



National
Industrial
Hemp Council
of America

NIHC moves hemp toward commodity status with the appointment of NIHC representative to the AAFCO Ingredient Definition Committee.

The National Industrial Hemp Council (NIHC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Hunter Buffington to the American Association of Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), Ingredient Definition Committee. Buffington will represent NIHC for hemp as an agricultural commodity in the feed supply chain. She was nominated in October last year and attended the AAFCO midyear meeting in Chattanooga TN, on representing NIHC and hemp as an industry advisor for the first time.

“We are pleased that Mrs. Buffington has been appointed to this important committee to represent hemp,” said Patrick Atagi, President and CEO of the National Industrial Hemp Council. “It is great to see NIHC and the American Association of Feed Control Officials continue to work together to remove barriers that inhibit the growth of the industry. This work will have global implications as the United States steps forward to lead the development of hemp feed markets.”

“I am proud to represent American farmers and ranchers who are looking for an additional commodity crop. Because of the nutritional value of hemp seed and its by-products, there has been a desire to bring it to the animal feed marketplace. We have more work to do, but a seat at the Ingredients Definition Committee for AAFCO provides the confidence the feed industry needs that we are serious about getting it done and bringing hemp feed to domestic and global markets,” she said this week.

The process to gain federal FDA-CVM (Center for Veterinary Medicine) approval has been a long and arduous one. It began with a December 2020 submission for hempseed meal to be fed to laying hens, by the Hemp Feed Coalition while Buffington was its Executive Director. The application went first to an AAFCO Feed Investigator, who then sent it to the FDA-CVM for consideration. The next step after FDA approval will be to bring the definition back to the AAFCO Ingredient Definition Committee, and there is anticipation that this may happen at the January meeting.

There is broad industry and even regulatory support to get hemp feed federally approved, but this is just one of many next steps to see hemp broadly legal as animal feed. The final approval includes the formal adoption process through multiple AAFCO committees and its inclusion in the AAFCO Official Publication of Ingredients. While a reason to celebrate, this will only make it Federally legal for laying hens. Broiler and pullet chickens will require their own applications and each species (cattle, horses, etc) will face the rigor of FDA approval; additional applications will be necessary for other hemp ingredients like oil or post-extracted biomass.

NIHC sought the appointment for Hunter because it is committed to gaining federal approval, translating to millions of acres of hemp grain needed to meet the demand. The Animal Feed Industry Association (AFIA) reported the total volume of feed in 2019 was almost 284 tons, with Broiler and Laying hens consuming over 28% (80 tons); and the revenue generated by the US feed market at \$59.9 billion. The potential market for hemp by-products as animal feed is currently unknown. Complete replacement of all feedstuffs with hemp is unrealistic. However, replacing just 1% of the current composite feed market would generate an additional \$599 million dollars of revenue for the hemp industry.