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THE SYMBOL SCHEME FOR CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

This document contains the following information -

1. An overview of the approval scheme for feeding stuffs.
2. Frequently asked questions.

NB. The description 'holistic' is not protected in law and the term is sometimes used erroneously to describe products which may not be eligible under the scheme. Only fully Certified Holistic Products can display the BAHNM Symbol Scheme Logo.

FOR INFORMATION ON OBTAINING CERTIFIED PRODUCTS
CONTACT THE SECRETARY BY E-MAIL OUTLINING YOUR
REQUIREMENTS AND YOU WILL BE SENT DETAILS OF APPROVED
MANUFACTURERS IN THE APPROPRIATE PRODUCT GROUP

In circumstances where fully certified products are not available or appropriate, uncertified affiliated products can be recommended to consumers. These may be manufactured to similar principles or going through the conversion process as part of the scheme.

1. THE APPROVAL SCHEME FOR FEEDING STUFFS AND MEDICINES

There is increasing concern amongst the veterinary profession and owners of companion animals about the ingredients used in commercial products and the implications of the use of these on the health of the animal in their care. The main issues are listed below.

1. The overuse of artificial additives
2. The overuse of unsuitable types of ingredients such as by-products
3. The under use of biologically appropriate unadulterated whole ingredients.

Under current legislation it may be impossible to glean this information from the declared ingredients on product packaging.

The purpose of the BAHNM approval scheme

The BAHNM approval scheme for commercial products operates within the framework of the Feeding Stuffs Regulations, The Veterinary Medicines Acts and Trading Standards Legislation. It has two main aims.

1. To provide a method of identification for products manufactured to clearly identifiable quality standards thereby providing an informed choice for the consumer. The quality standards are based on the definition of Holistic Feeding Stuffs and Medicines.
2. To provide a marketing tool for manufacturers producing products to a defined standard.

Ingredients classification

A major focus for the approval scheme is the types of raw materials used. All ingredients available to manufacturers are listed in the Feeding Stuffs Regulations, which is a Statutory Instrument of Government. These are further categorised by BAHNM into specific types according to their suitability when assessed against the Definition of Holistic Feeding Stuffs and Medicines. These issues are constantly reviewed in the light of current research.

Under the BAHNM approval scheme there are three categories of raw materials:

1. Allowed substances.
2. Limited substances – allowed up to a certain percentage inclusion, depending on the type of substance, the species involved and the formulation.
3. Banned substances – not allowed at all.

1. Allowed substances are defined as:

1.1. Derived substantially from plant or animal sources, in either an unprocessed state, or not having been denatured by physical processing such

as heat processing, rendering, purification, extraction, hydrolysis, enzymolysis, or fermentation to a degree, which requires unacceptable levels of synthetic fortification or adulterants.

1.2. Manufactured substantially from raw materials that are biologically appropriate for the species and that can be optimally and easily assimilated by the body.

2. Limited substances are defined as:

Substances which, by their nature, are acceptable from an holistic perspective, but with a strictly limited inclusion rate.

Examples:

2.1. Certain by-products.

2.2. Certain micronutrients

3. Banned substances are defined as:

Substances which by their nature, are not acceptable from an holistic perspective.

Examples: salt, sugar, dairy products, fruit pulp, antioxidants, colourings, emulsifiers, stabilisers, thickeners, gelling agents, aromatic and appetising substances.

Definition of Holistic Feeding Stuffs and Medicines

1. Quality:

Derived substantially from plant or animal sources, in either an unprocessed state, or not having been denatured by physical processing such as heat processing, rendering, purification, extraction, hydrolysis, enzymolysis, or fermentation to a degree, which requires unacceptable levels of synthetic fortification or adulterants.

2. Appropriateness:

Manufactured substantially from raw materials that are biologically appropriate for the species that can be optimally and easily assimilated by the body. Complete foods must reflect as far as practicable the variety of nutrients and micronutrients available to the undomesticated counterpart of the species.

