Wool New Zealand has obtained the following statement from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) in response to enquiries regarding New Zealand exposure to the contaminating ingredient Melamine, as found recently in US animal feedstuffs;

NZFSA is looking into imports from China of all vegetable protein ingredients and products containing them in light of reports from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) and subsequent developments there. Investigations to determine the effect of unauthorised addition of these and other nitrogen-rich fillers in product are ongoing.

NZFSA has reminded all Chinese wheat gluten and affected petfood importers in New Zealand of their obligation to ensure the safety and suitability of their imports. NZFSA also confirmed that none of the implicated US petfood was available within New Zealand and that no wheat gluten had been imported into New Zealand from the Chinese company implicated in the US product incident.

Investigations and testing completed to date have not suggested there is a problem with wheat gluten in New Zealand. In the light of ongoing concern regarding the use of melamine in product manufactured in China and media reports that its use there as a filler in animal feed is "a common occurrence", NZFSA will conduct a survey of all Chinese imports of vegetable protein ingredient and products containing them to establish what, if any, levels of melamine and related chemicals may be present.

This is a preliminary activity to establish what further action NZFSA may need to take regarding vegetable protein imports from China. NZFSA is coordinating its response to this emerging situation with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), and is also in contact with US FDA officials to gain further information on the situation.

NZFSA will continue to closely monitor developments overseas and, in coordination with FSANZ, take further action should this be warranted.

Kelvin Whall
Regional Manager – North America