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THE SYMBOL SCHEME – CERTIFIED HOLISTIC PRODUCTS

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the BAHNM approval scheme

The BAHNM runs a national registered approval scheme for Feeding Stuffs, Food Additives and Medicines in the United Kingdom. It operates within the framework of the Veterinary Medicines and Trading Standards Legislation. It has two main aims.

1. To provide a method of identification for products manufactured to clearly identifiable Holistic Quality Standards thereby providing an informed choice for the consumer. The Quality Standards are based on the Definition of Holistic Feeding Stuffs and Medicines given below.
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 type and quality of raw materials used. They must also be biologically appropriate for species.

The Feeding Stuffs Regulations 2005 (FSR) and subsequent amendments, which is a Statutory Instrument of Government, lists and categorises raw materials available to manufacturers; this list is non-exclusive and others may be used. All materials available are further categorised by BAHNM into specific types according to their suitability when assessed against the Definition of Holistic Feeding Stuffs and Medicines. Some of these are restricted under the Scheme and some are banned completely.

Under the BAHNM approval scheme there are three categories of raw materials as defined in 'BAHNM Certification Symbol Scheme / Limited and banned ingredients'.

1. Allowed substances.
2. Limited substances – allowed up to a certain percentage inclusion.
3. Banned substances – not allowed at all.

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 diet of 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.

Conditions of membership

The Association promotes the responsible marketing of products which are compatible with the definition of holistic products. In addition to complying with requirements of the Certification Scheme compliance with the relevant Statutory Regulations is mandatory.

These include:

Trading Standards / Veterinary Medicines Legislation
Traceability
Quality control

Products must be safe and claims made regarding products must only relate to matters which are justifiable.

Breach of Conditions of membership

A major breach of conditions would result in suspension and possible expulsion from the scheme. An example of a major breach would be supplying products described as holistic when they are substantially not.

A minor breach of the scheme would result in a notice to comply and failure to do so would result in suspension and possible expulsion from the scheme; an example of a minor breach would be minor labelling errors. The same could be applied to a member who repeatedly commits minor breaches and/or shows no commitment to follow the code.

Advice

1. For manufacturers

Many products in the 'grey' area between medicine and nutrition are hampered in promoting the health benefits of such products because of the constraints of the Medicines Acts and the Feeding Stuffs and Trading Standards Legislation. Comprehensive technical and marketing advice regarding product formulation, positioning and claims made for the efficacy of the product is available.

2. For consumers and health professionals

A free technical help-line is available for consumers and health professionals wanting technical information and practical advice on holistic nutrition and medicine, together with products available in the market place.

Affiliated Products

Only fully Certified Holistic Products can display the BAHNM Symbol Scheme Logo. In circumstances where such 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.

Confidentiality

Certified members are assured of complete confidentiality concerning their formulations and other aspects of their business through completion of a standard legal agreement to that effect.

NB: *Whilst every effort is made by BAHNM to safeguard the manufacturer with regard to any technical information or advice provided, the Certification Scheme does not replace or change the normal legal requirements which have to be complied with by manufacturers.*