BAHNM bases the definition of Holistic Feeding Stuffs, Feed additives and Medicines on principles which embrace the philosophy of maintaining good health through optimum nutrition and the use of non-pharmacy medicine where appropriate. Central to this is providing biologically appropriate food ingredients, together with the use of traditional medicines such as herbs and homoeopathy, where they can be a viable alternative to, or beneficially integrated with, pharmacy medicines. Information on the latest scientific literature relating to this principle is available from the secretary.

Research

BAHNM makes assessments as to suitability of ingredients based on four things. Not necessarily in following order.

1. The philosophy of holistic nutrition and medicine based on the Organic Tradition and modern research into integrated health.
2. In house meta analysis of scientific literature.
3. In house trial work.
4. Advice from external advisors working in clinical holistic medicine and science.

2. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between BAHNM certified feeds and others on the market?

BAHNM certified foods are manufactured to a specific quality standard. This is intended to provide the consumer with an informed choice regarding ingredients used in the product.

Currently there are hundreds of ingredients listed in the Feeding Stuffs Regulations 2000 which categorises ingredients for declaration purposes. The majority of these are by-products and additives. Because of their nature, many of these are subjected to limitations as to their inclusion rate under the BAHNM scheme and many others are banned altogether. BAHNM will tighten or relax restrictions on raw materials in the light of current research.

With regards to formulation, they are manufactured substantially from raw materials that are biologically appropriate for the species that can be optimally and easily assimilated by the body. Complete foods reflect as far as practicable the variety of nutrients and micronutrients available to the undomesticated counterpart of the species.

If some raw materials are judged to be unsuitable, why is their use allowed in non BAHNM certified animal foods?

The animal food industry has evolved over the last half century or so largely as a 'by product industry' that means its expertise developed making animal food from de-natured ingredients which had been used before. These substances required 'fortification' with many chemicals known as processing aids. There are hundreds of by-products and chemical agents which may be legally used. A good deal of this expertise comes from production animal science which concentrates on efficiency of food conversion into meat or milk, rather than long term health and vitality.

As more knowledge comes to light, some of these substances are being removed through legislation, but it can take a long period of time and it is sometimes too late to avoid a health problem. The industry will not generally react without substantial pressure. The philosophy of the industry, with regard to the choice of raw materials is seriously flawed, evidenced by the BSE outbreak in the 1990's, thought to have been started by feeding meat derivatives to vegetarian animals.

More current issues are connected with the overuse of certain synthetic preservatives and micronutrients such as vitamins for the diets of domestic pets – all of which are either restricted or banned under the BAHNM scheme. With common sense it is a simple matter to avoid questionable raw materials and produce wholesome foods provided the right raw materials are used.

How do you make choices concerning raw materials?

Raw materials are evaluated against the definition of Holistic Feeding Stuffs above and then placed into different categories according to their type. They are constantly being evaluated in the light of current scientific research. The general rule is that if there is any doubt the ingredient is not allowed.

Where can I get more information on holistic nutrition and medicine?

More information is available elsewhere on the site and a general reading list is available from the secretary: tech.help@bahnm.org.uk

The latest academic research on holistic nutrition and medical science can be located through any scientific search engine such as:
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi

How can I compare the ingredients which other manufacturers may use in their food products with ingredients in BAHNM approved products?

There are hundreds of ingredients listed in the Feeding Stuffs Regulations 2000, from which non BAHNM certified manufacturers can formulate their products.

For a list of these, log on to:

www.legislation.hms0.gov.uk/si/si2000/20002481.htm

For more information relating to specific ingredients listed and how they are categorised under the BAHNM certification scheme please contact the secretary: tech.help@bahnm.org.uk

For free technical information on integrated medicine and advice in specific circumstances contact: tech.help@bahnm.org.uk

NB. The information given here does not imply criticism of any product that is not on the scheme.

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