

Approving Raw Material Suppliers – Feed Safety Assessment Guidelines

The aim of an Approved Supplier Program is to ensure that all raw materials are safe to use in production and that the finished product manufactured is not compromised by incoming raw materials. This guideline document is written to provide direction as part of FeedSafe to assist manufacturing sites in meeting:

5.1 Is there a documented purchasing program implemented with emphasis on raw material quality and safety risks?

5.3 Does the site maintain a register of compliant raw material suppliers?

This document largely addresses the food safety risks that need to be considered in approving raw material suppliers. There are other non-food safety issues that need to be considered in approving suppliers that are outside the scope of FeedSafe. This could include such things as credit provision, price, technical service support, etc.

1. What is a Register of compliant raw material suppliers?

This is simply a list of suppliers that have been approved to supply raw materials to your company.

2. What is the basis for supply approval?

Compliant is seen to be an approved suppliers list where each supplier needs to be evaluated for their ability to meet your contractual requirements to satisfy raw material specifications with the results of the evaluation recorded. For FeedSafe there is a need to look at food and feed safety risks, and this needs to be incorporated into the site risk assessment plan.

3. What needs to be considered when evaluating a supplier?

Raw material suppliers are to be evaluated based on their confirmed QA program certification, provision of vendor declarations or historic record of supplying products that meet minimum specifications.

Higher risk raw materials, identified through the HACCP Risk Assessment, must undergo greater assessment prior to supply. This is expected to include raw materials that have greater risk of the presence of chemical residues, heavy metals, microbial, weed seeds, mycotoxins and any other contaminants.

The system to evaluate suppliers can include a rating process based on their ability and/or capacity to satisfy the incoming raw material specifications, expectations and requirements (refer section below).

4. Who is responsible for the acceptance and rejection of raw material suppliers?

The purchasing program needs to define who is authorized to approve raw material suppliers. Equally they also need to also be authorized to put suppliers on a non-approved list; also referred to as unsuitable for deliveries, delivery block or black-list.

5. Who uses the Approved Supplier List?

The list needs to be available to all staff responsible for purchasing raw materials.

6. Approved Supplier List Review

Records of the performance of suppliers should be reviewed at least annually to determine their continued suitability and inclusion on the Approved Supplier List. There needs to be a feedback system from QA staff to identify underperforming raw material suppliers based on quality criteria.

7. Approved Supplier List Confidentiality

It is expected that companies will treat their listing of approved suppliers as a controlled and confidential listing. Due to the inclusion of both approved and non-approved (blacklisted) suppliers, the decision on supplier approval can be a sensitive issue and appropriate levels of control and authorised access need to be implemented.

8. Approved Supplier Assessment

Example of a simple ranking system:

Product suppliers can be rated on their performance to satisfy requirements through a three-tier rating system. The three tiers can be identified as:

- A – approved as suitable and preferred for all deliveries of designated product
- B – suitable to only a limited extent. To be used in contingency purposes if required.
- C – unsuitable for deliveries, delivery block, non-approved.

A new supplier, after evaluation, shall commence with the status "A". As a result of continuous delivery to specification, the supplier is permanently evaluated. Using this permanent evaluation, underperforming suppliers ranking can be adjusted back to status "B" or "C" while the best suppliers are maintained as A- suppliers.

A-Suppliers are the preferred suppliers of raw materials. A-suppliers have third party certification, have been personally audited by the company (second party audit) and have shown consistent compliance to incoming raw material specification performance and criteria.

B-Suppliers may not have third-party certification but have provided evidence that they can satisfy all other approved supplier obligations. B-Suppliers can be used as back-up or second party supply. The company can work with B-suppliers to assist them to become A-suppliers.

C-Suppliers are blocked for all purchases and deliveries. This may be due to poor performance in past audits and supply, or that the supplier does not comply with company policy and objectives (for example other non-food safety issues). The block can only be lifted through the evidence of improved performance criteria conditions by the supplier or by on-site audit.

Product Supplier approval and rating must be maintained on the Approved Suppliers List.

The following types of raw materials are discussed in terms of the areas that need to be considered in approving suppliers.

Bulk grains off farm – typically based on receival inspection and test, vendor declarations and prior supply history. There needs to be receival standards, such as GTA, in use. In some cases, particularly at harvest, new suppliers may need to be accepted based on delivery inspection, sampling and testing with little or no prior assessment. In this case the approval process needs to place emphasis on the relevant grain receival standard and supplier acceptance based on a load-by-load basis.

Bulk grain from Bulk Handlers – QA certification and receival inspection and test.

Vegetable protein meals (cottonseed, linseed, soybean, etc.), **hulls and oils** - supplier QA certification together with purchase under contract that references and adheres to the AOF Trade Standards.

Animal protein meals (meat, poultry, etc.) **and fats** - reference to certification against the [ARA Accreditation](#) program and purchased under contract that specifies ARA/SFMCA trading standards.

Minerals including salt, feed phosphates, limestone, urea - supplier QA certification together with vendor declarations, certificate of analysis and prior supply history.

Food processing and other by-products – includes materials such as biscuit meal, malt combings, reject milk powders, millrun, oat hulls, rice hulls, etc. Acceptance based on contracted quality specification, industry trading standards, receival sampling and testing and/or prior record of meeting specification.



Feed additives – must either be:

- i. Exempt from APVMA registration – in this case the supplier should provide written confirmation that they have completed the APVMA END product self-assessment and confirmed that the relevant product is exempt from registration. Where suppliers have [FIAAAA certification](#), this already includes confirmation that they have completed the APVMA END product self-assessment for the products they supply.
- ii. Registered by the APVMA – Check both the product label for APVMA product registration and the [APVMA database](#). Searches can be completed by product name, active constituent or registrant company name. For many products copies of the product label is also held in the database.

Premixes - suppliers to be certified to either FeedSafe or the FIAAAA’s Code of Practice.

9. Other Non-food safety assessment issues

In addition to food safety evaluation, supplier approval will need to take account of other issues defined by your company that are outside the scope of these feed safety guidelines. Depending on your companies directives, these may include:

- Price
- Supply convenience
- Credit provision
- Reliability and consistency of product supply
- Delivery period including availability
- Provision of service including technical and laboratory testing
- Corporate image
- Environmental sustainability
- Workplace safety – Safety Data Sheet
- Child labour
- Animal welfare

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