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Paul Cartwright

Our ref: TO2022/15051

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18 August 2022

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your email of 25 July about the sale of live insect larvae to the domestic hen market. I have been asked to reply.

The Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) regulations prohibit the use of dead insects in animal feed, except for insect processed animal proteins (dead insects that have been processed according to certain requirements) in pet food and aquaculture. This ban does not apply to live insects, insect fats and oils.

Live insects are referred to in the Catalogue of Feed Materials, retained EU Regulation 68/2013 and described as "live terrestrial invertebrates, in all their life stages, other than species having adverse effects on plant animals and human health". It is therefore considered that live insects are permitted to be used in animal feed, and this practice is already taking place. The inclusion of live insects in the Catalogue is subject to a requirement that when used as a feed material they comply with retained animal-by products and TSE regulations. You have indicated that you are compliant with trading standards regulations, and therefore will be registered with your local authority trading standards office (TSO) as an animal feed business. Engrained in animal feed law is the overarching requirement that animal feed must not be marketed or fed to animals if it is unsafe. TSOs are responsible for the enforcement of animal feed legislation.

As you are aware, there are restrictions on what insects, which are defined in the Animal By-Product (ABP) regulations as farmed animals, can be fed by the TSE and ABP regulations. The feed materials you are feeding your insects are compliant with these regulations.

The only regulatory issue I could possibly foresee regarding the feeding of live insects to poultry is the manure and frass generated by farming insects. ABP regulations prohibit the use of category 2 materials, which includes manure and frass, from being fed to farmed animals. In addition, EU retained regulation 767/2009 on the marketing and use of feeds also provides a list of materials prohibited for use in feeds, this list includes faeces. These materials would need to be removed prior to feeding to poultry in order to be compliant with these regulations.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Jutting
Ministerial Contact Unit